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The Messianic Imperialism of the Spanish Habsburg Monarchs[*]

ABSTRACT

The Medieval history of the Iberian Peninsula was marked by the Reconquista, the 16th and 17th centuries were marked by the construction of the Spanish Empire, the process of the evangelization of the New World, the struggle against the Ottomans, France and the Protestant Powers. The Spanish Habsburg monarchs inherited and continued the messianic visions of the Catholic Monarchs Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon in the Early Modern period. The evangelization of the New World was a messianic mandate given by Pope Alexander VI to the Spanish Crown, the Habsburg rulers considered their kingdoms and subjects not only as countries and nations but as instruments for a higher purpose, to serve God, the Catholic Church, to propagate and to defend the Catholic Faith as well. Among the symbols of their visions, we can find the use of the motto Plus Ultra and the Pillars of Hercules in their royal coat of arms, the use of the titles 'King of Jerusalem' or the 'Catholic Majesty'. They used the Cross of Burgundy, the Cross of Saint Andrew as their imperial flags, not the coat of arms of their countries. The Spanish monarchs were the grand masters of the Spanish Orders of Santiago, Calatrava, Montesa, Alcántara and the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece. Their messianic visions were described by themselves in their own testaments and laws.

KEYWORDS: Habsburg, Spanish empire, early modern age, political visions, America, indies

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> "Ruego e mando a la dicha prinçesa, mi hija, e al dicho príncipe, su marido, que como católicos príncipes tengan mucho cuidado de las cosas de la honra de Dios e de su sancta fe, selando (sic) e procurando la guarda e defensión e enxalçamiento della, pues por ella somos obligados a poner las personas e vidas e lo que touiéremos, cada que fuere menester, e que sean muy obedientes a los mandamientos de la santa madre iglesia e protectores e defensores della, como son obligados, e que no çesen de la conquista de África e de pugnar por la fe contra los ynfieles, e que sienpre fauorezcan mucho las cosas de la Sancta Ynquisición contra la herética prauidad"
>
> (Isabel la Católica, 1504)

Introduction

Present study tries to give a short sum about the pillars of the political vision of the Spanish Habsburg Monarchs in the Early Modern Age. The term *Messianic Imperialism* used by the Historiography refers to the attitude and the actions of the Spanish Crown during the 16th and 17th centuries, mainly its struggle with the enemies of the Catholic Faith and the Catholic Church on one hand, the propagation of the Catholic Faith in the entire World on the other hand.[1] This period is known as the Golden Age of the Spanish Empire (*el Siglo de Oro*), its zenith of power, high culture, worldwide known literature, enthralling architecture etc.[2] It was the time of the illustrious School of Salamanca, and its famous representatives, Francisco de Vitoria, Domingo de Soto, Francisco Suárez, Juan de Mariana etc.[3]

In the case of the *Messianic Imperialism* of the Spanish Crown we talk about non a unique author or a philosopher, but the late Medieval and Early Modern Spanish Monarchs, Queen Isabel of Castile and her successors, the Habsburg kings of Spain. The Spanish Monarchs wrote their visions, their attitude, their wills into their political and legal testaments,[4] laws and royal orders during the centuries. Reading these documents, we can notice – at least in my own interpretation – that the imperial policy of the Spanish Crown the so called *Messianic Imperialism* was based on at least five essential pillars during the 16th and 17th centuries. Of course from a different perspective (military, social, economic etc.) other or additional viewpoints could be detected as well. So in my own interpretation, which now is a geopolitical perspective, these pillars should be the following.

I. Political and Religious Unity

The first pillar of the imperial policy of the Spanish Monarchs was the creation of the political and religious unity within the Spanish territories. The cultural and religious background in the Iberian Peninsula was the *Reconquista* during the entire Middle Ages.[5] Almost eight hundred years-long struggle (from the 8th century to the 15th century) for the recovery of the Peninsula from the Moors. During these centuries various Christian kingdoms and states (León, Navarre, Castile, Portugal, Aragón, Valencia etc.) were created, which provoked territorial, linguistic, legal, political fragmentation among the Christians. Later the monarchs came to understand that a kind of union (at least a political one) would be more benefit for the Spaniards to reach their main goal, to fulfil the century-old dream, the

[1] Geoffrey Parker: *Felipe II*, Barcelona, Planeta, 2020, 240.
[2] Manuel Rivero Rodríguez: *La España del Siglo de Oro*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2023.
[3] David Torrijos-Castrillejo – Jorge Luis Gutiérrez: *La escuela de Salamanca: la primera versión de la modernidad*. Madrid, 2022.
[4] Manuel Fernández Álvarez: *Testamentos de los reyes de la Casa de Austria*, Madrid, Editora Nacional, 1982.
[5] Joseph O'Callaghan: *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Reconquista.[6] This recognition led to the creation of the *mayorazgo* in the Castilian Law,[7] which substance was to conserve the unity of the state, which became an important principle for the succession of the throne as well, thus the monarch shall never divide its country among the heirs.[8]

By the end of the 15th century the marriage between Isabel of Castile (1474–1504) and Ferdinand II of Aragon (1479–1516) allowed to the Spaniards to unite their forces and thus they became able to abolish the last Moorish Kingdom and reconquer the entire Iberian Peninsula.[9] This policy was supported by Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia,[10] future Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503) who played fundamental role in the legal construction of the global Spanish Empire. This experience encouraged the monarchs to unite – at least personally if not legally – their realms and states, thus both Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon named the eldest survival daughter, Princess Joana in their testaments as *successor universal* of all their crowns.[11] It meant the personal and political, but not legal unification of the Spanish Kingdoms of the Peninsula after the death of Ferdinand of Aragon in 1516.[12] This policy was crucial for the Catholic Monarch's successors as well, so the Habsburgs maintained this principle through the next two centuries, and from case to case they stated that all their kingdoms and crowns shall be inherited by the first-born heir, and no division or separation shall be permitted.[13] This mayorazgo principle was extended to all their possessions, to the Low Countries,[14] to the various Italian possessions, and later to Portugal during the Iberian Union (1580–1640) as well.[15] The unique case was Philipp II (1556–1598) who ceded the Low Countries to his daughter in 1598 and thus separated those territories from the other possessions and took them under the jurisdiction of sovereign co-rulers, but it was just a tactic decision and an exception.[16] The Spanish monarch, Philipp III (1598–1621) stated and

[6] H. Salvador Martínez: *Alfonso X, el Sabio: Una biografía*, Madrid, 2003.
[7] Joseph O'Callaghan: *Alfonso X the Justinian of His Age: Law and Justice in Thirteenth-Century Castile***,** New York, Cornell University Press, 2019.
[8] "Ordeno y mando, que el príncipe don Phelipe, mi hijo, después de mis días, no pueda en su vida enagenar cosa alguna de todos los dichos reynos, señoríos y estados, ni dividirlos ni partirlos aunque sea en sus proprios hijos, ni en otras personas algunas", *Testamento de Felipe II*… 41.
[9] Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada: *La España de los Reyes Católicos*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2023.
[10] The marriage between Isabel and Ferdinand was legitimized with the help of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, let see Susanne Schüller Piroli: *Los papas Borgia Calixto III y Alejandro VI*, Valencia, 1991, 110.
[11] Their only son, Infante Juan died in 1497 with no heirs, next year died their eldest daughter, Infanta Isabel, her son died in 1500, thus Infanta Juana became the heir to the throne, let see: "otrosí, conformándome con lo que deuo e soy obligada de derecho, ordeno e establezco e ynstituyo por mi vniuersal heredera de todos mis regnos e tierras e señoríos e de todos mis bienes rayzes después de mis días, a la illustríssima prinçesa doña Juana, archiduquesa de Austria, duquesa de Borgoña, mi muy cara e muy amada hija primogénita, heredera e sucessora legítima de los dichos mis regnos e tierras e señoríos", *Testamento y codicillo de Isabel la Católica*.
[12] Navarre was conquered after the death of Queen Isabel but still in the lifetime of Ferdinand of Aragon.
[13] "Establezco e instituyo por mi heredero y sucesor universal de todos los dichos mis reynos e señorío", *Testamento de Carlos V…* 27.
[14] "Que doresenavant en tous nosdits Pays Patrimoniaux, & héréditaires d'embas, & de Bourgogne representation en matière de succession, soit de masles on femelles, estans sélon les anciennes Coustumes, Droicts, & Privilèges de nosdits Pays-Bas, capables à succeder, ait & aura lieu en ce que touche la succession du Prince ou Princesse d'iceux Pays tant en Ligne directe que transversalle, & jusques au nombre infini, nonobstant toutes Coustumes d'aucuns de nosdits Pays à ce contraires, disposans que representation ne doit avoir lieu", *Pragmatique sanction du 4 novembre 1549*, it was an edict, promulgated by Emperor Charles V reorganising the Low Countries into a unique and indivisible territory.
[15] "Declaro expressamente que quiero y es mi voluntad, que los dichos reynos de la Corona de Portugal ayan siempre de andar y anden juntos y unidos con los reynos de la Corona de Castilla, sin que jamás se puedan dividir ni apartarlos unos de los otros, por ninguna causa que sea, o ser pueda", *Testamento de Felipe II*… 23.
[16] In 1598 Philipp II of Spain ceded the Low Countries to his first-born daughter, Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia, and his nephew, Archduke Albert VII, let see the conditions: *Acta de Cesión de 6 de mayo de 1598*, In: Marqueses de Pidal y de Miraflores y Miguel Salva: *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España XLII*, Madrid, 1865, 219–228.

confirmed in his last will that since those possessions belong to his Crown as *mayorazgo antiguo*,[17] they shall be separated never again.[18]

After the voyages and discoveries of Columbus, and the bulls of donation issued by Pope Alexander VI, Queen Isabel declared that all the states and kingdoms of the Indies under her jurisdiction shall be incorporated to the Crown of Castile.[19] Her grandson, Charles I of Castile (1518–1556) stated during his inauguration oath in Barcelona in 1519 that all the Kingdoms of the Indies – the newly discovered and to be discovered lands – shall be fully united with the Crown of Castile forever, and cannot be separated from it for any reason.[20] One hundred years later Philipp IV (1621–1665) declared that the Kingdoms of the Indies (New Spain and Peru) and the Kingdom of Castile are from the same Crown.[21] Thus Spain had no colonies, but overseas territories legally full part of the Spanish Crown.

During the Middle Ages the Iberian Peninsula culturally was an authentic patchwork which was the obvious consequence of the various conquests through the long centuries, the Roman conquest in the Ancient times, the Visigoth one at the end of the Roman Empire, and the Arab conquest at the beginning of the 8th century.[22] This made a real cultural and ethnical mosaic with significant Jewish and Moorish population living together with the Spaniards.[23] This was the source of serious internal conflicts, a permanently growing problem to be solved for the Crown by the end of the 15th century.[24] Having fulfilled the Reconquista in 1492, Isabel and Ferdinand decided that all their Jewish subjects must convert to the Catholic faith, those who did not want to do so, had to leave the Peninsula.[25] Ten years later (1502) all the Mudéjar population[26] of the Crown of Castile were forced to convert to the

[17] "Por ser los dichos Estados Baxos mayorazgo indivisible y inseparable de esta Corona de España", *Testamento de Felipe III*… 43.

[18] "Se dissolviere el dicho matrimonio por muerte de qualquiera de los dichos Señores mi Hermana o Tío, que desde agora para entonces, declaro y quiero, que se tenga entendido, los dichos Estados han de pertenecerme a mí, y me han pertenecido por derecho proprio, y mayorazgo antiguo", *Testamento de Felipe III*… 45.

[19] "E por quel dicho reyno de Granada e las Yslas de Canaria e las Islas e Tierra Firme del Mar Oçéano, descubiertas e por descobrir, ganadas e por ganar, han de quedar yncorporados en estos mis reynos de Castilla e León, segund que en la bulla apostólica a nos sobrello conçedida se contiene", *Testamento y codicillo de Isabel la Católica*.

[20] "Por la donacion de la Santa Sede Apostólica y otros justos y legítimos títulos, somos Señor de las Indias Occidentales, Islas y Tierra firme del Mar Océano, descubiertas, y por descubrir, y estan incorporadas en Nuestra Real Corona de Castilla. Y porque es nuestra voluntad, y lo hemos prometido y jurado, que siempre permanezcan unidas, para su mayor perpetuidad y firmeza, prohibimos la enagenacion de ellas. Y mandamos, que en ningun tiempo puedan ser separadas de nuestra Real Corona de Castilla, desunidas, ni divididas en todo, o en parte, ni sus Ciudades, Villas, ni Poblaciones, por ningun caso, ni en favor de ninguna persona. Y considerando la fidelidad de nuetros vasallos, y los trabajos que los descubridores, y pobladores pasáron en su descubrimiento y poblacion, para que tengan mayor certeza y confianza de que siempre estarán y permanecerán unidas á nuestra Real Corona, prometemos y damos nuestra fe y palabra Real por Nos, y los reyes nuestros sucesores, de que para siempre jamas no serán enagenadas, ni apartadas en todo, ó en parte, ni sus Ciudades, ni Poblaciones por ninguna causa, ó razon, ó en favor de ninguna persona; y si Nos, o nuestros sucesores hiciéremos algna donacion, ó enagenacion contra lo susodicho, sea nula, y por tal la declaramos", *Recopilación de las leyes de los Reynos de las Indias*, Madrid, 1681, Libro III, Título I, Ley I (1519).

[21] *Recopilación*… Libro II, Título II, Ley XIII (1636).

[22] Hugh Kennedy: *The Great Arab Conquest*, *How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live in*, Boston, Da Capo Press, 2007.

[23] For example, in Valladolid – which served as the capital for a period – under Christian jurisdiction the Muslims could have mosque, own houses, crofts, vineyards etc., let see: Henry Kamen: *La Inquisición española: Mito e historia*, Barcelona, Crítica, 2023, 18.

[24] María del Pilar Rábade Obradó: La elite judeoconversa de la Corte de los Reyes Católicos y el negocio fiscal, *En la España Medieval* 37, 2014, 205–222, Ser judeoconverso en la corona de Castilla en torno a 1492, *Kalakorikos: Revista para el estudio, defensa, protección y divulgación del patrimonio histórico, artístico y cultural de Calahorra y su entorno*, 10, 2005, 37–56.

[25] "Hasta en fin del mes de Julio primero que viene de este presente año de 1492 años salgan de todos los dichos nuestros reynos y señoríos con sus hijos é hijas, criados y criadas, y familiares judíos así grandes como pequeños, de qualquier edad que sean", *Novísima Recopilación de las Leyes de España*. Tomo V, Madrid, 1805, Libro XII, Título I, Ley III (1492).

[26] They were Muslims who remained in Iberia in the late medieval period following the Christian reconquest (1492–1502).

Christianity, or to leave the country[27] as well. From this time they were called Morisco population,[28] this rule came into force in the Crown of Aragon only in 1525. Why the monarchs urged the religious unity?

For example, a subject of the Crown for once Catholic – no matter he/she was Jew or Muslim before – shall not leave the Holy Catholic faith. To ensure this policy, the Santa Inquisición (*Tribunal del Santo Oficio*) was erected both in Castile by Isabel (1478) and in Aragon by Ferdinand (1483) as well.[29] The tusk of the Inquisition was not to propagate the faith, but to avoid that the faithful subjects leave the Catholic faith, because it could lead to religious conflicts. So this concept later became the essential part of the religious policy of the Spanish Monarchs. In Germany, England, France etc. the reformation led to serious internal conflicts, various countries were marred into religious wars during the 16th century, a 'luxury' that Spain could not afford it to happen within its territories meanwhile facing a permanent threat from the Ottomans in the Mediterranean.[30] That is why no reformation or freedom of religion was permitted in the Spanish Empire during the 16th and 17th centuries. We know that the Spanish Habsburgs tried to break down the Protestant Dutch rebellion during the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648) unsuccessfully.[31] The expulsion of a part of the Moriscos, the Catholic descendants of the Moors from the Spanish Kingdoms between 1609 and 1614 was the consequence of the failure of the integrity and fear from the Ottoman intervention, suspecting the Moriscos as the 'fifth column' of the Ottomans.[32]

II. The defence of the Catholic Church and the propagation of the Catholic faith

The second pillar was to defend the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith. This policy comes from the struggles of the Reconquista, the Crusader attitude of the Spanish Monarchs and the Spanish nobility.[33] King Alfonso X of Castile (1252–1284) stated in his testament at the end of the 13th century that his heart shall be buried in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.[34] The century-old Medieval idea to liberate Jerusalem and the Holy Land was maintained by all the Spanish Habsburg Monarchs during the Early Modern Age as well. The Spanish monarchs made gracious donations for the Franciscans in Jerusalem regularly,[35] and to collect alms for that cause was allowed even in the Indies, among the Indians too.[36] The Spanish Habsburgs inherited the title *King of Jerusalem* from Ferdinand of Aragon, which made their attitude even more dedicated.[37] This policy was intact and so

[27] Serafín de Tapia Sánchez: 1502 en Castilla la vieja, de mudéjares a moriscos, *Edad Media* 17, 2016, 133–156.
[28] Spanish Muslims (or their descendants) who became baptized Christians.
[29] Cristian Rodrigo Iturralde: *La Inquisición, un tribunal de misericordia*, Ediciones Parresía, 2019,
[30] Fernando Martínez Laínez: *La Guerra del Turco*, Madrid, Edaf, 2010.
[31] Anton van der Lem: *Revolt in the Netherlands The Eighty Years War, 1568–1648*, London, Reaktion Books Ltd, 2022.
[32] Antonio Domínguez Ortiz – Bernard Vincent: *Historia de los moriscos – Vida y tragedia de una minoría*, Madrid, Revista de Occidente, 1978.
[33] Faustino Menéndez Pidal: *La nobleza en España: ideas, estructuras, historia*, Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, 2015, 125.
[34] "Mando, otrosí, que quando sacaren el nuestro corazón para llevarlo a la Sancta Tierra de Ultramar, segund que es ya dicho, e que saquen lo otro de nuestro cuerpo e lo lleven a enterrar al monesterio de Sancta María la Real de Murcia", Juan Torres Fontes: *Documentos de Alfonso X el Sabio*, Murcia, 2008, 345.
[35] Víctor de Lama: Un breve de Inocencio VIII dirigido a los Reyes Católicos, que nunca recibieron, y la financiación de los Santos Lugares, *En la España Moderna,* vol 38, 2015, 231–240.
[36] "Para que se aumente la devocion de nuestros vasallos a los Santos Lugares de Jerusalen, y sean socorridas las necesidades de los Religiosos de San Francisco, que con muchos trabajos y gastos asisten a su veneracion y ornato: Mandamos nuestros Vireyes, Presidentes, Audiencias, Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales, y a todos nuestros Jueces y Justicias; y rogimos y encargamos á los Arzobispos y Obispos, y sus Vicario […] pedir, demandar y recoger qualesquier limosnas, y ayuden por su parte quanto sea posible y requiere la piedad de tan santa obra", *Recopilación...* Libro I, Título XXI, Ley VIIII (1618).
[37] The title King of Jerusalem was bought by Charles I of Naples, and thus incorporated into the royal titles of the Kingdom of Naples (officially: Regnum Utriusque Siciliae) during the Angevin period in the 13th century, let see: Philipp Baldwin: Charles of Anjou, Pope Gregory X and the crown of Jerusalem. *Journal of Medieval History,* 2012, 1–19.

popular even in the 16th and 17th centuries too, just let see the works written by the great poets of the Spanish Golden Age, for example the famous novel *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, *Las mocedades del Cid* by Guillén de Castro about the story of one of the most iconic Spanish hero of the Reconquista, El Cid. The same crusader attitude can be detected in the novel *Jerusalén conquistada* written by Lope de Vega, or in the novel *Napoles recuperada por el rey Don Alonso* by Francisco de Borja y Aragón, ex viceroy of Peru. This *crusader image* was portrayed by the Spanish art in numerous works. In Spain various Chivalric Orders were established during the Middle Ages, but the Council of the Crusade was created by the Habsburgs only in the 16th century. The monarch became the grand master of all the Chivalric Orders of the Spanish Kingdoms, under the Union with Portugal, they became the grand masters of the Portuguese Chivalric Orders as well. Despite of that, all of them were painted exclusively with the great collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece.[38] The official feast of Apostol Santiago, patron of Spain was established by Philipp IV in 1643.[39]

The Spanish monarchs stated in their laws that all their subjects must believe and confess what the Roman Catholic Church teaches and confesses.[40] All the monarchs stated in the last will that the heir to the throne shall be a faithful Catholic, those who leave the Catholic faith are to be deprived from the succession immediately.[41] A good question would be whether a sovereign has limits or not if he/she wants to convert to another religion? Can a sovereign change the law freely? Or there are fundamental rules that cannot be changed not even by the sovereign itself?

III. Struggle with the Ottomans and the Protestants

The third pillar is the logic consequence of the second one. Although the Spanish Monarchs could fulfil the Reconquista at the end of the 15th century, but two new challenges appeared in the same time. The seemingly unstoppable rise of the powerful Ottoman Empire from the East[42] on one hand, and the new Schism within the Western Christianity[43] on the other hand. The Habsburgs detected the correlation of the two challenges in time, Archduke Ferdinand I of Austria (1521–1564) wrote this to his aunt, Margaret of Austria, the governor of the Low Countries in 1526.[44] Emperor Charles V wrote

[38] Carlos de Ayala Martínez: *Las órdenes militares hispánicas en la Edad Media (siglos XII-XV)*, Madrid, Marcial Pons Historia, 2007, Daniel Rodríguez Blanco: La organización institucional de la Orden de Santiago en la Edad Media, *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 12, 1985, 167–192, 178.

[39] "Por quanto son notorios los beneficios y favores tan continuados, que los Señores Reyes mis progenitores é yo, y estos mis reynos hemos recibido, y cada dia recibimos mediante el auxílio del glorioso Apóstol Señor Santiago, como Patron de ellos y los que me promete la confianza con que lo espero por su intercesion, me obligan á mostrarlo con algun reconocimiento dedicado á su mayor culto y veneracion, he resuelto, que estos mis reynos de Castilla tambien por via de reconocimiento envien al Santo Apóstol en cada un año perpetuamente mil escudos en oro del dinero que se distribuye por su mano; los quales ha de llevar á aquella santa Iglesia, en mi nombre y de los Reyes mis sucesores, el Alcalde Mayor mas antiguo de la Audiencia de mi reyno de Galicia, y hacer entrega de ellos el mismo dia del glorioso Apóstol cada año, empezando el de este presente", *Novísima Recopilación…* Tomo I, Libro I, Título I, Ley XV (1643).

[40] *Novísima Recopilación…*, Tomo I, Libro I, Título I.

[41] "Si lo que Dios no quiera ni permita alguno de mis sucesores profesare alguna secta, o heregía de las condenadas y reprobadas por nuestra Santa Madre Iglesia Cathólica Romana, y se apartare y separare de esta única verdadera y sagrada religión, por el mismo hecho, le doy y declaro por incapaz y inhábil para la governación y regimiento de todos los dichos reynos y estados y de qualquier de ellos, y de el oficio y dignidad de rey y le privo de la sucesión, posesión y derecho de ellos", *Testamento de Felipe IV…* 11.

[42] Gábor Agoston: *The Last Muslim Conquest: The Ottoman Empire and Its Wars in Europe*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2021.

[43] Peter Marshall: *1517: Martin Luther and the Invention of the Reformation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017.

[44] Mihály Hatvani: *Monumenta Hungariae Historica 1. Diplomataria I: Okmánytár a Brüsseli Országos Levéltárból és a Burgundi Könyvtárból*, Pest, 1857, 38, "Dont apres pouez, madame, penser, en quel dangier et péril mes pays Dautrice seront, et consequamment toute la Germanie, pour les grans troubles et jnvnions que y regnent a cause de la secte lutteriane, qui journellement augmente de plus en pis. […] Et que pis est, non seullement en mes pays Daustriee, qui son voisins dillecq; ains en ceste Germanie, et consequamment en toute la chrestiente est ou dangier densuyr tel mal et jnconuenient, que si dieu par sa saincte bonté ny mect la main, actendu mesmes

his experience and instructions to his son, the future Philipp II in his political testament in 1548.[45] The regular clashes with the Ottomans and the permanent religious wars in Europe required the significant part of the resources of the Spanish Empire.[46] The Habsburg Monarchs were ready to act for the defend of the religion and the Catholic Church, we can see the religious wars Europe-wide during the 16th and 17th centuries where the Spanish Empire was deeply involved. Philipp IV wrote in his last will in 1665 that "all the resources of the empire must be devoted to the protection of the Catholic Church and the glory of God".[47] This policy is the survival of the Medieval Idea of the Christian universalism, so the Spanish Monarchs treated their kingdoms not only as states and nations, but as an instrument and servant to defend the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith as well. If we check the symbols, we can notice this attitude well, the imperial flag was the Burgundian Cross, the Cross of St Andrew which symbolised the fight for the Christianity. In Europe this period was marked by the *raison d'état*,[48] the opponent idea of the *Christian universalism*, the very interest of a state, invoked as politically superior to moral or religious considerations, like in France, England or the Netherlands happened when those countries made alliance with the Sublime Porte.[49] The ideological background of the Franco-Ottoman, the Anglo-Ottoman etc. alliances during the Early Modern Age was the *raison d'état*, since these were openly against the main power of the Catholic faith, the Spanish Empire and the House of Habsburg.

IV. The propagation of the Catholic Faith

The fourth pillar was to propagate the Holy Catholic faith in the entire World. It is the Age of Discoveries, Columbus,[50] Magellan[51] etc. After Columbus had returned from the New World, Pope Alexander VI issued various bulls in which he divided the New World – which territory was under no Christian prince's jurisdiction still – between the Portuguese and Spanish Crowns.[52] The Borgia pope imposed an important condition to the privilege, a *messianic mandate*, to propagate the Catholic faith in the newly discovered lands. The Spanish Monarchs took this mandate in serious way, from the second voyage of Columbus, friars were sent to the New World,[53] that is why Pope Alexander VI gave them

le desordre, que y est, et que ceste secte lutteriane sespauche et augmente tousionrs de mal en pis; jl y a plustot apparance que le tout tumbe et succédé a ruyne et totale désolation que autrement".

[45] "Debéis tener siempre muy encomendada la observancia, sustentamiento y defensión de nuestra santa fe generalmente, y en especial en todos los dichos reinos, Estados y señoríos que nos heredaréis, favoreciendo la divina justicia y mandando que se haga curiosamente, y sin elección de personas y contra todos sospechosos y culpados, y teniendo solicitud y cuidado de obviar por todas las vías y maneras que pudiéredes con derecho y razón en las herejías y sectas contrarias a nuestra antigua fe y religion", Instrucciones de Carlos V a Felipe II, In: Manuel Fernández Álvarez: *Corpus Documental de Carlos V* Tomo II (1539–1548), Salamanca, 1975, 570.

[46] Mauricio Drelichman – Hans-Joachim Voth: *Lending to the Borower from Hell, Debt, Taxes, and Default in the Age of Philipp II*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2014, Carlos Javier de Carlos Morales: *El precio del dinero dinástico: endeudamiento y crisis financieras en la España de los Austrias, 1557–1647*, Vol. 1, Madrid, Banco de España, 2016.

[47] "En todos mis reynos, estados y señoríos, se ha guardado y guarda la Religión Cathólica Romana, y mis gloriosos predecesores la han guardado y mantenido y gastado y empeñado en defensa de ella el patrimonio real, anteponiendo la gloria y honra de Dios y de su Santa Ley a todas las cosas y consideraciones temporales; y porque esta es la primera obligación de los reyes, ruego y encargo a mis sucesores, que cumpliendo con ella, hagan y executen lo mismo", *Testamento de Felipe IV*…11.

[48] Friedrich Meinecke: *Machiavellism: the Doctrine of Raison d'état and its Place in Modern History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957.

[49] Let see for example: Evrim Türkçelik: El Imperio otomano y la política de alianzas: las relaciones franco-otomanas en el tránsito del siglo XVI al XVII, *Hispania*, Vol 75, No 249, 2015, 39–68, Jerry Brotton: *The Sultan and the Queen, the Untold Story of Elisabeth and Islam*, New York, Viking, 2016.

[50] István Szászdi León-Borja: Dos nuevos documentos para el conocimiento de la intervención de Luis de Santángel en el descubrimiento de las Yndias. *Estudios de historia de España*, No. 8, 2006, 163–174.

[51] Eduardo Andrades Rivas: Notas sobre las capitulaciones del almirante Fernando de Magellanes. *Derecho Público Iberoamericano*, No. 23, 2023, 131–145.

[52] Let see the full text of the donation letters, Samuel Edward Dawson: *The Lines of Demarcation of Pope Alexander VI and the Treaty of Tordesillas A.D. 1493 and 1494*, Toronto, 1899, 529–540.

[53] István Szászdi León-Borja: Isten első szava az Újvilágban. *Világtörténet* 2, 2016, 183–210.

the title "Catholic Kings" a few years later.[54] The Catholic Monarchs got the right of the tithe from the pope in 1501 to construct and found churches and monasteries in the Indies.[55] The first archbishopric was established in Santo Domingo in 1504, a few years later the Spanish Monarchs got the right of patron of the Indies[56] from Pope Julius II in 1508. The Spanish Monarchs interpreted their own main tusk to fulfil the mandate of the supreme pontiff, to convert all the New World to the Catholic faith.[57] At least two clerics had to be on every ships going to the New World.[58] A Franciscan friar, Toribio de Benavente (one of the Twelve Apostles of Mexico) wrote in his chronicle that "by 1536 four million souls were baptized in New Spain".[59] We read in the Laws of the Indies that the viceroys, archbishops, bishops and land-owners' main obligation was to ensure the conversation of the local communities to the Holy Catholic Faith, to build monasteries, chapels, churches, cathedrals, schools, universities for the people in the New World.[60] By the mid-16th century the most important cities a good part of the Indians participated in the Catholic feasts.[61] If we check the religious map of the World now the heritage of this policy can be clearly detected.

V. To create a 'New Jerusalem' in the Indies

And finally the fifth pillar was to integrate the New World into the Hispanic civil culture as well. The Spanish monarchs used the title *King of the Indies*,[62] and as I mentioned above, they treated the newly discovered lands and its people as they were part of the Castilian world, the Indians were called '*our vassals*' by the monarchs.[63] In the lack of special rules for those territories, the Laws of

[54] Eusebio Rey: „La bula de Alejandro VI otorgando el título de 'católicos' a Fernando e Isabel". I. Evolución del tema y texto. *Razón y Fe*, No. 146, 1952, 59–75.

[55] "Ecclesiis in dictis Insulis erigendis, per vos et successores vestros præfatos, de vestris et eorum bonis dote sufficiente, ex qua illis præsidentes earumque Rectores se commode sustentare, et onera diotis Ecclesiis pro tempore incumbentia perferre, ac cultum divinum ad laudem omnipotentis Dei debite exercere, juraque Episcopalia persolvere possint, Decimam hujusmodi percipere et licite ac libere valeatis, auctoritate Apostolica, tenore præsentium, de specialis dono gratiæ indulgemus", Francisco Javier Hernáez: *Coleccion de Bulas, Breves y Otros Documentos Relativos a la Iglesia de America y Filipinas*, Bruselas, A. Vromant, 1879, 21.

[56] "absque eorumdem Ferdinandi Regis et Joannæ Reginæ ac Regun Castellæ et Legionis pro tempore existentium consensu, erigi aut fundari possint; et cum, expediat eidem Regi, Ecclesiis et Monasteriis præfatis, personas fidas et gratas et acceptas præesse, jus Patronatus et præsentandi personas idoneas, tam ad Metropolitanas, quam alias cathedrales Ecclesias erectas, et pro tempore erigendas, et alia quæcumque Beneficia ecclesiastica, infra annum a die illorum vacationis computandum", *Colección de Bulas, Breves…* 24.

[57] "Porque el fin principal, que nos mueve á hacer nuevos descubrimientos es la predicacion, y dilatacion de la Santa Fe Católica, y que los Indios sean enseñados, y vivan en paz y policía", *Recopilación*… Libro IIII, Título I, Ley I.

[58] *Recopilación*… Libro IIII, Título II, Ley III (1556).

[59] "Yo creo que despues que la tierra se gano, que fue el año de 1521, hasta el tiempo que esto escribo, que es en el año de 1536, mas de cuatro millones de animas se bautizaron, y por donde yo lo se, adelante se dira" Toribio de Benavente: *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, Parte II, Cap. II.

[60] "Segun la obligacion y cargo con que somos Señor de las Indias ninguna cosa deseamos mas que la publicacion y ampliacion de la Ley Evangélica y la conversion de los Indios á nuestra Santa Fe Católica", *Recopilación*… Libro II, Título II, Ley VIII (1636), By 1630 fourteen universities were established by the Spanish Crown in the Indies.

[61] Juan Chiva Beltrán: El Corpus y el Imperio hispánico. Autoridades, naturales y usos de la devoción al cuerpo de Cristo. In: Víctor Minguez – Ínmaculada Rodriguez (ed.): *La Piedad de Casa de Austria*. Valencia, 2018, 63–86, 73.

[62] "que en todas las Provisiones y títulos que despacharen en nuestro nombre, hagan poner los tírulos en la forma siguiente. Don N. por la gracia de Dios, Rey de Castilla, de Leon, de Aragon, de las Dos Sicilias, de Jerusalen, de Navarra, de Granada, de Toledo, de Valencia, de Galicia, de Mallorca, de Sevilla, de Cerdeña, de Córdoba, de Córcega, de Murcia, de Jaen, de los Algarves, de Algecira, de Gibraltar, de las Islas de Canaria, de las Indias, Islas y Tierra firme del Mar Océano; Archiduque de Austria; Duque que de Borgoña, de Bravante y Milan; Conde de Abspurg, de Flandes, de Tirol, y de Barcelona; Señor de Vizcaya, y de Malina", *Recopilación*… Libro II, Título I, Ley VIII (1581).

[63] "Entre las materias, que mas importan para servicio de Dios nuestro Señor conservacion, y aumento de los Estados de las Indias, es el amparo, y buen tratamiento de los Indios, y que sean bien gobernados, y mantenidos en paz, y justicia, como vasallos de esta Corona", *Recopilación*… Libro III, Título XIIII, Ley XV (1618).

Castile had to be applied in the Indies.[64] The Castilian court system was installed in the Indies as well.[65] The first royal court was established by Ferdinand of Aragon in Santo Domingo,[66] the most of the royal courts of the Indies were founded by the 1560s.[67] The ancient customs and 'laws' used by the Indians were also respected by the Spanish Crown if those rules were not against the Catholic faith.[68] A kind of a legal continuity was represented by the art, the Habsburg monarchs as fifteenth, sixteenth seventeenth etc. Inca rulers.

The local nobles and communities were respected and recognized by the Spanish Crown, the monarchs stated in their laws that the lands and properties of the Indians must be respected by everyone.[69] The Crown tried to integrate the local nobility into the Castilian nobility, numerous Indian elite figures got Spanish noble title from the monarchs, like in the case of Pedro Tesifón de Moctezuma – the direct descendent of the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma – who got the title Count of Moctezuma.

The Crown from the beginning advocated the policy of the racial mixing between the Spaniards and the local people, "the Spaniards shall have right to marry Indians and vice-versa, the Indians shall have right to marry to Spaniards as well".[70] I mention only two famous examples, Martín Cortés, the son of Hernán Cortés born to an Indian woman became the knight of the Order of Santiago, or Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, born to a Spanish conquistador and an Inca Princess.[71] We can see the various paintings from the 16th and 17th centuries which represent the local elite dressed to elegant silk or velvet dresses with full of gold and silver jewels with the coat of arms got from the monarch mixed with the Castilian and local symbols.

Conclusion

The imperial policy of the Spanish Habsburgs cannot be understood without the knowledge of the primary sources. The essence of their imperial policy can be clearly detected from their laws and testaments, which was a Messianic vision based on the Medieval Christian universalism.

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[64] "Ordenamos y mandamos, que en todos los casos, negocios y pleytos en que no estuviere decidido, ni declarado lo que se debe proveer por las leyes de esta Rccopilacion, ó por Cédulas, Provisiones, ú Ordenanzas dadas, y no revocadas para las Indias, y las que por nuestra órden se despacharen, se guarden las leyes de nuestro Reyno de Castilla, conforme á la de Toro, así en quanto á la substancia, resolucion y decision de los casos, negocios y pleytos, como á la forma y órden de substanciar", *Recopilación*… Libro II, Título I, Ley II (1530), Pablo Rodríguez: Testamentos de indígenas americanos siglos XVI–XVII. *Revista de História* 154 (2006) 1:15–35. 16.

[65] *Recopilación*… Libro II, Título XV, Ley XVII (1570).

[66] *Recopilación*… Libro II, Título XV, Ley II (1526).

[67] Ramón María Serrera: *La América de los Habsburgo (1517–1700)*. Sevilla, Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, 2019. 184.

[68] "Ordenamos y mandamos, que las leyes y buenas costumbres, que antiguamente tenian los Indios para su buen gobierno y policía, y sus usos y costumbres observadas y guardadas despucs que son Christianos, y que no se encuentran con nuestra Sagrada Rcligion, ni con las leyes de este libro, y las que han hecho y ordenado de nuevo se guarden y cxecutcn", *Recopilación*… Libro II, Título I, Ley IIII (1555).

[69] "á todos nuestros subditos, naturales, y habitantes en las Indias, que no les hagan mal, ni, daño en sus personas, ni bienes, ni les tomen contra su voluntad ninguna cosa, excepto los tributos, conforme, sus tasas, pena de que qualquier persona, que matare, o hiciere, ó pusiere las manos injuriosamente", *Recopilación*… Libro VI, Título X, Ley IIII (1523). The Indians had right to make a testament, *Recopilación*… Libro VI, Título I, Ley XXXII (1580).

[70] "es nuestra voluntad, que los Indios, é Indias tengan, como deben, entera libertad para casarse con quien quisieren, así con Indios, como con naturales de estos nuestros Reynos, o Españoles nacidos en las Indias, y que en esto no se les ponga impedimento", *Recopilación*… Libro VI, Título I, Ley II (1514).

[71] There is an allegoric painting from Lima, Peru, which represents the double marriage of three families, the Loyola, the Borja, and the Inca families, with the guests of the wedding both Indians and Spaniards, and in the middle of the picture there are the two saint members of the families, San Ignacio de Loyola and San Francisco de Borja, the former is the relative of the founder of the Jesuit Society, the latter is the descendent of Pope Alexander VI.

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