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PLUS ULTRA –
The Symbols of the Imperialism of the (Spanish) Habsburgs*

ABSTRACT

The Early Modern Age was marked by the raison d'état in various countries in Europe, like in France, England or the Dutch Republic. Despite of the prestigious titles like the 'Rex Christianissimus' in case of the king of France, or the title 'Defensor fidei' in the case of the king of England, these powers allied with the Ottomans (whose aim was to eliminate the Christianity) openly and unscrupulously against the Habsburgs. It was the period of the spread of the capitalism in a significant part of Europe, where the Medieval noble ideal was replaced by the bourgeoisie, the idea of chivalry by entrepreneurship, the communities by the idea of individualism, and the common good by individual interests. But not in the Spanish Empire. The House of Habsburg did everything to maintain the crusader ideal, to restore the unity of the Christianity. The coats of arms they had, the titles they used, the crowns they owned symbolized perfectly their coherent policy during the 16th and 17th century.

KEYWORDS: *Habsburg, Spanish Empire, State symbols, Raison d'état, Christian Universalism*

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Introduction

State symbols like coats of arms, flags, or collars of chivalric orders are commonly subject of constitutional law and legal history. In the case of the Spanish Empire it is worth examining these symbols and titles of rulers much more closely. They clearly reveal evidence of the specific imperial concept, the Medieval idea of the *Christian Universalism*, which the (Spanish) Habsburg rulers considered to be the essence of their politics during the two centuries Early Modern Spanish political culture was built on Medieval experiences, and its focus was on maintaining the Roman Catholicism, creating and then preserving religious unity, and the universal struggle against Protestants and Sunni Islam. In present study, I try to analyze the manifest symbols of this policy and perception, the use of titles and coats of arms, the maintenance of chivalric orders, the role of the survival of the crusader idea in the thinking of the rulers, and the specific imperial idea that the (Spanish) Habsburgs maintained over their countries throughout.

I. Papal donations and the ‘bulas alejandrinas’

The coats of arms and titles used by Emperor Charles V (1520–1556) born in 1500 and his younger brother, Archduke Ferdinand I (1521–1564) born in 1503 represent the tremendous ‘heritage’ they got at the first decades of the 16th century. The Habsburgs came to the European political stage in the second half of the 13th century with the election of Rudolph, *Count of Habsburg* as *King of the Romans* (1273–1291). The Habsburg name was never used as a family name by the members of the dynasty, but as a hereditary title “*Comes in Habsburg*” through the long centuries.¹ They were known as “*de Austria*”, after the Lands of Austria which became the dynasty’s ‘family nest’ thanks to King Rudolph I’s donation to his sons in 1282. Wherefore the Austrian territories was the own lands of the family, and could be inherited within the dynasty with no interruption.² Hence the name “*de Austria*” was written on all the official documents, laws, orders, treaties through the centuries.³ Duke Rudolph IV of Austria (1358–1365) had the false *Privilegium Maius*⁴ written in 1358, by which he required the title *Archduke (Archidux Austriae)* instead of the former title Duke of Austria (*Dux Austriae*),⁵ to distinguish his family from the other ducal families of the Holy Roman Empire. Despite of that, the Habsburgs did not and could not use the title *archidux Austriae* since the *Privilegium Maius* was not recognised by the emperors until – a member of the dynasty – Emperor Frederick III (1452–1493) finally did it,⁶ although himself never used it, regardless of being *de jure* and *de facto* ruler of Austria.⁷

The dignities *King of the Romans* or the *Holy Roman Emperor* were not hereditary ones, they could be get by election only. Between the assassination of King Albert I in 1308 and the election of

¹ After Charles V had ceded the entire Austrian Hereditary Lands to his brother in 1522, the title “comte de Habsbourg” was used further, let see his testament written in 1522, *Papiers d’Etat du Cardinal de Granvelle*, Tome I. Paris, Imprimerie Royale, 1841, 252–256, 252.

² AT-OeStA/HHStA UR AUR 1845 König Rudolf I. von Habsburg bestätigt gemeinsam mit den Kurfürsten seinen Söhnen Albrecht und Rudolf von Österreich und Steier genannte Privilegien heidnischer und christlicher Kaiser und Könige <https://www.archivinformationssystem.at/detail.aspx?ID=299150>

³ The nomination “*nuestra Casa de Austria*” can be red in Spanish documents during the 16th and 17th centuries.

⁴ Let see the full text in Latin; AT-OeStA/HHStA UR AUR 187 <https://www.archivinformationssystem.at/detail.aspx?id=29082>.

⁵ “Si quibus suis curiis publicis imperii dux Austrię presens fuerit, unus de palatinis archiducibus est censendus et nichilominus in consessu et incesso ad latus dextrum imperii post electores principes obtineat primum locum”. AT-OeStA/HHStA UR AUR 187 [15].

⁶ Ladislaus V of Austria entitled himself “Austriaeque, et Styriae dux” in both of his decrees 1453 and 1454 as king of Hungary, a few years later, his cousin, Albert VI of Austria was entitled *archduke*, let see for example the letter of the king of Hungary: “*Illustri principi domino Alberto, archiduci Austrię*”, Vilmos Fraknoi: *Mátyás király levelei*, Budapest, Nap Kiadó, 2008, 99.

⁷ Let see the Treaty of Wiener Neustadt (1463) agreed with King Matthias of Hungary, the emperor was entitled only *Duke of Austria* “*Fridericus Austriae dux*”, the full text in Latin: Casparis Ursini Velii: *De Bello Pannonico*, Libri Decem, 1762, 210. His son, Maximilian I used the title *Archduke of Austria*, let see the Treaty of Pozsony (1491) agreed with Vladislaus II of Hungary, “*Serenissimo Principe & domino domino Maximiliano Romanorum Rege semper Augusto & Hungarie, Dalmacie, Croacie & Similiter Rege, Archiduce Austrię, Duce Burgundię*”, *De Bello Pannonico*, 240.

King Albert II in 1438, the Habsburgs were unable to reach to be elected king of the Romans. But from that time the *Roman royal* and *Imperial* crowns could be held within the dynasty through the elections in the next centuries. Thanks to that fact, the special family consciousness generated by Rudolph IV could be built further.

The *thrones of Hungary and Bohemia* were obtained by Albert II at the same time.⁸ The famous monogram of Duke Frederick of Austria, king of the Romans, the *A.E.I.O.U.* is usually interpreted as “*Austriae est imperare orbi universo*”, so “it is Austria’s destiny to rule the whole World”, referring to the *Domus Austriaca*. As a consequence of the unexpected death of Ladislaus V of Austria with no heir in 1457, the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia were lost for the Habsburgs for a few decades. Although Emperor Frederick III was elected *king of Hungary* by a group of the Hungarian barons in 1459 against King Matthias Hunyadi (1458–1490), even though it meant no effective rule since Frederick was unable to defeat Matthias and take over the country by force.⁹ In spite of that the usage of the title *king of Hungary* was permitted to Emperor Frederick III for his lifetime in the Treaty of Wiener Neustadt signed in 1463.¹⁰ It was a personal ‘right’ not a hereditary title then. After the death of King Matthias (†1490) both Emperor Frederick III and his son, Maximilian I (from 1486) King of the Romans reclaimed the throne of Hungary immediately, Maximilian tried to get it by force with no success. The Hungarian Diet elected Vladislaus II as king of Hungary (1490–1516). The conflict was resolved with the Treaty of Pozsony signed in 1491, which gave the same personal ‘right’ to Maximilian as the Treaty of Wiener Neustadt had given to Frederick before.¹¹

The *double-headed eagle* became the symbol of the Holy Roman Empire during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg, as in 1433 his imperial great seal was decorated with it. The *one-headed eagle* had used by the emperors before, from this time served as the symbol of the king of the Romans, as we can see the royal wax seals both of Albert II (1438–1439) and Frederick IV (1440–1452) as kings of the Romans. After that King Frederick IV was elected and crowned emperor in 1452, the *double-headed eagle* appeared on his imperial great seal of course. An iconic painting (Quaternionenadler) from the early 16th century illustrates the Holy Roman Empire with a huge Cross on the double-headed eagle’s chest and the coat of arms of the various German states, which symbolizes the *Christian Universalism* undoubtedly. The imperial crown itself embodied the ethos of the secular leadership of the Christian World, so the Habsburgs naturally maintained this interpretation in the Early Modern Era. The *one-* or *double-headed eagle* did not become the private symbol of the dynasty during the 16th and 17th centuries, those could be used by the kings and emperors exclusively. The coat of arms, coins, seals of the Archdukes and Infants of the dynasty were illustrated without the eagle consequently. During Emperor Charles V’s reign (1520–1556), the *one-headed eagle* appeared in the coat of arms of his younger brother Ferdinand I (from 1521 Archduke of Austria, from 1526 king of Hungary and Bohemia) only after his election as king of the Romans in 1531, the *double-headed eagle* only after his election as emperor in 1558.

Thanks to the marriage of Archduke Maximilian I of Austria with Mary of Burgundy (1477–1482), their son, Philip the Fair could inherit (1482) the *Duchy of Burgundy* by which those territories became the dynasty’s own territory.¹² This was extremely important not only from strategical and

⁸ Georgius Fejér: *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, XI. Buda, 1844, 29.

⁹ Tamás Pálosfalvi: Szegedtől Újvárig. Az 1458–1459. esztendőkrónikájához, *Századok* 147, (2013) 2:347–380, 369.

¹⁰ “Item quia prefatus dominus noster Imperator bonis & honestis respectibus hucusque titulo & nomine Regio Regni Hungarie usus est, deliberatum est & conclusum, quod eadem sua Maiestas Imperialis huiusmodi titulo Regio a prelatibus Baronibus Nobilibus Proceribus & aliis Regnicolis Regni Hungarie, inantea libere & quiete in eorum litteris & vbilibet honorata & decorata quoaduixerit remaneat & Rex dicti Regni Hungarie ac aliorum Regnorum eidem Regno coherencium nominari & vocari & eo titulo vti & frui possit & valeat, impedimento contradiccione & turbacione Regis pro tempore, dominorumque & Inhabitorum ipsius Regni prorus amotis”, *De Bello Pannonico*, 206.

¹¹ “Item, Romanorum Rex, titulo Regni Hungarie, uti poterit, Et ita a domino Rege Wladislao & Regnicolis appellabitur, quemadmodum Cesarea Maiestas eodem hactenus vsa fuit, & deinceps vtetur, vicissim quoque Cesar & Romanorum Rex, & ipsorum subditi, dominum Wladislaum Regem Hungarie, cum Titulo solito Regni Hungarie, appellare & intitulari tenebuntur”, *De Bello Pannonico*, 249.

¹² Christopher Hare: *Maximilian, the Dreamer, Holy Roman Emperor, 1459–1519*, London, Stanley Paul, 1913. 56.

financial, but from spiritual aspects as well, because the Habsburgs thus got the hereditary title *Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece*, which chivalric order was founded by Philipp the Good in 1430.¹³ This was an important symbol for the fight for the Holy Catholic Faith and against the Ottomans. Their children married to the children of the Spanish royal couple, Isabel I of Castile (1474–1504) and Ferdinand II of Aragon (1479–1516). The marriage of Archduke Philipp I of Austria and Infanta Joana of Aragon in 1495 was crucial for the Habsburgs.¹⁴ This union between the House of Trastámara and the House of Habsburg had many to do with the strategic policy of Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503) as he convoked the first Holy League in 1495.

Fulfilling the Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula in 1492, and the beginning of the propagation of the Holy Catholic Faith in the newly discovered lands by the Spaniards in the following years, so the conversion of the Indians in the Americas, Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand got the title “*Rex Catholicus*” in 1496 from Pope Alexander VI arguing that “they should inspire other princes with their example”.¹⁵ The pope gave this title to the royal couple for their lifetime, thus it was a personal right, not a hereditary one. So their heir to the throne, Queen Joana I of Castile (1504–1555) could not use it in the first decade of her reign. Even if her husband, Philipp the Fair was recognized as co-ruler of Castile by the Cortes of Burgos in 1506, his unexpected death a few months later put an end to his reign in short term.¹⁶ The elder son, Archduke Charles of Austria inherited the Low Countries from his father, meanwhile their younger son, Ferdinand remained in Spain under the protection of his maternal grandfather, King Ferdinand II.¹⁷ For all that, in accordance with the testaments both of Isabel and Ferdinand, their grandson, Archduke Charles, in the name of his mother, Queen Joana, took the control of the Spanish Kingdoms in 1517 as governor.¹⁸ It is true that an eagle (Eagle of Saint John) as symbol was used by Isabel and Ferdinand as well, but it had nothing to do with the imperial one, later the Spanish Habsburg kings did not really use it.

With Charles I’s ascend to the Spanish throne in 1518, the Habsburgs got the hereditary title *King of Jerusalem and Hungary* as well, since Naples (officially: *Regnum Utriusque Siciliae*) was under direct Spanish rule from the beginning of the 16th century. Those titles were strongly connected to the Crown of Naples, the *Jerusalem* title from the end of the 13th century, the *Hungary* title from the beginning of the 15th century.¹⁹ With Charles I’s rule in Spain, an emblematic symbol was put in his coat of arms, the Pillars of Hercules which represented the ‘end of the known world’ at Gibraltar in the ancient Mythology. Now it was reinstated with the motto „*PLVS VLTRA*” (“further beyond”) as symbol of the recent discoveries, as the first official chronicler of the Indies, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo interprets it.²⁰

¹³ Julian de Pinedo y Salazar: *Historia de la insigne órden del toyson de oro*, Madrid, 1787.

¹⁴ Hermann Wiesflecker: Maximilian I. und die habsburgisch-spanischen Heirats- und Bündnisverträge von 1495/96, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 67. (1959) 1–52.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ José Manuel Calderón Ortega: Felipe el Hermoso, Fernando el Católico y la instauración de la Casa de Austria en Castilla, In Alvar, Alfredo: *Socialización, vida privada y actividad pública de un Emperador del Renacimiento. Fernando I 1503–1564*, Madrid, Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales (SECC), 2004, 133–166., Hermann Wiesflecker: König Philipps I. Tod in Burgos (1506). Eine Krise der habsburgisch-spanischen Weltmachtsbildung, *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, No. 18 (1976) 87–94.

¹⁷ Juan Antonio Vilar Sánchez: Los primeros años del gobierno de Carlos de Habsburgo en los Países Bajos, In: Juan Luis Castellano Castellano – Francisco Sánchez-Montes González: *Carlos V. Europeísmo y Universalidad*, Madrid, 2001, 567–583.

¹⁸ José Manuel Calderón Ortega: El proceso de redacción del último testamento de Fernando el Católico el 22 de enero de 1516, In *IX Encuentros de estudios comarcales. V Centenario de la muerte del Rey Fernando El Católico (1516–2016)*, Madrigalejo, 2016, 29–52, 49.

¹⁹ Philipp Baldwin: Charles of Anjou, Pope Gregory X and the Crown of Jerusalem, *Journal of Medieval History* 2012, 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03044181.2012.725181> Ádám Anderle: Az aragón kapcsolatok. *Történelmi Szemle* XXXVIII, (1996) 4:401–111, Ladislaus of Naples (1386–1414) took the title “*Hungariae, Dalmatiae, Croatiae Rex*” in Zara against Sigismund of Luxemburg in 1403, from that time, the title was connected with the Neapolitan royal titles.

²⁰ „Cosa por cierto mas digna é sin comparación capacissima de memoria é grande que no fué dar Hércules entrada al mar Mediterráneo en el Océano, pues los griegos hasta él nunca le supieron, é de aqui viene aquella fábula que los montes Calpe é Ábila (que son los que en el estrecho de Gibraltar, el uno en España y el otro en África, están

With the death of Emperor Maximilian I in 1519, his grandson Charles inherited the Austrian Hereditary Lands alone. At the same year King Charles I of Spain was elected king of the Romans, next year Holy Roman Emperor as well. Even if the title *King of Hungary* used by Emperor Maximilian I was not a hereditary one – as I have mentioned it above – Charles took it as a such one. So by 1519 Charles I had the title *King of Hungary* on two ‘rights’ without effective rule in Hungary, as he ‘inherited’ it both from his maternal and paternal grandfathers too. During the Imperial Diet at Worms in 1521, Charles ceded a part of the Austrian Lands to his younger brother, later in 1522 in Brussels he ceded the rest of it too.²¹ Of course it meant no division of the dynasty, since all the Infants of Spain used the title “*archiducque de Austria*”, and the “*conde de Habsburg y Tirol*” during the 16th and 17th centuries. As all the Archdukes of Austria used the title “*dux Burgundiae*” – Ferdinand I the “*infans Hispaniarum*” title as well –, the symbols of Castile and Burgundy were part of their coat of arms during the 16th and 17th centuries as well.

Ferdinand I was elected *king of Bohemia and Hungary* in 1526, thus the Habsburgs could regain these thrones both de jure and de facto too after many decades. To own Hungary meant to take on the challenge, to fight against the Ottomans directly in Central Europe. So interesting that in the 1620s the title “*Rex apostolicus*”²² appears in international documents. For example the marriage contract (1628) between Infanta Maria of Spain and Archduke Ferdinand III of Austria – he was elected and crowned king of Hungary in 1625 –, mentions the archduke as “*Apostólico Rey de Vngría*”.²³ Even with the title was not mentioned in Hungarian laws or public documents, it was recognized by the Papacy in 1758 during Queen Maria Theresa’s reign only.²⁴

The personal union between the Crowns of Spain and Portugal, the so called Iberian Union (1580–1640) was established by the Spanish Habsburgs who inherited the throne of Portugal thanks to the strong dynastic relations. To own the title *King of Portugal* was important both strategically, financially but spiritually as well. The Portuguese also fought against the Moors during the Reconquista, the coat of arms of Portugal religiously was very symbolic. There is a painting in Peru from the early 18th century which illustrates Jesus Christ as he gives the entire World to the pope and the king of Spain and Portugal. On the painting we can see Pope Gregorius XIII (1572–1585) and King Philipp II of Spain and Portugal (1556/1580–1598) who united the two crowns in his person and constructed the Iberian Union. This Union required the global fight against the Ottomans and the Protestants as well.

II. The ethos of the Crusade and the Council of the Crusade

The campaigns of the Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula (from the 8th to the 15th centuries) were crusades just as the campaigns led to the Holy Land during the 12th and 13th centuries.²⁵ The struggles with the Sunni Islam was not terminated with the fulfilment of the Reconquista in 1492, it continued in the 16th and 17th century with even greater intensity against the Ottoman Empire in Hungary, North and East Africa, or at the Indian Ocean. Under Ottoman vassalage and protection, the Regency of Algiers

enfrente uno de otro) eran juntos, y que Hércules los abrió é dio por alli entrada al mar Océano, é puso sus columnas en Cádiz é Sevilla, las quales César méritamente trae por divisa con aquella su letra de Plus Ultra. Palabras en verdad á solo tan universal Emperador, é no á otro príncipe alguno convinientes, pues en partes tan apartadas de donde Hércules llegó (é donde después ningund otro príncipe ha llegado), las ha puesto su Cesárea Magestad”, lásd: Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo: *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, Libro XII Cap. X, 403.

²¹ I wrote a short study on it, let see: *Pactum Mutuae Successionis (1522): A Habsburg-ház szétválasztása egy "spanyol" és egy "osztrák" ágra? – Kísérlet egy félreértés/fogalom tisztázására a brüsszeli szerződés aláírásának 500. évfordulóján*, *Jogtörténeti Szemle XX* (2022) 2:22–31. <https://doi.org/10.55051/JTSZ2022-2p22>

²² Sándor Bene (ed.): *Hol vagy, István király? A Szent István-hagyomány évszázadai*, Budapest, Gondolat, 2006.

²³ Diego Peralta – Antonio Marín – Juan de Zuñiga (ed.): *Coleccion de los Tratados de Paz, Alianza, Neutralidad, Garantia, Proteccion, Treuga, Mediacion, Acesion, Reglamento de Limites, Comercio Navegacion, etc. hechos por los Pueblos, Reyes, y Principes de España*. Madrid, 1745, Reynado de Phelipe IV, Parte II, 89.

²⁴ Georgius Fejér: *Jurium ac Libertatum Religionis et Ecclesiae Catholicae in regno Hungariae partibusque adnexis codicillus diplomaticus*, Budae, Typis Regiae Scientiarum Universitatis Hungaricae, 1847, 394.

²⁵ Joseph O’Callaghan: *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

was established by Algerian corsairs by 1516.²⁶ The tradition of the Reconquista was a very central component of the strategy in Spanish political thought just as Pope Alexander VI mentions it in his papal bull.²⁷

The Medieval institutions that administrated and coordinated the subsidium for the Crusade installed by Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand, was reorganised by Charles I into the *Comissario general de la santa Cruzada*. It was under the jurisdiction of the commissar nominated by the monarch, and composed by counsellors from Castile, Aragon and the Indies.²⁸ The Medieval idea to liberate Jerusalem was supported by many, and it remained intact during the Habsburg period as well.²⁹ So the monarchs urged to collect subsidium not only from Spain, but from the Indies as well.³⁰ The Early Modern Age was the period of the development of capitalism in a significant part of Europe, where the medieval noble ideal was replaced by the bourgeoisie, the idea of chivalry by entrepreneurship, the communities by the idea of individualism, and the common good by individual interests. But not in the Spanish Empire! The famous works like the *Don Quixote* from Miguel de Cervantes or the work *Las mocedades del Cid* from Guillén de Castro which formed the most iconic figure of the Reconquista. The novel *Jerusalén conquistada* written by Lope de Vega, or the novel *Napoles recuperada por el rey Don Alonso* from the ex viceroy of Peru, the Prince of Squillace, Francisco de Borja y Aragón. Being all the emblematic figures of the Spanish Golden Age (*Siglo de Oro*) who were soldiers too. The Kingdom of Hungary appears in numerous popular works of Lope de Vega thanks to the Long Turkish War (1591–1606) which was observed by the Spanish Public. This Crusade ideal and principle of the Christian Universalism was intact in the 17th century too as King Philipp IV stated in his testament in 1665.³¹ This global struggle taken by the Spanish Empire was recorded by Francisco de Quevedo in one of his fantastic poem.³² Because of the Crusade – participation of thousands of Spanish soldiers – to liberate Vienna from the Ottoman siege and the campaigns against the Ottomans in Hungary during the 1680s various paintings were made, in which King Charles II (1665–1700) defends the Eucharist against the Ottomans who want to destroy it. José Sarmiento de Valladares, the jure uxoris count of Moctezuma, the last viceroy of New Spain of the Habsburg-era (1696–1701) installed a folding screen depicting the Siege of Belgrade (1688) in his palace in City of Mexico which represents the intact of the Medieval Crusade ideal and principle of Christian Universalism at the end of the 17th century too.

²⁶ Alan Mikhail: *God's Shadow. Sultan Selim, His Ottoman Empire, and the Making of the Modern World*, New York, Liveright, 2020, 308.

²⁷ „Y así, aquel reino, que en el corazón de vuestra España, con gran peligro de los vuestros e injuria del nombre cristiano había rendido pleitesía a la impiedad Mahometana más de 700 años, fue restituido por vuestro valor a Jesucristo nuestro Salvador; en donde ahora, aventados los delirios Mahometanos, se publica la verdad evangélica y se rinde culto al Dios Omnipotente con las debidas ceremonias de la Iglesia”. 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.

²⁸ Alonso Pérez de Lara: *Compendio de las tres gracias de la Santa Cruzada, subsidio y escusado*. Madrid, 1610.

²⁹ Chad Leahy: “That Kingdom is Mine”: On Spain's Early Modern Polemics of Possession Over Jerusalem, circa 1605. *Quidditas* 41 (2020) 96–133.

³⁰ „Para que se aumente la devocion de nuestros vasallos á los Santos Lugares de Jerusalem, y sean socorridas las necesidades de los Religiosos de San Francisco, que con muchos trabajos y gastos asisten á su veneracion y ornato: Mandamos nuestros Vireyes, Presidentes, Audiencias, Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales, y á 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”, lásd: *Recopilación de las Leyes de los Reynos de las Indias*, Madrid, 1681, Libro I, Título XXI, Ley VIII (1618).

³¹ „Y generalmente encargo a mis sucesores legítimos en mis coronas y señoríos que por tiempo las poseieren, honren a sus reynos y se desvelen en su conservación y aumento, honren, favorezcan y amparen a sus vasallos, porque lo merecen, y aunque esto es general en todos los reynos, en particular les encargo el amor y cuidado de los reynos de España, y muy especialmente de la Corona de Castilla, pues es notorio las fuerças de gente y dinero que hemos sacado de esta Corona en tiempo de los señores reyes mi Abuelo, y Bisabuelo y de el Rey mi señor, mi padre, y en el mío, para las guerras de Flandes, Alemania, Francia, Italia, Inglaterra, Levante y otras partes, y los servicios y derramamiento de sangre que en todo han hecho y hacen cada día en la defensa de la Religión Catholica”, lásd: Fernández Álvarez, Manuel: *Testamento de Felipe IV*. Editora Nacional, Madrid, 1982, 73.

³² „En Navarra y Aragón no hay quien tribute un real; Cataluña y Portugal son de la misma opinión; sólo Castilla y León y el noble pueblo andaluz llevan a cuesta la cruz. Católica Majestad ten de nosotros piedad pues no te sirven los otros así como nosotros”.

III. Grand master...

As the ethos of the Medieval knighthood was flourishing in Early Modern Spain, the high prestige of the Medieval chivalric orders – *Orden de Alcántara* (1154), *Orden de Santiago* (1158), *Orden de Calatrava* (1158), *Orden de Montesa* (1317) – remained intact as well.³³ Even more so that Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand obtained the title grand master of these chivalric orders at the end of the 15th century, their grandson, Charles even reached at the papal court the unification of these titles with the Spanish crown in hereditary mode.³⁴ The title grand master of the Teutonic Order in the Holy Roman Empire on the contrary was held by the members of the House of Habsburg ad hoc only in the Early Modern Age. The Spanish Chivalric orders owned extended lands in Spain, their administration was concentrated and reorganised into a council (*Consejo de las Órdenes*) by Charles I under the jurisdiction of a president nominated by the monarch.³⁵ As the fight against the Sunni Islam was not ended with the Reconquista, in consequence of the massive expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean in the early 16th century, required the attention and resources of the monarchy. The Ottoman siege and conquest of Rhodes in 1522 urged Emperor Charles V to get ready for the defence of the Spanish coasts, thus he gave Malta to the Knights Hospitaller in 1530 to stop the Ottoman navy. The siege of Malta in 1565 showed perfectly the strategic side of the donation. The relation between the Habsburg dynasty and the Hospitallers was as strong as Archduke Venceslaus of Austria got the title Grand Prior of the Order of Malta in Castile in 1577. Wearing the ornate of the order he was painted by Alonso Sánchez Coello at the Spanish royal court.

The situation was similar in Portugal. The famous Order of Christ (*Ordem de Cristo*) which replaced the Order of the Templars in 1318 with the help of the Papacy³⁶ played significant role in the discoveries and conquest of Africa. From 1420 the title grand master was held by a member of the royal family, Prince Henry the Navigator was the first one.³⁷ This title was united with the two former Medieval chivalric orders' one – *Ordem de São Bento de Avis* (1146), *Ordem Militar de Sant'Iago da Espada* (1175) – and it was given to the king of Portugal by the pope in the Bull *Praeclara Clarissimi* in 1551 as a hereditary title.³⁸ Ascending to the Portuguese throne in 1580, the Habsburgs obtained then these titles too, which strengthened further their crusader attitude. Even more that the Spanish and Portuguese possessions in America, Africa and Asia needed more and more protection against the permanent growing attacks from the part of the Protestant British and Dutch pirates and companies which finally led to an authentic global conflict.

The Order of the Golden Fleece (*Ordre de la Toison d'or*) was the most prestigious of all, as it had originally a hereditary title grand master which the Habsburgs inherited at the end of the 15th century. The grand master was the king of Spain, all the archdukes and infants of the dynasty who got the membership, got it from the Spanish monarchs. Very interesting that non of the monarchs was illustrated with the symbols of the other chivalric orders, only with the collar of the Golden Fleece. The most illustrious public figures of the 16th and 17th centuries – among them the viceroys of New Spain and Peru as well – were usually painted with one of the chivalric orders' symbol on their dress. Many of the iconic figures of the cultural life were members one of the chivalric orders, Lope de Vega for example was a knight of the Hospitallers, Diego Velázquez was a knight of the Order of Santiago, the Santiago-Cross on his dress on his famous painting *Las Meninas* was painted by King Philipp IV personally. The Medieval legend of Santiago (Saint James) – the patron saint of Spain – was as popular in the Early Modern Age that King Philipp IV established officially his feast in 1643.³⁹

³³ Carlos de Ayala Martínez: *Las órdenes militares hispánicas en la Edad Media (siglos XII-XV)*, Marcial Pons Historia, Madrid, 2007.

³⁴ Daniel Rodríguez Blanco: La organización institucional de la Orden de Santiago en la Edad Media, *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 12. 1985, 167–192, 178.

³⁵ Feliciano Barrios: *La Gobernación de la Monarquía de España Consejos, Juntas y Secretarios de la administración de corte (1556–1700)*, Madrid, 2015, 566.

³⁶ *Bullarium patronatus Portugalliae regum in ecclesiis Africae, Asiae atque Oceaniae*, 2–6.

³⁷ Bruno Tadeu Salles: A administração do Infante D. Henrique na Ordem de Cristo e os inícios da expansão marítima portuguesa no século XV (1420–1460), *Revista Tempo de Conquista*, Vol. 4. (2008) 1–25.

³⁸ Olímpio de Melo: *Ordens Militares Portuguesas e outras Condecorações*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1922.

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 auxilio del glorioso Apóstol Señor Santiago,

IV. Double perception against the *raison d'état*

The courts where the Habsburg brothers Charles and Ferdinand were born and raised up were marked by the Medieval chivalric ethos even in the early 16th century.⁴⁰ Their grandfather, Emperor Maximilian I planned to be elected pope in the 1510s which shows perfectly the devotion of the Habsburgs to the Catholic Church.⁴¹ During the 16th and 17th centuries various members of the dynasty had ecclesiastical career, they became (arch)bishops, cardinals, grand masters of the Teutonic Order, archduchesses and infantas became nuns. The Spanish infantas took the veil as a Poor Clare, like Charles I's eldest daughter, Empress Maria (†1603), her daughter, Archduchess Margaret (†1633), or Charles II's mother, the governor of the Spanish Empire, Queen Mariana (†1696). Charles I's younger daughter, Infanta Joana (†1573) secretly became member of the Jesuits with the effective help of his cousin, the Duke of Gandia, Francisco de Borja, the 3rd Superior general of the Society of Jesus.⁴²

The idea of the Crusade, the struggle against the Sunni Islam were maintained by the Habsburgs from both religious and strategic reasons. The unification of the title *Rex Catholicus* with the Spanish royal title was claimed by Charles I successfully at the papal court, it was given by Pope Leo X (1513–1521) to him.⁴³ The documents of the Cortes of Valladolid (1518) mentions Charles I as „Muy alto e muy poderoso católico rey e Sennor”.⁴⁴ It was extremely important for the Habsburgs since the kings of France had the title '*Rex Christianissimus*',⁴⁵ the kings of England got the title '*Defensor fidei*' in 1521 from the Medici pope.⁴⁶ The reformation brought the end of the Medieval ideal of the Christian Universalism in Europe and the practice of the *raison d'état* in numerous countries' policy.⁴⁷ As a result for the kings of France or England meant no moral problems to make alliance with the Ottomans or the Moors during the Early Modern Age against the Spanish Empire or the Papacy. On that account Emperor Charles V blamed the French politics openly for its 'unholy' alliance with the Ottomans in his speech at the papal court in 1536.⁴⁸ Henry VIII of England broke with the Papacy and this led to the establishment of the Church of England and the transfer of power over the English church from the Pope to the English Crown. His successors allied with the Ottomans or the Sultans of Morocco against Spain

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 de las Leyes de España*, Tomo I, Madrid, 1805, Libro I, Título I, Ley XV (1643).

⁴⁰ Charles met various times with his grandfather Emperor Maximilian I, let see: Geoffrey Parker: *Carlos V – Una nueva vida del emperador*, Madrid, Planeta, 2019, 55.

⁴¹ Hare op. cit. 166–167.

⁴² Ana García Sanz: Juana de Austria: un modelo de intervención femenina en la Casa de Austria, In: Sánchez Hernández, María Leticia: *Mujeres en la Casa de Austria una red social, cultural, religiosa y política*, Madrid, Ediciones Polifemo, 2019, 251–270, 258.

⁴³ Bethany Aram: La reina Juana entre Trastámaras y Austrias, In: José Manuel Nieto Soria y María Victoria López-Cordón Cortezo (ed.): *Gobernar en tiempos de crisis: las quiebras dinásticas en el ámbito hispánico 1250–1808*, Madrid, Sílex, 2008, 31–44, 41.

⁴⁴ *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla*, Tomo IV, 260.

⁴⁵ Noël Valois: Le Roi très chrétien. In: *La France chrétienne dans l'histoire*, Paris, 1896, 317–330.

⁴⁶ J. Mainwaring Brown: Henry VIII's Book, "Assertio Septem Sacramentorum," and the Royal Title of "Defender of the Faith", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 8 (1880) 242–261.

⁴⁷ Friedrich Meincke: Machiavellism. *The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and its Place in Modern History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1962.

⁴⁸ „Y así mesmo a V. S^d y a todos nosotros será nottorio quanto por parte del rey de Francia de continou de tales effetos se ayan estorvado digo de la paz de la Cristiandad y de la guerra que con ella a los enemigos de Dios y nuestros se pudiera haver hecho”, lásd: Vicente de Cadenas y Vicent: *El discurso de Carlos V en Roma en 1536*, Madrid, Hidalguía, 1982, 61.

unscrupulously.⁴⁹ The Spanish Habsburgs took the title *Rex Catholicus* in serious way and maintained the crusader idea, thus they tried everything to restore the unity of the Christianity in Europe to fight the Protestants and the Ottomans.

The expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century affected or threatened directly the countries of the Habsburgs – with the exception of the Low Countries – so the politics of the Habsburg monarchs had to react to this challenge. Isabel of Castile identified the Ottomans (“los turcos”) and the Moors as the enemies of the Christianity in her testament.⁵⁰ Thus the struggle against the Sunni Islam was interpreted as a common cause for the Christian powers, as it was recommended for her successors as well.⁵¹ These illustrious crowns gave prestige on one hand but meant serious obligation to the Habsburgs because of this policy on the other hand. The Spanish Crown because of the Reconquista, the Imperial Crown because of its Medieval ethos, the Holy Crown of Hungary because of the 150 years-long struggle with the Ottomans. The Ottomans (“el Turco”) were mentioned by Emperor Charles V in his testament (1554) as the enemies of the Christianity just as in his grandmother’s time happened.⁵² This attitude could be widely detected in royal orders, declarations, testaments just as in popular literary works.

These documents shows that the Habsburg rulers interpreted their countries and vassals not just as nations but as instruments too for the common cause of the Christianity as well. The idea of the *monarquía universal* was in the centre of Emperor Charles V’s political visions although he refused the accusation in his speech at the Papal court in 1536 that he wanted to be the king of the World.⁵³ Since the time of Philipp II of Spain the nomination *monarquía católica* became known and used commonly.⁵⁴ Emperor Matthias (1612–1619) over the succession to the throne argued the interests of the House and the Catholic religion “das Ich unsers Haus und der Catholischen Religion Interesse wegen”⁵⁵ in a letter to his brother, Archduke Albert VII of Austria. In accordance with this policy, Philipp IV of Spain expressed in his testament that the kings of Spain shall govern due to religious considerations and not secular interests.⁵⁶

The Spanish Habsburgs wrote “Yo el Rey”, “Yo el Príncipe”, “Yo la Princesa”, forms instead of their names Charles, Philipp, Isabel etc. on the documents. On their coats of arms, seals, law books, palaces, cathedrals, were decorated with the symbols of their countries, Castile, Aragon, Granada, Burgundy, Austria, Naples etc. In many cases the Neapolitan coat of arms with the symbols of Jerusalem and Hungary which was united with the Spanish Crown since the early 16th century thanks to the Spanish conquest of Naples. The royal titles, so the king of Jerusalem among them were written in all documents issued in the name of the monarch even in the Indies as well,⁵⁷ which aim was to maintain and strengthen the Crusader attitude of the monarchy.

⁴⁹ Jerry Brotton: *The Sultan and the Queen. The Untold Story of Elisabeth and Islam*, New York, Viking, 2016, 205.

⁵⁰ „Otrosí, por quanto por la See Apostólica nos han seído conçedidas diuersas vezes la cruzada e jubileos e subsidios para el gasto de la conquista del regno de Granada e para contra los moros de África e contra los turcos, enemigos de nuestra sancta fe cathólica”, lásd: *Testamento y codicillo de Isabel la Católica*.

⁵¹ „E 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 honrra 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 pagnar por la fe contra los ynfieles, e que sienpre fauorezcan mucho las cosas de la Sancta Ynquisición contra la herética prauidad”, lásd: *Testamento y codicillo de Isabel la Católica*.

⁵² Manuel Fernández Álvarez: *Testamento de Carlos V*. Editora Nacional, Madrid, 1982, 7.

⁵³ „Y algunos dicen que yo quiero ser monarca del mundo y mi pensamineto y obras lo muestran que es lo contrario [...] quiero lo dar de manera que la Cristiandad esté segura de guerra”, let see Cadenas y Vicent op. cit. 62.

⁵⁴ Luis Ribot: *¿Hispanica, Católica o de España? Precisiones sobre la monarquía de los Austrias*. *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, Tomo CCXX, Cuaderno II, 2023.

⁵⁵ Mihály Hatvani: *Monumenta Hungariae Historia IV (1608–1652)*, Pest, 1859, 139.

⁵⁶ „Ruego y encargo a mis sucesores que por tiempo fueren, gobiernen mas las cosas por consideraciones de religión, que no por respeto de el estado político”, *Testamento de Felipe IV...* 13.

⁵⁷ „que en todas las Provisiones y títulos que despacharen en nuestro nombre, hagan poner los títulos en la forma siguiente. Don N. por la gracia de Dios, Rey de Castilla, de Leon, de Aragon, de las Dos Sicilias, de Jerusalem, de Navarra, de Granada, de Toledo, de Valencia, de Galicia, de Mallorca, de Sevilla, de Cerdeña, de Córdoba, de

The Royal Banner was to be taken out to the festivals in major holidays and to be accompanied by the viceroy and the judges (oidores) of the Real Audiencia.⁵⁸ The famous Medieval symbolic procession of the Holy Week (Semana Santa) in Spain, the tradition of the holy brotherhood (hermandades) and the floats (pasos, tronos) were maintained by the Spaniards intact in the Early Modern Age too. The Stations of the Cross (Vía Crucis) was installed in Spain by the Marques of Tarifa, Fadrique Enríquez de Rivera thanks to his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land (1518–1520), his diary was printed and published at the beginning of the 17th century.⁵⁹ The Saint Andrew's Cross (also known as Cross of Burgundy) was used on the imperial flag symbolizing that the Spanish Empire is the servant of the common cause of the Christianity and the Papacy. That is why the Cross of Burgundy, the Pillars of Hercules or the Plus Ultra were incorporated in various towns' coat of arms in the Indies, New Spain and Peru as well. In the great battle scenes painted in the Escorial Palace, these imperial flags appear in the ranks of the Spanish troops (tercios) and on the masts of the ships of the fleet. Diego Velázquez's famous painting, the Surrender of Breda during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) shows visibly the Cross of Burgundy as the flag of the Spanish troops. The Spanish monarchs were ready to devote all the resources of the empire to the spread of the Catholic faith and to the defence of the Catholic faith and the Church and as they testify to this missionary sense of mission in the first article of the Laws of the Indies.⁶⁰ They consistently affirmed this in their last wills too, Philipp IV stated expressis verbis in his testament in 1665.⁶¹ In the 1660s, a movement began regarding the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in the Spanish Empire, so the monarch swore to defend this doctrine in a public event, which was painted by Pedro de Valpuesta.

To fulfil this duty, this mission, the Spanish Habsburg rulers maintained the principle majorat (mayorazgo) had forged during the Reconquista. It secured that all the territories shall be inherited by a unique successor, so no division shall be permitted. This principle was extended to all the new countries that the monarchs obtained like in the case of Portugal.⁶² The coronation medal of Philipp II as king of Portugal was decorated with “*PHILLIP II HISP ET NOVI ORBIS REX*” „*Philipp II king of Spain and the New World*”, its other side the “*NON SUFFICIT ORBIS*”. Having Portugal, the Habsburgs faced a much bigger challenge both in Africa, Asia and America because of the French, British and Dutch pirates

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 Absburg, de Flandes, de Tirol, y de Barcelona; Señor de Vizcaya, y de Malina”, lásd: *Recopilación...* Libro II, Título I, Ley VIII (1581).

⁵⁸ „En las Ciudades de la Indias es costumbre usada y guardada sacar nuestro Pendon Real las vísperas, y días señalados de cada un año, el de Pasqua de Reyes en Lima: el de San Hipólito en México, le lleva un Regidor por su turno, y acompañándole, para mayor honra y veneracion, el Virey, Oidores, y Regimiento van á Vísperas y Misa [...] nuestra voluntad es, que esta costumbre se continúe”, lásd: *Recopilación...* Libro III Título XV Ley LVI (1530).

⁵⁹ Fadrique Enríquez de Ribera: *Este libro es de el viaje q̄ hize a Ierusalem de todas las cosas que en el me pasaron desde que sali de mi casa de Bornos, miercoles 24 de Nouiembre de 518 hasta 20 de Octubre [sic] de 520 que entre en Seuilla*, Seuilla, 1606.

⁶⁰ „Y teniéndonos por mas obligado que otro ningun Príncipe del mundo á procurar su servicio y la gloria de su Santo Nombre, y emplear todas las fuerzas y poder, que nos ha dado, en trabajar que sea conocido y adorado en todo el mundo por verdadero Dios, como lo es, y Criador de todo lo visible, é invisible; y deseando esta gloria de nuestro Dios y Señor, felizmente hemos conseguido traer al Gremio de la Santa Iglesia Católica Romana las innumerables Gentes y Naciones que habitan las Indias Occidentales, Islas y Tierra firme del Mar Océano, y otras partes sujetas á nuestro dominio”, lásd: *Recopilación...* Libro I Título I Ley I.

⁶¹ „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”, lásd: *Testamento de Felipe IV...*11.

⁶² „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 apartar. los unos de los otros, por ninguna causa que sea, o ser pueda, por ser esto lo que más conviene para la seguridad, augmento y buen gobierno de los unos y de los otros, y para poder mejor ensanchar nuestra Sancta Fe Católica y acudir a la defensa de la Iglesia”, lásd: *Testamento de Felipe II...*23.

and companies, just as the Ottomans in the Mediterranean and Asia, the fortresses in Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Kenya, Mozambique, Iran, Oman, India etc.

Conclusion

The politics of the (Spanish) Habsburgs in the 16th and 17th centuries are worth examining through symbols and the statements of the rulers, because they reflect well everything they thought along the lines of. In contrast to the new ideas that were emerging in the era, the Spanish politics continued to rigidly adhere to the Medieval ideal of chivalry, Catholicism, Christianity manifested in actions, service to the public interest, and the ideal of good governance. Coats of arms, titles, coins, seals, and paintings are very important imprints of the political culture that the rulers brought over from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern period; an analysis of the driving forces of Spanish political culture of the two centuries would of course require a separate study.

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