

ROYAL POWER
AND
THE WAR WITH GRANADA

By

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Abstract

One of the most important issues faced by the society of the Iberian Peninsula during the fifteenth century was the conflict between the demands of the monarchy and the accumulated rights of the nobility. The Reconquista facilitated the growth of a privileged warrior class, which resulted in a nobility entrenched in their wealth and historic privileges of rule. The Crown frequently challenged this domination, yet with little success, until the reigns of Isabel of Castile and Fernando of Aragon. These monarchs successfully channeled the power of the nobility into forms that increased the power of the monarchy without alienating the wealth and prestige of the nobles.

The purpose of this thesis is to show how the process of controlling the nobility was aided largely by the growth in military power of the monarchy, developed and expanded through the war with Granada, from 1480 to 1492. This war demanded a vast increase in the size and a change in the composition of the Castilian army, with a corresponding increase in the financial, social and technological infrastructure needed to support it.

The campaigns against Granada were focused primarily around numerous sieges, with gunpowder siege artillery as the primary weapon. The dissertation shows how this artillery was vital to the eventual success of Castile over Granada. In support of the

artillery, large infantry armies were raised by the Monarchs to conduct the actual sieges and protect Castilian supply lines. The cavalry, formerly the dominant arm of the Castilian army, was relegated to skirmishing.

The introduction of effective firepower placed at the disposal of the monarchs sufficient military force to control the nobility and extend their influence throughout Castile, Aragon, Granada, and Navarre, and to unify politically much of the Peninsula.

This reorientation of the emphasis in the Castilian military system had enormous political, social, financial and military ramifications for Castile. The State intruded into much of Castilian society, in the form of bureaucrats and tax collectors. The financial affairs of the monarchs expanded to fit the demands of the war effort, eventually absorbing a large proportion of the revenues of the Church and that of the nobility as well. This growth of state power eventually overrode much of the legal isolation of the different areas of the Peninsula.

The massive effort required of the peoples of Spain also promoted a social unification, in that the concept of a vital task successfully concluded was shared by all. The success of the war also fostered a crusade mentality among Spaniards and the strengthening of the influence of the Catholic religion

under the direction of the monarchs.

In these ways, the military demands of a decade of war against Granada facilitated and forced the growth of a centralized, bureaucratic state on a society dominated by aristocratic pretensions and regional factionalism.

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Introduction

One of the most important issues faced by the society of the Iberian Peninsula during the fifteenth century was the conflict between the demands of the Monarchy and the accumulated rights of the Nobility. This struggle was of long standing. The Reconquista facilitated the growth of a privileged warrior class, and by the fifteenth century, culminated in a nobility entrenched in their wealth and historic privileges of rule. The Crown frequently challenged this domination of the sources of power, yet with little success until the reigns of Isabel of Castile and Fernando of Aragon. These monarchs successfully channelled the influence of the nobility into forms that increased the power of the Monarchy without alienating the wealth and prestige of the nobles.

Most historians interpret this struggle in a political and financial sense, omitting almost entirely the function that the monarchs and nobles perceived as their primary reason for existence, that of fighting.

The purpose of this thesis is to show how the process of controlling the nobility was aided largely by the growth in military power of the Monarchy, developed and expanded through the war with Granada, from 1480 to 1492. This war demanded a vast increase in the size and a change in the composition of the Castilian army, with a corresponding increase in the financial,

social and technological infrastructure needed to support it.

The campaigns against Granada were focussed primarily around numerous sieges of Granadan fortified places, with gunpowder siege artillery as the primary weapon. The dissertation shows how the artillery was vital to the eventual success of Castile over Granada. It suggests that the use of effective artillery placed at the disposal of the monarchs sufficient military force to control the nobility, extend the influence of the Crown throughout Castile, Aragon, Granada, and Navarre, and to unify politically much of the Peninsula. Finally, it contents that this reorientation of the emphasis in the Castilian military system had enormous political, social, financial and military ramifications for Castile. The military demands of a decade of war against Granada facilitated and forced the growth of a centralized, bureaucratic state in a society dominated by aristocratic pretensions and regional factionalism.

Spanish Military Society

According to Charles Tilly, a nation-state is a well-defined, continuous territory, relatively centralized, differentiated from other organizations, with a tendency to monopolize the use of armed force.¹ The achievement of the Catholic Monarchs in creating a "nation-state" can be put into perspective by noting that in the middle of the fifteenth century, the kings of Castile were not strong enough to rule their own country; a hundred years later the Crown was the effective ruler of a vast empire thousands of miles away. This was achieved through control of the Castilian aristocracy by the monarchy, which was the major accomplishment of the Catholic monarchs. There were no noble revolts in the realm after 1516, unlike in France and England where they continued into the seventeenth century.

The main impediment to the growth of royal power was the nobility. Because of constant warfare against the Muslims, the barren nature of much of the country, and the fact that most trade and industry were in non-Christian hands, the power of the nobles was largely dependent on military adventure. Contemporaries saw Spain as a nation of warriors who thought

¹ Charles Tilly, ed., The Formation of National States in Western Europe (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 27.

honour reposed largely in battle.² Private wars dominated all of Spain, and in 1472 alone, over 1,200 armed horse were involved in such conflicts. "Resort to arms - not permitted to other classes in society - seemed to the [knights] to justify their station in life."³

The exclusive prerogative of armed force was one of the basic attributes of nobility.⁴ The nobility of Spain was especially bellicose in its defense of and justification for its status as warriors. The Chronicle of the Count de Luna states that "So long had wars continued in Castile that men had no other care than to keep their arms and horses choice and in good state." The Count de Luna himself wrote that "...it was a coward who rose from bed without girding on a sword."⁵ In Spain the knightly class was dependent on continuous war for its livelihood.

War was still largely seen as a particularly vicious form of joust, where courage was all-important. These noble warriors had to avoid "shame" through "despicable actions", "cowardice"

² J.R. Hale, "International Relations in the West: Diplomacy and War, The New Cambridge Modern History, Volume I: The Renaissance 1493-1520, Edited by Denys Hay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 260.

³ J.N. Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms 1250-1516, vol. II: 1410-1516, Castilian Hegemony (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 61.

⁴ Peter Shervey Lewis, Later Medieval France: the Polity (New York: MacMillan, 1968), p. 187.

⁵ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 304.

and "laziness". They must display "great ardour" in combat and perform acts of "great courage and hardy enterprises", "feats in arms", "prowess", and experience "the din of battle".⁶ Courage was conceived as an aristocratic, noble form of behavior, linked to race, blood and lineage, and as an individual trait arising from ambition and desire for temporal goods, honour, glory and posthumous renown. Still extant was the medieval notion that battle was for private gain. The capture and ransom of prisoners was extremely important to these warriors. In 1483 the Lord of Lucena captured a notable Moorish chief, Abu Abdillah, and the Lord of Cabra tried to snatch his prisoner away from him.⁷

The resulting chaos can be determined from a fifteenth century perception of the social effects of this knightly domination. In one source, knights were described as "Desecrators of churches, excommunicates, murderers by ambush, violaters of women, willing perjurers of their plighted word and sealed documents, fugitives from battle, those defeated in gage of battle, arsonists, leaders of free companies and pirates."⁸

The economy, society, and culture were organized in the service of this ruling class, whose influence reached down to

⁶ Philippe Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, Translated by Michael Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 253.

⁷ Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Al-Makkari, The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties of Spain, vol. II, Translated by Pascual De Gayangos (New York: Johnson Reprints, 1964), p. 374.

⁸ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 290.

the lowest levels. Many normal prerogatives of the state - the authority to wage war, to tax, to administer and enforce the law - were privately owned as legal, hereditary rights by members of the military aristocracy. These acquired rights of the nobility, which included almost all royal functions except that of coining money, severely limited the power of the Crown.⁹

The essential relationship of the nobility toward the monarchy was one of control and exploitation. "They wanted justice and more than justice against their opponents, but none for themselves...They wished to live unrestrained."¹⁰ Alonso Fajardo, the victor in a battle against Granada, informed Enrique IV that "You should not, Lord, press me so hard, for you know that I could give the castles I hold to the Moors and be a vassal of the king of Granada and live as a Christian there as others do."¹¹

This loose loyalty of certain nobles to the Castilian monarchy was not a major factor in the Crown's determination to conquer Granada, since very few Christian nobles actually pledged fealty to the rulers of Granada, but is a strong indication of the rebelliousness of the nobility, who viewed the King as merely primus inter pares. During the war with Granada

⁹ Jean Hippolyte Mariejol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, Translated by Benjamin Keen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), p. 264.

¹⁰ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 303.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 126.

in 1486, the disgruntled Count of Lemos revolted in Galicia and seized Ponferrada, forcing the monarchs to halt the war and visit Galicia to restore their authority.¹²

The military power of the nobility was a reflection of the Spanish emphasis on prowess in battle. Castilian society emphasized military strength because of the frequency of war throughout the peninsula, the strong bonds between the social and military hierarchy, and the widespread possession of military equipment.

During the years of noble anarchy in the early fifteenth century, caused by royal minorities, noble armies were dominant in the various military campaigns. Even during the undisputed monarchy of Enrique IV, the Duke of Medina Sidonia gathered a private army of over 20,000 men for battle.¹³

When the war with Granada escalated during the early 1480s, the reactions of the nobility varied. Many of los grandes de Castilla would not serve in person but simply sent captains and men.¹⁴ In contrast, the Duke of Alba generously lent his own bombards to the army besieging Zamora.

The forces of the nobility that did fight in the war were grouped according to their noble origins, rather than according

¹² Ibid., p. 511.

¹³ William H. Prescott, History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 3 vols. (Boston: Dana Estes, 1872), 1:216.

¹⁴ J.R. Hale, War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450-1620 (London: Fontana Press, 1985), p. 91.

to size, weaponry, or military usefulness. The levies to attack the town of Baza during 1489 show this kind of feudal organization.

The king (Ferdinand) held a review; his host numbered 13,000 horse and 40,000 foot soldiers, whom he ordered drawn up as follows. He commanded that in the first line there should be 150 mounted men with the Alcaide of the Young Pages, who, according to the ancient usage of Spain, must go with the marshals to prepare the cantonments. And he commanded that in the vanguard should go the Grand Master of Santiago with 1,800 lances, with whom went the men of Eciija with 150 lances and 700 foot soldiers, and 150 espingarderos of the city of Toledo. At one wing of this battle he placed the Grand Master of Calatrava with 400 lances and 1,000 foot soldiers. And at the other wing marched Pedro Lopez de Padilla with 200 lances of the squires who had land and received wages from the king and queen; of these men Lopez de Padilla had been named captain. In the second battle went Don Diego Lopez de Haro with 150 lances and 4,000 foot soldiers of the Kingdom of Galicia, who had been given to him to command. In the third battle went 1,000 men-at-arms and light cavalry and 1,000 foot soldiers of the Cardinal of Spain; its captains were Don Rodrigo de Mendoza, Lord of the Cid, and Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Adelantado of Cazorla. In the fourth battle went the horse and foot soldiers of the Hermandades, each squadron with its captain. In the fifth battle went Don Diego Fernandez de Córdoba, Count of Cabra, with 250 lances and 300 foot soldiers, and Martin Alonzo de Montemayor, with 160 lances and 200 foot soldiers...In the tenth battle went Don Alonso, lord of the house of Aguilar, with 300 lances and 300 foot soldiers. In advance of the royal battle went the Count of Tendilla with 460 lances that belonged to him, to his brother the Archbishop of Seville, and to the Count of Benavente.¹⁵

This seemingly irrational use of the forces available was mandated by the strong feudal influences prevalent in the Christian army. The soldiers owed allegiance to the lords who

¹⁵ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 194.

raised them and not to the King. After an attempted reorganization of his troops, the Duke of Medinaceli answered the King: "Tell the king my lord that I came to serve him with the men of my household, and that I shall not serve in the war unless accompanied by my men, nor is it reasonable for them to serve without me at their head."¹⁶ This attitude made the vast majority of the troops present extremely difficult to control, since many of the nobles refused to serve alongside or under the command of their competitors.¹⁷

As the nobility dominated the military forces, so they dominated the wealth of Spain. This wealth, acquired by arms, was based on land and the right alienated from the Crown to collect taxes. Vast territories were under the control of the great aristocrats, who had immense revenues, thousands of vassals and their own armies. During the fifteenth century these lands brought in rent income of 3,363,500 maravedís per year, which theoretically paid for the servitium debitum of 2,300 lances controlled by the crown, but which were in reality under the control of the nobles who raised them.¹⁸

The nobles also used illegal means during periods of weak

¹⁶ Henry Kamen, Spain 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict (London: Longman, 1983), p. 34.

¹⁷ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 377.

¹⁸ Roger Highfield, "The Catholic Kings and the Titled Nobility of Castile", Europe in the Late Middle Ages, Edited by John Hale, J.R.L. Highfield and Beryl Smalley (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), p. 382.

monarchies to acquire land. Many monasteries in Castile were taken over by nobles to whom they had 'commended' themselves. The attempts of the monarchy to prevent these usurpations were largely futile.¹⁹

The nobility dominated not only the countryside of Castile but the cities as well. Frequently they extorted the position of city magistrate from the Crown, and by controlling the city mob, ensured noble domination of city life. The Cortes of 1442 asked in vain that nobles with over 200 vassals not be allowed to live in cities. Proud of their fueros, the towns of the meseta resisted, but the nobility's military prowess and ruthlessness usually prevailed. "The local nobles terrorized the peasantry dependent on Salamanca, threw out the city's officials, put in their own, used stocks and chains against objectors, and erected a gallows as the sign of jurisdiction. A noble with ten men put the royal and municipal representatives to flight."²⁰

The wealth of the nobility involved almost defies comprehension and illustrates the medieval idea that the king was only the first among equals. In 1474, at least four families had an income of over one million maravedís per year, three families had between five hundred thousand and one million, and many had under five hundred thousand. In 1482

¹⁹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 101.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 73.

sixty-one major nobles had an income of 1,254,000 ducados from a population totalling approximately six to seven million vassals. Don Gutierre de Sotomayor, Master of Alcántara, held as his own personal property 505,800 hectareas of land (over 1,000,000 acres), and owned 195,000 sheep and 2,000 cows. Not only the Castilian nobility enjoyed such revenues; in Aragon nineteen nobles held annual incomes of 180,000 ducados.²¹

This strength of the nobility was partially caused by the Crown's need to maintain strong military forces to defend Castile against Granadan armies. In times of a strong monarchy the nobles and their well-armed retinues were kept under strict control by the Crown through bribes and intimidation. In contrast, Fernando and Isabel inherited a nobility made strong and virtually independent of all control by civil wars caused by royal minorities and the weaknesses of Isabel's brother Enrique IV.

Historically, the Kings of Castile had always wielded limited power, because of the influence of a military élite in this military society. For all practical purposes royal power was strictly limited. As a contemporary jurist, Palacios Rubios, wrote, "...to the King is confided solely the administration of the kingdom, and not dominion over things, for the property and rights of the State are public, and cannot be

²¹ Highfield, The Catholic Kings, pp. 362-367 passim.

the private patrimony of anyone."²² According to the Siete Partidas, the King must be protected from error. "The people spared neither their blood nor their treasure in the royal service, but their masters had to conduct themselves in such a way that the sacrifice be made easy and the devotion honorable."²³

The peripatetic tendencies of the Crown, necessary in a system that stressed personal relationships, facilitated noble ambitions. There was little motivation for the nobles to drift to town houses in a capital like London or Paris, where they could be kept under the Crown's watchful eye and could waste their resources on ostentatious display in competition with each other.

Enrique IV perpetuated a policy of personal leadership by campaigning against Granada during the years 1455-1458 for economic benefits (booty) and the freeing of Castilian captives. Both Archidona and Gibraltar were captured, the frontier was secured and a heavy tribute exacted from Granada. His bellicose nobles, who demanded glory rather than booty, hated this strategy and demanded total war against Granada.

Because he was pious and not cruel, more a friend of the life of his (followers) than the spiller of their blood, he said that...the life of men had no price or equivalence, and it was a great error to risk them, and because of this it did not please him that his

²² J.H. Elliott, Imperial Spain 1469-1716 (Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1963), p. 84.

²³ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 117.

(followers) went out on skirmishes...And in such expeditions, (too) much money was spent; he wished...(rather) to expend his treasures (in) damaging the enemies little by little.²⁴

The clergy also disliked Enrique's tactics, for they desired the conquest and conversion of the infidels. In an effort to discredit Enrique IV, Fernando and Isabel and their chroniclers later condemned his wars as mere cavalgadas, or burning and looting expeditions.²⁵

Enrique was more concerned with controlling his frequently rebellious nobility than with conquering Granada. Conquest had a low priority, since he felt that possession of new positions would give the Castilian nobles greater power, and that the fortresses in Christian hands would be a provocation for Muslim revenge. Thus, military technique was subordinated to political goals. Upon capturing Gibraltar in 1462, Enrique demonstrated his determination to keep the noble power of its new guardian limited. The King granted it to the duke of Medina Sidonia in 1468, but under stringent conditions. The Duke was forbidden to transfer the title to any foreigner, cleric, or ecclesiastical order, while the Crown retained the rights of taxation, coinage, minerals (gold and silver) and especially of military activity.²⁶

²⁴ William D. Phillips, Jr., Enrique IV and the Crisis of Fifteenth-Century Castile 1425-1480 (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1978), p. 55.

²⁵ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, I:475.

²⁶ Phillips, Jr., Enrique IV, p. 55.

Because of the presence of a potentially hostile Muslim Granada, this conflict between the Castilian Crown and the nobility was insoluble. The Crown needed the military power of the nobility and the nobles needed the Crown as a source of rewards and as leverage against other competing noble houses. The key that unlocked this stalemate was the determination of Fernando and Isabel to crush Granada.

In order to comprehend the immense task Fernando and Isabel took upon themselves in seeking military conquest over Granada and how vital was the siege artillery, the situation of Granada itself must be understood. Granada had existed for centuries as an independent Muslim state, frequently co-operating with the various Christian kingdoms to the north.

The relations between Granada and the Christian states were essentially pragmatic, veering between alliance and war. The Muslims were not implacable enemies to be met only in battle. They were men whose lands could be conquered when possible but who could serve equally as allies and trading partners at other times. During the Murcian civil war of 1447-1448, Granadan forces took part on both sides.²⁷

By the end of the fourteenth century, Granada suffered under increasing disadvantages compared to the Christian north. In 1400 Ibn Hudayl saw Granada as occupying a position of insecurity. "Is (Granada) not enclosed between a violent sea

²⁷ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 126.

and an enemy terrible in arms, both of which press on its people day and night."²⁸ In August of 1415, the Portuguese invasion and occupation of Ceuta on the North African coast, long a port of embarkation for Muslim armies invading Spain, isolated Granada from Muslim North Africa, a source of potential recruits. During the fifteenth century the political decline of Granada accelerated due to depositions, rebellions, assassinations by rival clans, and growing taxes. Endemic civil war persisted in Granada from the time of Yusuf III (1408-1417). Frequently two Emirs competed with each other, one controlling the Alhambra, the other the important suburb of Granada, the Albaicín.²⁹

Enrique IV, usually seen by historians as a weak and vacillating King, dominated Granada militarily and politically. In 1455 and 1457, Spanish troops devastated the Vega of Granada, and in 1456 the Vega of Málaga. "Great harm" was done to the Muslims, who suffered "great distress and need" from these Christian forays. The frontier line was advanced and Gibraltar and Archidona were captured in 1462. By this form of limited war the Emir Sa'd, placed on the throne by Enrique, agreed to terms highly beneficial to Castile.³⁰ In 1465 Ibn al-Khatib, an Egyptian visitor, described the situation of Granada as almost

²⁸ Ibid., p. 367.

²⁹ Joseph F. O'Callaghan, A History of Medieval Spain (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 547.

³⁰ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 329.

hopeless. Granada was "...among the most beautiful cities of Islam, if it were not that the infidels are so near."³¹

One of the greatest strengths of Granada was its wealth. The annual revenue was over one million silver reales at the time of the Granada War, but approximately one-fifth to one-quarter of it went to Castile as tribute, an arrangement agreed upon between the Nasrid dynasty of Granada and the Kings of Castile after 1430. According to Jaime Vicens Vives, this constant inflow of gold in the late Middle Ages was one of the necessary propellants of the European economies of the 1500's, fuelling the growing power of Castile.³²

The inhabitants of Granada paid three times more in taxes than the equivalent groups in Castile. This heavy taxation undermined the stability of Granadan society and the popularity of the Emir Abu-l-Hasan 'Ali who reigned from 1464-1485. The resulting unrest and civil wars during his reign caused a serious decline of the once flourishing economy. The porcelain works of Malaga became eclipsed by those of Manises, near Valencia. Economic decline forced the dependence of the Emirate on Genoese merchants.³³

Thus, a declining economy coupled with isolation from possible large scale reinforcements from North Africa suggests a

³¹ Ibid., p. 31.

³² O'Callaghan, History of Medieval Spain, p. 601.

³³ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 368.

weakening of Granada's ability to mount resistance to Christian incursions. The essentially non-belligerent policies of Enrique IV allowed Granada a few more years of existence, but against the determination of Fernando and Isabel to crush Granada, these military disabilities would be fatal.

Despite its disabilities, Granada had several military advantages. The dense population of over one million people provided a large tax base and a source of many soldiers. The mountainous terrain was very defensible and many strong fortresses guarded the passes between the mountains. The rugged countryside also gave the advantage to the Muslim light cavalry over the Christian "steel-clad cavalry." Despite the fact that Granada was cut off from easy access to North Africa, some money and reinforcements made their way to strengthen its defenses. As late as the middle of the fifteenth century, Granada could still take the offensive; internal divisions in Castile allowed Granada to recapture several towns, and Muslim raids reached within five leagues of Seville and into Murcia in 1449 and 1450.³⁴

The greatest of the advantages that the Muslims enjoyed was the superb fighting qualities of their army. Among the soldiers of Granada were the rugged inhabitants from the Alpujarras, skilled in the use of the crossbow and accustomed to the hardships and techniques of fighting in the mountains. The

³⁴ Ibid., p. 316.

Granadan mounted crossbowmen were considered very effective and accurate with their weapons. The privileged few who could afford to fight on horseback trained from early childhood in riding and firing the crossbow. The essential tactics of the Muslim cavalry were feigned charges or retreats, to disorder, panic or draw the enemy in disorganized pursuit. Granadan warriors were prized so highly for their military virtues that the Castilian monarchs frequently used Granadan troops, either as mercenaries or as allies, against other Christian monarchs of the Peninsula. In the mid-fourteenth century Pedro the Cruel received from Granada the aid of over 20,000 Muslim troops, while 300 Muslim horsemen comprised the guard of Enrique IV.³⁵

As well as native troops, the Granadans could call on a small number of African and Christian mercenaries. During the siege of Malaga, Negro gomerres (ghumarah), "men of ferocious temper, but tried valor and military discipline" fought in the garrison.³⁶ One hundred of these ferocious troops were sent to the Pope and incorporated into his bodyguard after the surrender of Malaga in 1487. Christian mercenaries from Catalonia, Castile and Portugal also served in Muslim armies, and were also present in the garrison of Málaga in 1487.³⁷

The size of the Granadan army itself is difficult to

³⁵ Ian Heath, Armies of the Middle Ages (Worthing: W.R.G. Publications, 1982), p. 32.

³⁶ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 2:17.

³⁷ Heath, Armies of the Middle Ages, p. 34.

determine, as only Christian estimates are readily available. Abu-l-Hasan 'Ali had a standing army of 7,000 cavalry of which 4,700 were present at a review in 1478. In 1482 Abul-Hassan besieged Alhama with approximately 3,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry. During 1483 the Muslims staged large scale raids with 1,200-1,500 cavalry, with Abul-Hassan's sortie from Malaga involving 1,500 cavalry and 6,000 infantry. Boabdil's attack on Lucena involved 700 cavalry and 9,000 infantry. During 1487, an attempt to raise the siege of Vélez Málaga with the troops of only one of the two Emirs involved 1,500 cavalry and up to 40,000 infantry. Baza was defended in 1489 by a force of 10,000 under Abdallal el Zagal with another 10,000 under the Prince Cid Hiaya. During the final siege of Granada the original garrison of 1,250 cavalry was reduced through skirmishes with the Christian cavalry to a force of less than 150. In all these actions, the main strength of the Muslims was in their cavalry, but the bulk of their forces was infantry, usually unreliable citizen militia.³⁸

These Muslim troops were much admired by their Christian adversaries. The popular ballads of the frontier, the Romances fronterizos, portrayed the Muslim cavalry as knights on the same social level as the Christian warriors. The Muslims were "...very much hidalgos: they come from the lineage of those who

³⁸ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 375.

were lords of Spain."³⁹ As with Christian knights, the essential qualities of the Muslim knights were "piety, valor, courtesy, prowess, the gifts of poetry and eloquence, and dexterity in the management of the horse, the sword, lance, and bow."⁴⁰ Until the middle of the fifteenth century, Castilian and Catalan knights mixed freely with their Muslim counterparts and peacefully visited Granada.

Even during the war the respect remained. At the siege of Malaga, the Christian chronicler wrote of the Muslims: "Who does not marvel at the bold heart of these infidels in battle, their prompt obedience to their chiefs, their dexterity in the wiles of war, their patience under privation, and undaunted perseverance in their purposes."⁴¹ This respect was well earned, for during the same siege, the Muslim cavalry charged the Christian cavalry, threw away their lances, and attacked their enemies with only their daggers, with no quarter given.⁴²

The close connections between the warriors on both sides of the border encouraged the borrowing of military tactics and weaponry.

Very often the Andalusian princes and warriors take the neighboring Christians as models for their equipment. Their arms are identical, likewise their surcoats of scarlet or other stuff, their pennons,

³⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

⁴⁰ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 1:392.

⁴¹ Ibid., 2:30.

⁴² Ibid., 2:19.

their saddles. Similar also is their mode of fighting with bucklers and long lances for the charge. They use neither the mace nor the bow of the Arabs, but employ Frankish crossbows for sieges and arm infantry with them for encounters with the enemy.⁴³

This spread of military technology was not entirely welcome by the recipients. The Spanish Muslims resented the fact that military necessity had forced them to adopt the weapons and heavy armour of their Christian adversaries.

Conversely, the Christians borrowed much of their military terminology from the Muslims. Thus: adarga, a leather shield, alarde, a military parade, alcaide, a governor of a castle or fort, alferez, a lieutenant or ensign, atalaya, a watchtower, rebato, an unexpected attack, and zaga, a rearguard.⁴⁴ One innovation in military tactics copied by the Christians was the military band, called in Arabic the nauba or tabl khana. It was usually drawn up away from the actual conflict and played during the entire battle, to encourage the army. It could also be used to signal to the troops as well. Some signals used were the call to battle (al-harb), played on the drum (tabl), and the retreat (al infisal), played on the drum or cymbals (kasat).⁴⁵

By the middle of the fifteenth century, the peaceful

⁴³ Lynn White, Jr., Medieval Religion and Technology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 281.

⁴⁴ Douglas Gifford, "Spain and the Spanish Language", Spain, A Companion to Spanish Studies, Edited by P.E. Russell (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 14.

⁴⁵ Henry George Farmer, The Minstrelsy of "The Arabian Nights" (Hertford: Austin and Sons, 1945), p. 7.

relationship between Granada and Castile was under increasing strain. Escalating religious tensions between the two states were exacerbated by civil unrest in Granada and civil war in Castile. In the year 1476, the break between Castile and its normally tributary Granada took place, when Isabel sent a demand to the Muslim Emir of Granada for renewal of tribute, and received the reply that "we no longer mint gold, only steel."⁴⁶ Because of the seemingly weak position of Castile during its civil war, Abu-l-Hasan captured Zahara, a Christian town, in December of 1481, despite a truce then in effect. In retaliation, the Christian war-party in Andalusia captured the Muslim city of Alhama in February, 1482.⁴⁷ These actions provided a reason for the monarchs to unite Castile against a foreign power and a despised religion, to heal the wounds of the civil war in a cleansing national crusade.

The nature of the war was quickly determined. To conquer this natural fortress, a campaign of attrition, rather than booty collecting expeditions, was required. This tactic was suggested as early as the fourteenth century, and is attributed to Enrique II (1369-1379).⁴⁸

Few battles were fought and the numerically weaker Muslims avoided them. The Muslim strategy was extremely well chosen.

⁴⁶ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 370.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 202.

By forcing the Christians to attack fortified areas, the determination, resources and ingenuity of Castile were stretched to the limit. For example, just to transport the siege artillery, over 6,000 men were used to build a single causeway at the siege of Cambil. During the siege of Baza, the massive siege works required the services of over 10,000 workers. Over 16,000 mules, donkeys and horses were requisitioned by the General Assembly of Pinto in December of 1482 to supply the army for the following spring campaign.⁴⁹ And this huge effort was for only the small armies at the beginning of the war.

Contrary to the belief of J. de Mata Carriazo, that the war was strictly a local affair of sieges and skirmishes, and that it "...was almost never the struggle of one people with another"⁵⁰, the Granada campaign was a struggle to the death. The determination of both sides to resist is hinted at in the harangues attributed to the Christian commander of Alhama and the Muslim commander of Malaga, during the sieges of those cities. The siege of Malaga lasted almost four months and after its fall the revenge of the Christian Monarchs was vicious. Christian renegades in the defeated garrison were killed by being acañaveados (pierced through by reeds), the deserters and conversos were burnt alive, the Muslim commander was imprisoned indefinitely, and the garrison and population

⁴⁹ J.F.C. Fuller, The Decisive Battles of the Western World, 480-1757 (St. Albans: Paladin, 1975), p. 393.

⁵⁰ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 126.

were enslaved. Some were allowed to ransom themselves for thirty gold doblas each, but the vast majority who could not afford to pay were sold into slavery.⁵¹

During the siege of Baza in 1489, Fernando and Isabel's determination is illustrated by their decision to order the building of over a thousand huts of earth or clay with roofs of timber and tiles, to protect the army during the autumn. This earthen town was built in just four days and proved very discouraging to the defenders, as the Muslim historian Al-Makkarí indicates.

About the end of the latter month the Moslems, having examined the extent of their stores, found that they had but very few in their magazines; but they still persevered in their resistance, in the hope that the Christians would raise the siege at the approach of winter. But, alas! what was their astonishment when, instead of returning to their country, they saw them actually building houses and huts, no doubt with the intention of passing the winter before their city! At sight of these preparations the inhabitants of Baza were seized by terror and despair, and they accordingly began to negotiate a capitulation on the same terms as had been granted to the surrendered places.⁵²

Al-Makkarí described the determination of the monarchs in the yearly campaigns: "...the Christian king so pressed the territory of the Moslems on all sides, that he attacked no fortress which he did not take, and invaded no district which did not immediately surrender to his arms."⁵³

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 384.

⁵² Al-Makkarí, The Mohammedan Dynasties of Spain, p. 382.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 376.

The greatest aid to the Christian monarchs was luck, or as they saw it, God's favour. In 1483 Abu'Abdillah (Muhammad XII), known to the Christians as Boabdil, was captured by the Christians. Fernando decided not to set up Boabdil as a puppet Emir in Granada, but to conquer the entire emirate through him. "To put Granada in division and destroy it We have decided to free him...He [Boabdil] has to make war on his father."⁵⁴ The consequences of this measure were that discord and civil war broke out in Granada, weakening the Muslims' ability and will to resist.

The reasons for Boabdil's disastrous behaviour can perhaps be explained in relation to the traditional policy of vassalage to Castile. Instead of offering hopeless resistance to the Christians, he thought that a form of peaceful and limited independence could be won. To the inhabitants of Granada, he offered "...peace and security, and promising that whoever submitted to his authority should have nothing to fear in future from the hostilities of the Christians, such being the condition of a treaty which he said he had in his possession, signed by the King of Castile."⁵⁵ The promise of the end of decades of unrest and civil war in Granada was very welcome to some of its inhabitants.

This act of Boabdil's was just a mirror of the factionalism

⁵⁴ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 381.

⁵⁵ Al-Makkari, The Mohammedan Dynasties of Spain, p. 378.

in Muslim culture resulting from tribal affiliation or blood relationships which were a major factor in the defeat of Granada. In just ten years, from 1481 to 1491, the ruling class of Granada was rent by coups and betrayals, especially those involving Boabdil, al-Zagal, and the Emir Abu-l-Hasan. The Christian army itself received aid from numerous Muslim sources. It was accompanied by "...renegades and Mudejars who showed [Fernando] the weak points of the Muslims."⁵⁶ Many of the Muslim inhabitants of Granada refused to fight and remained in their villages. This was largely due to the fact that in the Muslim society of al-Andalus, loyalties were ethnic and regional in nature rather than national or religious. Time after time during the final years, the Christians conquered towns which received little or no help from neighboring towns. As in Christian Europe, religion was a binding force that could be bent or twisted for political reasons. "Religion so rent with cliques and factions always rested on unstable equilibrium...No common bonds, no deep political allegiance, bound this diversity into more than an accidental unity."⁵⁷

Christian Spain also suffered from the same regional loyalties and xenophobia that religion only partially compensated for. The drive to unify the peninsula played a crucial role in the decision to conquer Granada. Thus a major

⁵⁶ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 386.

⁵⁷ Anwar G. Chejne, Islam and the West: The Moriscos (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), p. 19.

reason for the war can be explained in political terms. A victory over Granada did more than anything else to rally the country behind the Crown, and associate the monarchs and people in a heroic enterprise. The unification of Castile and Aragon, personified by the marriage of Fernando and Isabel, was furthered by the participation of Fernando as King of Aragon in the war. In this way the monarchs instilled the idea that the Reconquest was a national Spanish enterprise, not merely a Castilian one.⁵⁸

Regional and local patriotisms were endemic in Spain as in the rest of Europe, and these hindered the efforts of the monarchy to create royal power and an effective foreign policy. The political union between Castile and Aragon was a beginning, but only that. The cultural and psychological differences developed during the medieval centuries were not easily resolved and political union could not ensure the actual cohesion of the various political and social groups.⁵⁹

The main factor in overcoming the centrifugal bias of the Iberians were the monarchs' many visits to every royal town and city, as well as the front lines in Granada. This partially explains the immense personal loyalty Isabel especially attracted. The army frequently benefited from her visits, and at the difficult sieges she appeared among the troops, at

⁵⁸ Elliott, Imperial Spain, p. 46.

⁵⁹ O'Callaghan, History of Medieval Spain, p. 24.

Málaga in 1487 and at Baza in 1489. Isabel's appearances were partially a means of arousing monarchical feeling, as well as a sign that the difficult sieges would be pressed home.⁶⁰

In the war camps as well, Isabel encouraged the soldiers. As Peter Martyr related, "...Her presence seemed at once to gladden and reanimate our spirits, drooping under long vigils, dangers and fatigue."⁶¹ The same author wrote how Isabel established one of the first field hospitals to care for the sick and the wounded. The camp hospital "...is so profusely supplied with medical attendants, apparatus, and whatever may contribute to the restoration or solace of the sick, that it is scarcely surpassed in these respects by the magnificent establishments of Milan."⁶² The tents, attendants and medicines for "the queen's hospitals" were provided at her own expense.⁶³

A contemporary wrote that "Many men believed that she [Isabel] was created miraculously, for the Redemption of lost kingdoms."⁶⁴

Fernando was also conspicuous in the front lines among his troops and was able to maintain their morale by sharing with them the risks of battle. During the siege of Vélez Málaga,

⁶⁰ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 25.

⁶¹ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 2:65.

⁶² Ibid., 2:61.

⁶³ Ibid., 1:484.

⁶⁴ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 363.

Fernando rallied his men and charged the enemy during a surprise sortie by the Muslims. "...he could not stop to calculate chances when his subjects were perilling their lives for his sake..."⁶⁵ The resulting feeling of community and popular approval aided the Catholic monarchs in their program of national war and centralization. Thus the effort to conquer Granada united the divided kingdoms and peoples of Spain in one endeavor, blessed by religion and greed, against a valiant but satanic religion.

The cooperation of these diverse peoples under the leadership of one monarchy during the war aided the development of a national Spanish consciousness. The hearty cooperation during the Granada War showed that Castilians and Aragonese could be combined in foreign adventures. The later victories of Fernando over France - the recovery of Roussillon and Cerdagne by diplomacy, the conquest by war of Naples and Navarre, and the seizure of much of the North African coast - would have been impossible without the assistance of the forces of both Castile and Aragon.⁶⁶

Further aspects of this drive were the demands for uniformity as well as unity. The removal of "foreign" elements, such as the Jews, shows this desire. It is also illustrated in the actions of the monarchs to remove the Spanish church from

⁶⁵ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 2:15.

⁶⁶ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 584.

the control of the Papacy. Thus, the homogenizing of the population was a factor in the creation of a nation-state.⁶⁷

These efforts were successful. After a long siege, on the first day of the year in 1492, Christian troops entered the Alhambra at first light, on Boabdil's request, to prevent any violence. The rest of the Castilian army approached the city later in the morning, with the Castilian Monarchs dressed in Moorish robes. The silver cross (a gift from the Pope), the Royal Standard and the Standard of Santiago were raised over the towers of the Alhambra. As Boabdil handed the keys of the city to Fernando, a procession of Christian captives in chains were freed. To the sound of bombards and cannons, the entire Christian army sang the Te Deum. As Boabdil left the city, mass was celebrated in Granada "with the greatest tears and devotion ever seen, as much by the priest celebrating as by all of us who were there."⁶⁸ To a Christian observer it was "the most signal and blessed day there has ever been in Spain."⁶⁹

The Islamic literature of the time describes the shattering psychological effect of these defeats on the people of Granada. A contemporary Egyptian Moslem wrote that it was "one of the most terrible catastrophes which have befallen Islam."⁷⁰ A

⁶⁷ J. A. Maravall, "The Origins of the Modern State" Journal of World History 6 (1961), p. 797.

⁶⁸ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 387.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 388.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

poem, written after the fall of Alhama, described the despair of the native population, who had suddenly lost their homes and their heritage:

Hombres, niños y mujeres
Lloran tan grande pérdida
Lloraban todas las damas,
cuantas en Granada había
Ay de mi Alhama!
Por las calles y ventanas
mucho luto parecía
y llora rey como fembra
que es mucho lo que perdía
Ay de mi Alhama!

Men, children and women
lament such a great loss.
All ladies lamented
as many as were in Granada.
Alas, my poor Alhama!
In the street and windows
Great mourning was seen
And the king crying like a woman
For the much he had lost.
Alas, my poor Alhama!⁷¹

In contrast, the Castilian response to the victorious war was a spirit of romantic nostalgia. Frontier ballads, the Romances fronterizos, celebrated the deeds of both Christian and Muslim heroes. The monarchs ordered propaganda songs written to celebrate the holy mission of Spain to conquer in the name of God. "Setenil, ay Setenil!" expressed the hope that the monarchs would conquer "as far as Jerusalem." "Sobre Baza" encouraged persistence in the hardest siege of the war.⁷²

Contemporary explanations for the conquest were straightforward. To Bernaldez it was God's desire to reward the Catholic Monarchs. In Christian theology, to avenge wrongs and recover stolen goods were good reasons for a just war. The outcome of battle was thought to be a judgement of God, with

⁷¹ Chejne, Islam and the West, p. 5, citing M. Dánvila y Collado, La expulsión de los moriscos españoles (Madrid, 1889).

⁷² Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 371.

justice infallibly on the side of the victor.⁷³

More recent explanations mention the feuds within the Muslim dynasty-clans, the superiority of the Christian military and financial resources, the vigorous and determined efforts of the Christian rulers, the skill of the Christian leaders, and the intensive religious and monarchical propaganda utilized so well by the Crown.⁷⁴

The importance of the conquest to Castile can not be overestimated. Fernando and Isabel manipulated the nobility and people of Spain for their own political ends, acquired control of a rich land and unified all Christian Spaniards under their leadership. Above all, they acquired power over the institution that dominated all the forces of medieval Spain, the army.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 392.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 392.

The Christian Army

The Christian army that conquered Granada had little contact with other European military tactics. There were some French adventurers in its ranks, but it developed essentially out of its own marauding traditions. The composition of this army slowly changed during the fourteenth century from a cavalry force to an infantry-based militia, with cavalry support. What figures we do have for the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries suggest that the number of men-at-arms (armoured cavalry) present never exceeded 6,000, the number of light cavalry fluctuated from 1,200 to 8,000 and the number of infantry increased from 5,000 archers in 1374 to over 50,000. At the battle of Navarete, on April 3, 1367, the Castilian army was composed of 4,500 men-at-arms, 3,000 crossbowmen, 4,000 light cavalry, 20,000 infantry and 1,500 French men-at-arms.¹

The Castilian army before the war with Granada was largely composed of men from two sources: militia from the cities and towns of Castile, and the personal retainers of the nobility, including those of the King. Up to the middle of the fourteenth century, the retainers of the nobility were paid either with grants of land, as in France, or increasingly with grants of money. From 1390 on the Crown placed an increased reliance on acostamientos of tierras (money fiefs), due to the lack of

¹ Heath, Armies of the Middle Ages, p. 30.

support from the nobility. This meant that the Crown paid an annual retainer fee plus wages when the nobles were on active service. In 1429, twenty-three percent of the Crown's regular income was spent on tierras for a force of 9,000 lances, at an average cost of 1,500 maravedís per lance. Each of the cities and towns provided a certain number of men according to agreements negotiated with the Crown, while the nobles provided whatever men they could or would afford to spare.²

The infantry were equipped with some armour (sometimes only a helmet), a sword, a pike or a crossbow. There was little formal organization to the infantry mass: like the cavalry, they usually accompanied their lord or designated leader. They were distinctly a secondary force to the cavalry, but were useful in sieges or holding the line while the cavalry charged, rallied, or fled, depending on the fortunes of the battle.

This feudal army was incapable of sustaining the power of the monarchy or of conquering Granada, because it was not under the control of the King. Thus, a necessary part of the Crown's attempts to centralize and unify the country under its authority was the control and reorganization of the ultimate source of power, the army. The absence of such control of the army frequently resulted in civil wars, endemic in Spain before the war with Granada. Of all the requirements for royal authority, this was perhaps the most difficult for the monarchs to

² Ibid., p. 29.

achieve.

Before the reigns of Fernando and Isabel, the only military forces under the control of the Crown were the personal retainers of the King. Attempts were made to increase the size of the Royal armies through recourse to citizen militias. Juan I of Castile (1379-1390) made the first efforts to form a permanent militia under royal control. All males between the ages of twenty and sixty, clerics and laymen alike, were to be armed with specific equipment according to their income, and be prepared for periodic reviews. These musters were to be held every two months and the use of horses rather than mules for the cavalry was demanded. This attempt failed.³

Enrique IV, usually seen as a weak King, established a royal standing army composed of 3,000 lanzas and 20,000 infantry, paid for by subsidies from the Cortes and from income derived from the Bulls of Crusade granted by the Pope. These units were never at full strength. During the first decade of his reign, Enrique's bodyguard was composed of 3,600 men-at-arms and light cavalry.⁴ The nobles' fears of this large force prompted them to demand a reduction of the army to a force of only 600 lanzas in the "Sentence of Medina del Campo" on January 16, 1465.⁵

³ O'Callaghan, History of Medieval Spain, p. 602.

⁴ Phillips, Jr., Enrique IV, p. 56.

⁵ Ibid., p. 78.

One of the basic sources of potential military power to counteract the large noble armies was that of a citizen militia. Enrique IV began the formation of such a militia through the gathering of many local Hermandades (local police forces) into a national Santa Hermandad. The directors of this organization were appointed by the King and thus it was under his control. This force provided a ready source of troops during the civil war beginning in 1465.⁶

However, a permanent army under the control of the Crown was vital to safeguard its authority. The environment needed for a permanent army included the creation of permanent military units, the desire of the authorities to maintain these units during times of both peace and war, the presence of large numbers of potential and willing recruits, and regular revenues to pay the troops.⁷ Fernando and Isabel provided these requirements.

The bulk of the royal armies of Fernando and Isabel were formed by recourse to the crown's vassals, to ordinary nobles and to the militias of the cities (concejos). The result was an army that was inferior to that of the nobles in size, but one that contained some elements of superior organization. The paid troops present encompassed the royal guard of 500 men-at-arms and 500 light cavalry. These were divided into fifteen

⁶ Ibid., p. 61.

⁷ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 168.

companies under the King's personal command. The King's vassals and their men were kept under strict control, while the small permanent militias from Galicia and the Andalucian border were of excellent quality. A weakness of this army was that these royal forces were regrouped each year at the start of a campaign, and thus there was no permanent standing army as such.⁸

The personal retainers of the Crown formed a substantial part of the Royal armies. In 1481 Queen Isabel's personal household force contained 1,100 men-at-arms and 130 light cavalry. The King was attended by a royal bodyguard of 1,000 knights of which half were men-at-arms and half were light cavalry, all of whom were well equipped and mounted. By the time of the war with Granada, the royal troops included the Guardas Reales, a permanent body of 900 cavalry, an Hermandad force of 1,500 cavalry, and by 1489 a host of lesser nobles who were 'royal vassals' and paid by the Crown, comprising over 1,000 cavalry.⁹

The troops of the Santa Hermandad, or Holy Brotherhood, formed a vital part of the royal army. Fernando and Isabel used the fear of a Portuguese invasion in 1475 to renew the Hermandad militia of Enrique IV. The army thus formed was composed of 12,000 cavalry and 30,000 infantry, many of whom were members of

⁸ Mariéjol, Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 195.

⁹ Hale, War and Society, p. 136.

the Hermandad.¹⁰

The Santa Hermandad was originally merely a rural police force. It was composed of regular councils to create and enforce regulations, alcaldes to keep documents and enforce justice, and cuadrilleros, or squads of archers, to arrest and execute law-breakers. In April of 1476, Fernando and Isabel gave the local hermandades jurisdiction over the crimes of murder, assault, robbery, arson, private imprisonment and rape, if committed in rural, wilderness or unpopulated areas. In August of the same year, ignoring the city fueros of long standing granted by previous monarchs, Fernando and Isabel placed cities and towns in the jurisdiction of this police force controlled by the Crown. In addition, all rural and urban police were taken under the control of the Hermandad. To enforce these extra duties all the rural communities were ordered to build up their police to one light horseman per 100 householders and one man-at-arms per 150 householders. The communities were also ordered to pay some troops to be held on call for the militia whenever needed.¹¹

The function of the Hermandad was very specific: to contain and control violence, but not to eliminate it. All Spaniards were accustomed to bearing arms and the Crown encouraged such a mentality. The justice issued to lawbreakers was very rough and

¹⁰ Marvin Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermandad (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970), p. 29.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 19.

quickly applied. The royal physician Lopez de Villalobos commented that the Hermidad's "...procedure was so severe that it appeared to be cruelty, but it was necessary because all the kingdoms had not been pacified...These was much butchery, with the cutting off of feet, hands and heads."¹² The efficiency of the Hermidad forces resulted in their widespread use in the Granada War, with the resultant revival of rural banditry throughout Castile. A list from 1492-1493 of rewards to individual archers shows the presence of many criminals on the roads.¹³

To facilitate the use of this police force the Crown formed a Junta of the major towns of Castile, the Junta General, in 1476. This was essentially a forum for cooperation and consultation. To increase the monarchs' control of the militia and provide infantry for the war, beginning in 1480 the captains of the militia units were chosen and paid by the Junta.¹⁴ It also provided large sums of money to finance the war as well as arranging for 3,000 militia to form the core of the royal army under the command of the King's brother, Don Alonso de Aragon.¹⁵ These funds helped pay for the large numbers of mules needed to victual Alhama from 1482-1485 and to hire both

¹² Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 18.

¹³ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 507.

¹⁴ Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermidad, p. 77.

¹⁵ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 19.

mercenaries and local militias for the yearly campaigns.¹⁶ The Junta General of the revived Hermandad established quotas of light and heavy cavalry as well as infantry to be provided by each locality.¹⁷ While these troops were a useful addition to the royal army (the archers of the hermandades were particularly efficient), the mass levies of the Hermandad troops were not suitable for a standing army because the troops were called up for particular campaigns only. As well, the General Assemblies authorized only eighty days pay for the militia per campaign.¹⁸

Regular drafts of infantry from the Hermandad were provided through various Assemblies during the war. These included:

1483 Assembly of Pinto	8,000
1485 Assembly of Torrelaguna	5,000
1487 Assembly of Fuentesauco	10,000
1488 Assembly of Arranda	10,000
1489 Assembly of Tordesillas	10,000
1490 Assembly of Adamuz	10,000 ¹⁹

These forces were organized into battalions composed of ten fifty man companies. Frequent reviews of the militias helped instill a sense of communal discipline and solidarity. These periodic reviews also helped to estimate the degree of desertion, which was both large in scale and impossible to

¹⁶ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 378.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 506.

¹⁸ Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 81.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 78.

prevent.²⁰

At the beginning of the war the militia left the towns and the countryside and operated directly under royal command. In 1490 the 10,000 Hermanidad infantry present constituted twenty five percent of all the infantry of Fernando's army.²¹

During the Granada War the main weight of providing the fighting force was borne by Andalusia. The following numbers were summoned by the Crown for the War:

	Cavalry	Infantry	Mules
1482 Seville	300	4,000	7,000
1483 Seville	500	6,000	
Cordoba	750	5,000	
1484 Seville	400	6,000	
1485 Seville		4,000 (first campaign)	
	500	6,000 (second campaign)	
1486 Seville	500	5,000	
1487 Seville	500	5,000	
1489-1491			
Seville	500-600	6,000 (each year)	

Thousands of mules, mule-drivers and cart-drivers were also called out in large numbers each year.²²

During 1482, the first year of serious, sustained campaigning, only 2,500 cavalry and 3,000 infantry were present at the siege of Alhama, most of whom were Andalusian. During the following campaigns the total number of cavalry each year hovered at the 10,000 to 12,000 mark while the number of peones (infantry) grew from 10,000 to over 50,000 in 1491. Over 30,000

²⁰ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 379.

²¹ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 19.

²² Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 379.

non-fighting men were used in 1483 alone, simply to devastate the Granadan countryside. The Muslim forces were increasingly outnumbered every year, as the sheer size of the Christian army increased, until by 1489 the army numbered 13,000 cavalry and 40,000 infantry.²³

The infantry component of the army was largely raised from the cities (concejos). The concejos of Andalusia were the only ones to send men to every campaign. In 1483 alone, they sent 1,900 cavalry and 12,800 infantry. Most of these men were volunteers from the unemployed and were frequently unpaid on campaign for as long as two years. Other areas of Spain, including Galicia, Vizcaya and the Asturias, sent infantry forces. In 1486 the Asturias sent 1,200 infantry and in 1489 Galicia sent a large number.²⁴ This working together of forces from widely disparate areas with different traditions caused some comment, and is a tribute to the unifying efforts of the Monarchs. In the words of Peter Martyr: "Who would have thought that the Galician, the proud Asturian and the rude inhabitant of the Pyrenees, would be mixing freely with Toledans, people of La Mancha, and Andalucians, living together in harmony and obedience, like members of one family, speaking the same language and subject to one common discipline."²⁵

²³ Ibid., p. 376.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 378.

²⁵ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 34.

When the Granada war ended, the militia was dissolved and the Council of the Hermandad disbanded because the troops were no longer necessary to the army, but were desperately needed to police the countryside.²⁶

To increase royal authority in time of war, the Crown took over the forces of the Military Orders of Calatrava, Santiago and Alcantara through the expedient of making Fernando the Master of each order as the current Master died. The orders were taken over in 1485, 1493 and 1498 respectively. Fernando ruled the Orders through the Real Consejo de los Ordenes Militares, a further growth of the bureaucracy needed to consolidate Spain under the Crown.²⁷

The chain of command of the Orders was very specific and fitted in well with the evolving royal bureaucracy. The Master or Maestre led the Order, with the Grand Prior (Prior Mayor), the Grand Commander (Comendador Mayor), the Castellan or Key-bearer (Clavero), the Sub-Castellan (Sub-Clavero), the Quartermaster (Obrero), and the Standard-Bearer (Alférez) all below him in order of command.²⁸ The awarding of these positions provided the Monarchs with a ready source of patronage for their followers.

The basic unit of these Military Orders was the commandery

²⁶ Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 50.

²⁷ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 399.

²⁸ Heath, Armies of the Middle Ages, p. 31.

[encomienda] which usually contained four brethren. This small group provided a tactical flexibility useful in the skirmish actions typical of the Granada War. Most of the troops raised by the Orders were vassals or mercenaries under the command of the brethren serving as officers.²⁹

The Military Orders provided the Crown with a considerable number of troops. During the year 1472 the Order of Alcántara controlled 1,500 cavalry and 2,500 infantry.³⁰ During one year the Master of the Order of Santiago mustered 1,760 cavalry for the conquest of Granada, thus demonstrating its wealth for all to see. Calatrava, a less wealthy Order, provided 450 cavalry and 1,000 infantry at one time during the war.³¹

So desperate was the Crown for men that Homicianos (criminals convicted for capital crimes) obtained royal remission from their sentences by serving in the war. As many as 1,000 of these individuals served in the later campaigns.³²

That the organizational efforts of the monarchy were still incomplete can be seen by how the army was commanded. These military campaigns were a mixture of state and private enterprise. Contracts (capitulaciones) were made with leaders of the military expeditions against the Muslims. These

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 163.

³² Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 378.

contracts reserved certain rights to the Crown while guaranteeing to the leader of the expedition due rewards or mercedes for his services. Each contingent was raised and led by a leader whose first task was to reward his followers. Before the expedition started, formal agreements were usually made about the distribution of the booty: a portion would be set aside for the Crown and the rest would be divided into fixed proportions according to the rank and status of the members of the expedition.³³ This naturally promoted a spirit of competition among the varying groups. There was little unity in an army composed, very frequently, of contingents commanded by mutually antagonistic nobles; and within these contingents there was far less sense of loyalty to the monarch than to the individual captain who had recruited them.³⁴

This type of fluid and heterogeneous army presented many difficulties to the monarchs. As in the past, it was necessary to plan months ahead for the date and starting point of each campaign, the lodging of troops, and the organization into units to march and pitch camp in an orderly way. When campaigning against Granada the vassals of the Crown were summoned with their men, on pain of losing their privileges. Many new concessions of caballería, or knighthood, were made during the

³³ Elliott, Imperial Spain, p. 59.

³⁴ J.R. Hale, "War and Opinion: War and Public Opinion in the 15th and 16th Centuries" Past and Present 22 (1962), p. 26.

war, mostly to men of New Castile and Andalusia.³⁵

Sometimes the noble vassal commanded his contingent in person, but usually a captain of renown took his place during the noble's absence. The lands of the crown furnished levies led by adelantados (state presidents, chief judges and leaders of troops), or other royal officials. The municipal militias from the cities and towns were commanded by captains or corregidores. All these forces, both noble and common, contained both infantry and cavalry.³⁶

The noble contingents were each a separate army. In 1483 the nobility, the Military Orders and the bishops provided 4,700 cavalry and 3,440 infantry, while in 1489 they provided 7,461 cavalry out of a total of 13,000 and 5,795 infantry out of a total of 40,000.³⁷ These noble forces were organized into battles or batallas of mixed infantry and cavalry. The basis of these batallas was the demand of the nobles to command their own men, resulting in units which were made up by origin but were unequal in strength and with no rational proportion of cavalry to infantry.³⁸

The early Castilian cavalry force had only a haphazard organization. The mounted troops were divided into units of

³⁵ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 378.

³⁶ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 193.

³⁷ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 377.

³⁸ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 193.

100, 200, or 300 lances. Each lance referred to a single horseman, except where French influence was strong, as in Navarre, where it referred to a unit of two to six men.³⁹

Indications of the growing power of the monarchy are provided in the organization of the infantry, by royal decree and under royal command, rather than through the goodwill of the nobility. This involved the creation of companies of 800 men each in sixteen cuadrillas (squads) of fifty men each. These companies were composed of 720 men equipped with the pike and eighty espingarderos, men equipped with a primitive firearm. Each company was led by a captain and was staffed with an alcalde, a purser and a treasurer.⁴⁰

The force most amenable to royal control available to the monarchs, but unfortunately one of the smallest, was their Castilian bodyguard, the Guardas Reales. In 1480 the monarchs reorganized this cavalry into fourteen companies, each with a capitán principal (captain), alférez (ensign), two trumpeters, two drummers and one hundred lances. Each company was divided into four parts, each led by a hombre principal (lieutenant).⁴¹ In 1481 this body comprised 893 lances, and by 1496 had grown to 1,100 men-at-arms and 130 light cavalry.⁴² This organization,

³⁹ Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 76.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 76.

⁴² Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 167.

as little applied as it was, lasted until 1493, when the Guardas Viejas was created, a force controlled directly by the Crown. Twenty five companies were formed, each of eighty men-at-arms, with twenty light cavalry attached to each company. Each company had a section of escopeteros (mounted harquebusiers), thus combining shock, skirmishing, and firepower potential in one unit.⁴³

During the fifteenth century, Spanish cavalry was divided into two separate arms, the heavy shock cavalry, typical of European warriors, and the light skirmishing cavalry typical of Arabic societies. The standard ratio of light cavalry to the men-at-arms during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was approximately four to one, while at certain times the Castilian cavalry was comprised of ninety percent light cavalry and only ten percent men-at-arms.⁴⁴ While the prevalence of raiding over pitched battles partially explains the lack of heavy cavalry, the hot climate of central Castile delayed the introduction of full plate or "white armour". The Spanish nobility did not adopt plate armour until Milanese artisans produced suitable light and well ventilated armour in the middle of the fifteenth century.⁴⁵

⁴³ George Gush, Renaissance Armies, 1480-1650 (Cambridge: Patrick Stephens, 1982), p. 53.

⁴⁴ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 378.

⁴⁵ J.G. Mann, "Notes on Armour Worn in Spain From the Tenth To the Fifteenth Cenuries" Archaeologia LXXXIII (1933), p. 286.

Such minutiae as the type and styles of armour worn by Spanish knights may seem irrelevant, but the mentality of the ruling classes can be partially explained through such details. "If one wishes to penetrate the mind of the past one may reflect that Charles V paid larger sums for his armours in the Real Armeria than he did to Titian for his pictures in the Prado, and that he took with him several of his suits to accompany his retirement to the monastery of Yuste."⁴⁶

In an era when the lack of suitable weapons or training rendered the Spanish infantry almost helpless against the armoured man on horseback, the actual armour and weapons of the man-at-arms were of vital importance. At the battle of Olmedo in 1445, the Cronica de Alvaro de Luna described one of the contingents of the Castilian army:

Now the squadrons of the King of Castile were drawn up in this manner: the Constable, who held the vanguard, had very good soldiers and knights, noble and skilled and accustomed to war, and both they and their horses were well and elegantly armed...you could scarcely find in all of the Constable's army a person whose horse was uncovered, and even the horses' necks were protected with steel chain-mail. And all those young, noble knights of the Constable's household, and many others, were richly equipped, for some had diverse emblems painted on their horses' armor and wore gifts from their ladies as pennants over their helmets.

Others had heavy chains with gold and silver bells around their horses' necks; and there were some who wore bullions set with pearls and precious stones as edgings for their helmets. There were others who carried small bucklers, richly ornamented with wonderful symbols and devices. No small diversity did they display in the crest of their sallets and helmets, for some wore crests of wild beasts, other

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 305.

variegated panaches, and there were those who used feathers, both as crests for their helmets and as crownpieces for their horses. Nor were there lacking people who sported plumes like wings, which extended down their backs. Some went in rough harness; others wore jackets overlaid with plates over their armor, and others richly embroidered surcoats. So went all the Constable's troops and most of those who gathered for this war. As it was already late, and the sun was shining directly on them, and their trappings were polished and their armor gleamed, they all presented a fine appearance.⁴⁷

By the time of the Granada war many Christian nobles wore suits of complete white armour from the Milan area made of high quality steel which, combined with clever design, made the wearer almost immune to sword blows and bow shots.⁴⁸

In contrast to this heavy armoured European style cavalry, the type of cavalry that the Spanish adopted from their Muslim opponents and developed into the horsemen thought of by all of Europe as typically Spanish were the jinetes, a term that originated with the "Zenata", a Berber tribe in North Africa famous for its horsemen.⁴⁹ These light horsemen of Castile armed with lance and leather shield a la jineta had learned their tactics from the Muslims, which involved hovering around

⁴⁷ Gonzalo Chacon, "Cronica de don Alvaro de Luna, edicion y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo", Spanish Life in the Late Middle Ages, Edited and Translated by Kenneth R. Scholberg (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 62.

⁴⁸ Malcolm Vale, War and Chivalry (London: Duckworth, 1981), p. 105.

⁴⁹ Leonid Tarassuk and Claude Blair, The Complete Encyclopedia of Arms and Weapons (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 452.

the enemy until they would give ground or break, when the jinetes would charge home. At the battle of La Higuera in 1431, as portrayed in a painting in the Escorial, the whole area between the armies is filled with a whirling mass of the jinetes of the two sides, engaged in single combats with the javelin, which was sometimes hurled and sometimes used to thrust. Behind this melee are two lines of Spanish heavy cavalry, with two solid masses of infantry in the rear. Their Muslim opponents have very little, or even no armour. The Muslim light cavalry are supported by a line of six solid squadrons of mounted lancers, and one line of infantry in eight columns. There is even a figure of a Christian handgunner present.⁵⁰

The Castilian jinetes were equipped with a round steel cap, a large shield, a quilted gambeson and two long javelins. The shield or adarga was, according to Froissart "a very light shield, covered with cuir-bouilli of Cappadocia which, if the leather has not been overheated (in the boiling), no weapon can penetrate".⁵¹ An even earlier source states that it was "proof against sword and lance blows and the majority of arrows."⁵²

The weapon most favoured by these warriors was the javelin, which could be thrown with good aim even when galloping at full

⁵⁰ Charles Oman, A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages, vol. II (London: Methuen and Company, 1924), p. 180.

⁵¹ Heath, Armies of the Middle Ages, p. 135.

⁵² Ibid.

speed.⁵³ Used correctly these javelins could be very effective. At the siege of Lisbon in 1384, a javelin pierced a knight's coat-of-plates, mail corselet, silk-stuffed gambeson and both sides of his body. At Trancoso javelins "were thrown with such force that they knocked down almost all they hit."- according to Froissart.⁵⁴ The javelin could also be used as an overarm thrusting weapon, usually held well forward of its center point.⁵⁵ A vital aid to these tactics was the development of the stirrup a la jineta. This comprised a set of normal stirrups but with shortened leather straps which bent the rider's legs, thus aiding in leg control of the horse, leaving the arms free.⁵⁶

Despite the long experience and emphasis on cavalry that the Spanish enjoyed, their cavalry, both heavy and light, was not regarded as very effective by other European knights during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Trained as raiders and useful in skirmishes, patrolling the flanks and rear of the army, and for cutting down fugitives, the jinetes were largely ineffective as battle cavalry. According to Froissart "as soon as they have thrown 2 or 3 darts, and given a stroke with their lances, without disconcerting the enemy, they take alarm, turn

⁵³ Oman, A History of the Art of War, p. 180.

⁵⁴ Heath, Armies of the Middle Ages, p. 130.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 135.

⁵⁶ Tarassuk and Blair, The Complete Encyclopedia, p. 452.

their horses' heads and save themselves by flight as well as they can. This game they played at Aljubarrota."⁵⁷

The mounted man-at-arms, considered the cream of the Castilian army, was also not very effective against his European counterparts. They adopted heavy armour much later than the English and French feudal horsemen, the horses were generally not banded, that is protected by armour, and the knights were reluctant to fight on foot. If a first charge failed they tended to use skirmish tactics like the jinetes.⁵⁸ In some instances they demonstrated a lack of the equestrian skills necessary in war. In a contemporary manuscript they are described as knowing "nothing of war or honor; they know neither how to wait or flee. In Castile there is also a dearth of good riders."⁵⁹

A partial reason for this demonstrated lack of skill can be traced to the heavy demand for horses in Europe, which spurred horse breeding and selling in Spain.⁶⁰ According to Olivier de la Marche in 1445, "...it was at this time that horses of pedigree were so dearly sold in France that one never spoke of selling a horse of note but for 500, 1000 or even 1200 reals,...And every gentleman thought that if he were to appear

⁵⁷ Heath, Armies of the Middle Ages, p. 49.

⁵⁸ Oman, A History of the Art of War, p. 181.

⁵⁹ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 199.

⁶⁰ Vale, War and Chivalry, p. 122.

on a good horse he would be more easily recognized, sought after and received into the companies."⁶¹ This heavy demand denuded Spain of good horses, due to the quick and easy profits available in France. So pressing was this lack of horses that the Crown actively intervened to force knights to ride horses rather than mules. Antoine de Lalaing's account of Philip the Handsome's trip to Spain in 1501-1502 states that:

The queen, seeing that the majority of her gentlemen rode mules and when it was necessary to arm and ride on horseback they were the least dexterous in the world, considering that there was a daily expectation of war with the French or the Moors or against both of them at the same time, ordered that no-one, however great he was, unless he was a priest or ecclesiastic, should ride a mule but a horse and that the horses should stand fifteen hands or more, in order to be better suited to war, and she even forced her husband, the king to do this and ordered that those living on the borders of France should ride in our fashion and those who were neighbors of the Moors should ride short-stirruped (à la jinnette).⁶²

This ineffectiveness indicates that, in Spain at least, the cavalry was largely obsolete against a European power, and equally useless in the mountains of Granada. The Castilian army was ripe for reform. The age of the independent cavalry nobility was passing.

Despite its relative inefficiency, the cavalry played a leading role, if only socially, in the Granada war. In the words of Andrea Navagero, "It was a really lovely war. Since relatively little use was made of firearms, every gentleman

⁶¹ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 131.

⁶² Ibid., p. 132.

could display his bravery, and hardly a day passed that was not marked by some memorable feat of arms."⁶³ So frequent were chivalrous combats between Muslim and Christian knights at the siege of Baza, that Fernando, in favour of a strict blockade of the city, forbade the Christian knights to indulge in such duels.⁶⁴

During the war as a whole, the ratio of infantry to cavalry changed from one to one in 1482 to five to one in 1491.⁶⁵ This was in some ways due to the rugged nature of the terrain and the frequent sieges. While these tactical reasons were important, other factors also came into play. The numbers of both heavy and light cavalry declined relative to the infantry, because for social and economic reasons the number of cavalry was constant, while the inexpensive infantry could be recruited and equipped in increasing numbers. Infantry were more utilized because they were both available and cheaper, due to the lack of expensive mounts, lighter baggage, and less expensive armour.⁶⁶

The dwindling role of cavalry eventually created an acceptance of the idea that it could be chivalrous to fight on foot. By the fifteenth century, English archers and Swiss pikemen had revolutionized the social status and military

⁶³ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 198.

⁶⁴ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 2:59.

⁶⁵ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 375.

⁶⁶ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 133.

effectiveness of the lowly infantry. As illustrated by the English archers at Crecy in 1346 and Swiss pikemen at Morat in 1476, well trained infantry came to dominate the battlefields of Europe.⁶⁷

During the war with Granada, the Spanish utilized both the English firepower and the Swiss pike techniques. The standard Spanish pike was almost fourteen feet long and was considered very effective in the broken terrain of Granada, when wielded by well trained infantry.⁶⁸ The crossbow was used rather than the longer ranged and faster shooting longbow, because weight of blow and accuracy were considered more important than range and speed of fire against the combination of armoured horse and heavily armoured man-at-arms.⁶⁹ The crossbow was a terrifyingly effective weapon. The bolt had a maximum range of 280-380 yards and could punch through the heaviest armour and cause appalling wounds.⁷⁰ It was only abandoned late in the sixteenth century when the even more effective arquebus and musket came into widespread use. En masse, the crossbowmen were considered to be a corps d' elite, due to their effectiveness on the

⁶⁷ Eugene F. Rice, Jr., The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), p. 12.

⁶⁸ Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 79.

⁶⁹ Hale, International Relations in the West, p. 283.

⁷⁰ William Ledyard Rodgers, Naval Warfare Under Oars, 4th to 16th Centuries (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1980), p. 107.

battlefield.⁷¹

The development of effective hand-held gunpowder weapons in the fifteenth century increased the usefulness of well trained infantry equipped with the new guns. By 1488 a few Spanish infantry were armed with a gun called an espingarda, a heavy, inaccurate weapon with a wooden support, a long metal barrel with a touch hole, a powder pan and very little else.⁷² It was a large weapon, the largest being over seven feet long and weighing fifty pounds. However, the most common size of espingarda was only three and one-half feet long and weighed approximately ten pounds. It fired a one and a half ounce ball and was fairly effective against large targets up to about 150 yards. It was the first practical portable handgun, although the long reloading time caused archery to be preferred at short ranges. Some disadvantages of such a weapon were that it required a great deal of training to use, rain could spill or dampen the pan powder, and the glowing matches could give away the positions of the firers at night.⁷³ None of these weapons had rifled barrels, although rifled hand-guns were used at a Leipzig shooting match in 1498.⁷⁴

⁷¹ O.F.G. Hogg, Artillery: Its Origin, Heyday and Decline (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1970), p. 11.

⁷² Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 79.

⁷³ Gush, Renaissance Armies, p. 11.

⁷⁴ Lynn White, Jr., Medieval Technology and Social Change (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 164.

Recent tests using replicas of fifteenth century handguns have determined that they were reasonably accurate and could penetrate armour plate at twenty yards, using wet-mixed gunpowder and steel bullets. At longer ranges against man-sized targets, the accuracy was extremely uncertain. Firing lead bullets, which resulted in less stress on the gun, resulted in a drop in accuracy, but lengthening the gun barrel improved accuracy somewhat. Unless the gunpowder was well rammed down the barrel, with a wad, the gunpowder would not explode at all. With dry-mixed gunpowder, the gun misfired over twenty-five percent of the time, due to the settling out of the ingredients and insufficient ramming. With wet-mixed powder, the reliability was improved (less than ten percent misfires), and the average muzzle velocity was increased. Due to the introduction of wet-mixed gunpowder and longer barrels, the effectiveness of the weapon on the battlefield was sufficient to make it a reliable man-killer for the infantry.⁷⁵ In an incident at the siege of Malaga, an arquebus ball penetrated the buckler of the Marquis of Cádiz, but lacked the force to do much injury.⁷⁶

The growing importance of firearm infantry on the battlefield is shown by the royal decision of 1480 to exchange

⁷⁵ A. R. Williams, "Some Firing Tests With Simulated 15th-Century Handguns", Journal of the Arms and Armour Society VIII (1974), pp. 116-119.

⁷⁶ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 2:24.

militia service for money commutations in order to hire trained espingarderos (musket men). These men were trained professionals under the Crown's control, and thus a counterweight to the military power of the nobles. During the years 1488 and 1490, Toledo alone provided 200 espingarderos.⁷⁷ The General Assembly was asked to send the equivalent of 700 salaries in place of men in order to hire good marksmen.⁷⁸ These espingarda-armed infantry were paid as much as a mounted royal vassal and twice as much as an ordinary foot-soldier.⁷⁹

This emphasis on infantry equipped with firearms was vitally important to the development of a centralized Castilian state. Infantry could now successfully oppose cavalry, and this infantry was under the control of the Crown. The monarchs no longer had to rely on aristocratic cavalry and could thereby dispense with the military services of the nobility. Once the nobles lost their monopoly of military power, their resistance to the Crown crumbled.

Along with the decline of cavalry and the rise of infantry, the extensive use of gunpowder artillery by the Castilians during the war with Granada was decisive for the success of Christian arms. This is because the war with Granada was a war of sieges. The Muslims had constructed numerous and strong

⁷⁷ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 379.

⁷⁸ Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 79.

⁷⁹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 377.

castles and forts over a period of centuries, usually on high ground, and the Spanish Muslims were excellent military architects.⁸⁰ So pervasive were these frowning edifices that the successful prosecution of the war revolved around the capture of such strongholds. The new artillery was vital to any successful military venture in Granada.

The very large number of Granadan fortified places demanded effective use of such artillery as the Christians possessed to batter the solid masonry of the walls. The object of artillery, to bring the maximum firepower to bear on the target with the minimum of delay, was amply carried out by a siege train of almost 179 pieces of artillery and over 1500 reserve gun carriages in the later sieges.⁸¹

Despite a rate of fire of only one round a hour for the heavy artillery and a maximum range of only 2,000 metres⁸², up to 1,000 artillery rounds could strike an enemy stronghold in a twenty-four hour period.⁸³ The effect of this battering was potentially overwhelming. According to a Florentine observer just before the Italian Wars, "When the time for bombardment comes thirty or forty pieces are fired so that the wall is soon reduced to rubble. The French say that their artillery can make

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 166.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 377.

⁸² Ibid., p. 376.

⁸³ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 201.

a breach in a wall eight feet thick. Although every hole is small, their number is large for from the moment they begin to fire they do not stop day or night."⁸⁴ Some idea of the revolutionary influence of such tactics can be seen in the wars of Charles VII of France. In a period of only 370 days in 1449-1450, he conducted sixty successful sieges.⁸⁵

Not only were walls battered down by the fire but the morale of the defenders was frequently affected as well. Both Christian and Muslim chroniclers testify to the brutal effectiveness of a type of incendiary ammunition used by the Christians. At the siege of Moclín, the Christian chronicler Pulgar described "a specially made ball [pella confeccionada] of the kind that scattered fiery sparks and rose high in the air".⁸⁶ A Muslim observer of the campaign of 1486 testified to the military value of such ammunition: "...the Christian disposed of cannons with which he launched fire-bombs...These projectiles were one of the causes for the abandonment of the places on which they fell."⁸⁷

Historians have long been aware of the importance of artillery in overcoming the walls of Granada. Despite his many reservations concerning the centralizing influence of artillery,

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Rice, Foundations of Early Modern Europe, p. 11.

⁸⁶ Mariéjol, Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 200.

⁸⁷ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 376.

J.R. Hale does admit that "It is true that guns knocked down unreformed fortifications, and this gave the French an advantage over the English at the beginning of the fifteenth century and the Spaniards an edge on the Moors at the end of it."⁸⁸ This edge was decisive, because the war with Granada was a siege.

The Granada War was not the first time artillery had been used in Spain, but was the main ingredient in the Christian success. Andres Bernaldez commented that a series of towns fell in 1486 "within a month, the least of which in the past could have held out a year and could not have been taken except by hunger".⁸⁹ An official document mentions that the artillery "cast down and leveled to the ground the greater part of the fortress of Alhabar".⁹⁰ According to Jean Mariejol, "Historians have not sufficiently noted the decisive role of the artillery in the last struggle against the Moslems. The War of Granada was above all one of sieges, with large-scale battles of secondary importance; the towns were taken one by one, and when Granada was isolated, it fell of itself."⁹¹

Fernando and Isabel were fully aware of the value of the artillery. In 1479, the Castilian army had only four

⁸⁸ J. R. Hale, "Gunpowder and the Renaissance: An Essay in the History of Ideas", From Renaissance to Counter-Reformation: Essays in Honor of Garret Mattingly, Edited by Charles H. Carter (London: 1966). p 114.

⁸⁹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 376.

⁹⁰ Mariéjol, Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 202.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 199.

artillerymen on its muster roles. More were quickly hired, so that by 1485, ninety-one artillerymen were registered in the army.⁹² Gunners, engineers, and blacksmiths were hired in Italy, Flanders, and Germany, while gunpowder was imported from Sicily and Portugal.⁹³ The Spanish commander of the artillery, Francisco Ramirez de Madrid, received ample rewards for his efforts, including the señorío of Bornos for the difficult task of building a road suitable for artillery from Vis de Torre to Villanueva. In a Letter of Concession from Fernando to Ramirez, this debt to the artillery is acknowledged. "In the conquest of the kingdom and Moors of Granada for the holy Catholic faith, Señor Francisco Ramirez of Madrid, his secretary and captain of artillery and a member of his council,...exposed his person to great dangers and labored in the combats and the taking of all the cities, towns, and fortresses that their Majesties gained in this war."⁹⁴

Artillery had not always received such accolades from influential men. To John Mirfield in 1390 it was seen as "this warlike or diabolical instrument commonly called a cannon [gonne]."⁹⁵ For Francesco de Giorgio, a military engineer, its

⁹² Heath, Armies of the Middle Ages, p. 33.

⁹³ Mariéjol, Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 200.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 203.

⁹⁵ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 138.

discovery was "not to human but to devilish agency".⁹⁶ As artillery became more efficient, it was more dammed. At the siege of Roxburgh on August 3, 1460, James II of Scotland "mair curieous nor becam him or the majestie of ane King...unhappely [was] slane with ane gun, the quhilk brak in the fyryng".⁹⁷ A French noble taken prisoner at Pavia was more descriptive of the current opinion of the fairness of artillery fire. "Would to God that this unhappy weapon had never been invented. I myself would not bear the scars it caused me and which still cripple me today. Nor would so many brave and valiant men have died by the hands of cowards and shirkers who would not dare to look in the face the men they bring down from a distance with their wretched bullets."⁹⁸ In Orlando Furioso, Ariosto makes the aristocratic point that gunpowder was a coward's weapon to destroy gentlemen from afar.

Through thee is martial glory lost, through thee
The trade of arms become a worthless art:
And at such ebb are worth and chivalry
That the base often plays the better part.⁹⁹

Despite the natural aversion of a gentleman to being decapitated by a shell fired by an ordinary gunner's boy, artillery very quickly established itself as a necessary tool of war. Perhaps the greatest appeal of artillery to military men

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 206.

⁹⁸ Rice, The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, p. 15.

⁹⁹ Hale, War and Opinion, p. 29.

was not its efficiency but its noise. The sound of large artillery pieces being fired was awesome and proved its value in the prestige granted the owner of such noisy machines. For most owners of such early artillery, the practical result at the downrange end was much less important than the uprange effects. O.F.G. Hogg, a historian of artillery, wrote that "Noise, smoke and all the features of a grand parade were our ancestors' idea of firepower and in their view the greater the display the more efficient the outcome."¹⁰⁰ Many soldiers accepted the new weapon, not for its killing power, but for its ingenious construction and violent special effects.

Needless to say, other qualities besides sounds and flashy effects appealed to captains of men. Few sources mention the obvious fascination of a twelve foot long phallic symbol that discharged with such obvious results, but this is not to be ignored. The very fact that artillery was so expensive and, at least at first, so ineffective, made it a natural status symbol for the fashion-conscious monarch or noble. So demanding was the pull towards the artillery, that references to the ancients' use of guns were conveniently discovered. The lack of gunports in Greek and Roman fortifications eventually halted this line of thought.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Hogg, Artillery: Its Origin, Heyday and Decline, p. 23.

¹⁰¹ J.R. Hale, "War and Public Opinion in Renaissance Italy", Renaissance War Studies, Edited by J.R. Hale (London: Hambledon, 1983), p. 368.

What ultimately procured artillery's acceptance was its effectiveness on the battlefield or in sieges. The clergy of the twelfth century might ban the crossbow and two hundred years later attempt the same with gunpowder weapons, but the men whose business it was to fight used the most effective weapons they could get. So pervasive were these gunpowder weapons that by the beginning of the sixteenth century the gun began rivalling the sword as the symbol of war itself.¹⁰² No longer was artillery considered a devil's toy, and ceremonial occasions were enlivened by the use of guns to give suitable emphasis to occasions of state. Arnold von Harff, a pilgrim to Rome in 1496, described 200 guns fired off simultaneously to welcome Pope Alexander VI to the Castel Sant' Angelo. "This is done in honour of the Pope when he rides over the bridge, and similarly when a cardinal rides across they shoot off three cannon in his honour."¹⁰³ Cannons were also great favorites on special occasions and public festivals, their destructive nature disguised in great boomings and flashings to entertain the gentry and masses.¹⁰⁴

Artillery was used primarily in sieges because it was useful for little else, except perhaps as entertainment. It generally had a poor rate of fire, short effective ranges, was

¹⁰² Hale, War and Opinion, p. 21.

¹⁰³ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 207.

¹⁰⁴ Hale, War and Public Opinion, p. 368.

notoriously inaccurate, and was extremely difficult to transport. An example of the difficulties of transporting these gigantic pieces is that in 1472, sixteen large Milanese cannon required 227 carts and 1044 oxen to transport them,¹⁰⁵ though obviously not all cannon were this difficult to move. The Spanish suffered further problems in that the rugged nature of the Granadan terrain demanded massive engineering to construct roads where only mule trails had existed. During the siege of Cambil, 6,000 men built a causeway that advanced only three leagues in twelve days. It required the leveling of one of the most rugged parts of the sierra.¹⁰⁶

As in all feats of great difficulty, the problems tended to multiply as each was overcome. Providing the ammunition for the artillery proved a great problem for the monarchs. In one case, at the siege of Málaga, Fernando sent for marble cannon-shot from Algeciras fired by Alfonso XI in the previous century.¹⁰⁷ This was a rare occurrence however, and most heavy siege pieces fired stone shot, usually of granite.¹⁰⁸ In most cases it was easier to quarry stone shot on the spot, from rock that was hard but not brittle. To safeguard the precious supply

¹⁰⁵ Hale, War and Society in Renaissance Europe, p. 156.

¹⁰⁶ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 1:480.

¹⁰⁷ Fuller, The Decisive Battles of the Western World, p. 396.

¹⁰⁸ Hogg, Artillery: Its Origin, Heyday and Decline, p. 157.

of gunpowder, underground vaults were dug to store it against possible Muslim raids or accidental detonation by careless gunners.¹⁰⁹

The logistical demands for the supply of artillery ammunition and gunpowder were enormous, as Hernando del Pulgar makes clear.

To make munitions and equipment of the artillery, there were employed many blacksmiths, carpenters, sawyers, woodcutters, smelters, masons, stonecutters who looked for stone quarries, and other stonecutters who worked the stone, and diggers, charcoal-burners whose job it was to make charcoal for the forges, and esparteros [mat-makers] who made ropes and baskets. And over each group of workers was an overseer [ministro] who urged on the workers and supplied them with the things they needed for their task. Moreover, a great many carts were needed, and for each hundred carts there was an overseer, and under him artisans to whom he gave the equipment needed to keep the carts in repair. There were other artisans to make the gunpowder, which was kept in pits dug out underground by three hundred men assigned to guard them day and night.¹¹⁰

If any group, people or state fight a successful war, it is because they have adapted to the demands of that war. In Castile's case, this involved an army which was rationalized, organized, and given adequate technology. Mass formations of infantry were trained to operate effectively together, and efficient engineers, artillery, medical and supply services were organized.¹¹¹ From an emphasis on individual courage there

¹⁰⁹ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 202.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 200.

¹¹¹ Maravall, The Origins of the Modern State, p. 808.

developed the values of group discipline and valour.

During the war, the army, as well as Spanish society, changed. Since any creation of a society mirrors that society, the changes in the Spanish army during the Granadan War are a measure of the national changes effected by Fernando and Isabel during this period. The freebooting society of the Reconquest and the persistence for so long of an open frontier of war and conquest lay at the root of the Spanish skills in warfare. The ten-year long siege of the fortress that was Granada gave discipline to these natural warriors and transformed them into successful soldiers. "In this admirable school the Spanish soldier was gradually trained to patient endurance, fortitude and thorough subordination; and those celebrated captains were formed, with that invincible infantry, which in the beginning of the sixteenth century spread the military fame of their country over all Christendom."¹¹²

¹¹² Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 2:104.

The Growth of Royal Power

Perhaps the avenue of approach that best typifies how the new gunpowder technology influenced Spanish society has to do with the raising of money. Money is the alpha and omega of both statecraft and war. When Louis XII was preparing to invade the duchy of Milan in 1499, he asked one of his Italian commanders what was necessary for success; the response was blunt: "Money, more money and again more money."¹

Fernando and Isabel made tremendous efforts to raise money for the war with Granada. Such efforts were necessary, for the traditional revenues of the Crown were but a part of the total revenues of all Spain. Lucius Marineus Siculus, an Italian humanist of the time, stated: "I believe that the revenues of all Spain are divided into three nearly equal parts, of which one belongs to the king, the second to the grandees, the third to the clergy."² These revenues were totally inadequate for an enterprise of this magnitude, especially when by 1474 most of these revenues were alienated from the crown. Of a total of 73,250,000 mrs. (maravedís) of royal income per annum, the Crown received only 11,250,000 mrs.. It was successful in reclaiming its right to much of these moneys by various means, and even increased the amount received, for by 1482 the Crown

¹ Rice, The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, p. 100.

² Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 275.

gathered approximately 150,000,000 mrs. from ordinary revenue, and in 1504 over 315,000,000 mrs..³

It is interesting to note that most of the money collected was actually spent on the war, and those who provided the money believed that it was. Pulgar noted: "And out of what was collected from the crusade and the subsidy of the clergy and the fines imposed on those who had reverted to Judaism and became reconciled with the Church and other fines, and from other ordinary revenues and from every source where money might be obtained, they [the Catholic Monarchs] ordered them to spend on things for the war."⁴

The Spanish monarchy was not alone in its success in increasing the royal revenue. An analysis of the financial records of the time indicates a large increase in the ability of the governments of Spain, France, and England in the fifteenth century to raise revenue. In terms of revenue received per capita the English and French monarchies doubled their incomes; the Spanish monarchy multiplied its income between ten and twenty times, because of the efforts of Fernando and Isabel to pay for the war.⁵

³ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 503.

⁴ Jose Goñi Gaztambide, "The Holy See and the Reconquest of the Kingdom of Granada (1479-1492)", Spain in the Fifteenth Century, 1369-1516, Edited by Roger Highfield, Translated by Frances M. López-Morillas (London: MacMillan, 1972), p. 364.

⁵ Richard Bean, "War and the Birth of the Nation State" Journal of Economic History 33 (1973), p. 212.

The sources of this increased revenue were of various kinds. According to the proceedings of the Cortes of Toledo in 1480, the principal sources were: aduanas and almojarifazgos (ten percent import and export duties); servicio y montazgo and portazgo (duties on the right of passage and circulation inside Spain, especially on the flocks of the Mesta); alcabalas and diezmos (ten percent tax on all commercial transactions - the most lucrative and hated of all taxes); revenues from the royal domain, especially mines and salt pits; servicio, moneda and moneda forera (special aids or taxes); and the Cruzada (the sale of indulgences granted by the Pope for the holy war and made semi-mandatory).⁶ Unfortunately for the monarchs, this taxation was not seen as a royal right. Medieval theorists suggested that to the king belonged dominium (political authority), while to the subject belonged proprietas (private property).⁷

The major source of royal income was the alcabala or sales tax, coupled with other less lucrative tax revenues, such as customs duties, etc.. However, many nobles owned the right to collect this tax. Despite this inconvenience, the amount collected almost doubled between 1481 and 1496, from 150 million mrs. to 269 million mrs..⁸ The heavy reliance on the prompt

⁶ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 211.

⁷ Rice, The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, p. 101.

⁸ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 49.

payment of such taxes forced the monarchs to compromise with the more politically powerful groups who were affected by the tax burden.

To retain the support of the nobility, upon which it was still dependent, the crown refrained from taxing their economic base. Considering that fifty-five percent of the land of Spain was under the jurisdiction of the major nobles and forty-two percent was owned by the Church, the urban oligarchy and the lesser nobles, the Crown's decision was a wise one.⁹ To further encourage noble support, Fernando and Isabel exempted them from financial payments and taxed seignorial lands less heavily than city land.¹⁰

Because of the heavy load of such taxes on those who actually paid them, continual resistance was shown to the tax-collectors. Many cities, and especially Burgos, resisted the continuance of payments.¹¹ Even the royal chroniclers, usually so faithful to the royal cause, recorded this opposition. There were, as Bernaldez records, "muchas murmuraciones."¹²

The Monarchs also milked the Santa Hermandad for funds as well as troops. The normal contribution was 33,500,000 mrs. a

⁹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 498.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 507.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 381.

year. A special tax was levied from 1482 on, which in 1491 alone produced a revenue of 48,000,000 mrs..¹³ The Junta de Hermandad contributed through taxation 17.8 million mrs. in 1478-1479, 44 million mrs. in 1485-1486, and 64 million mrs. in 1491-1492.¹⁴ Since the cities of origin of the Hermandad troops provided the expenses of the militia, and not the royal funds, the tax rate in 1476 of 10,000 mrs. per 100 households jumped to 18,000 mrs. per 100 households by 1485.¹⁵ The monarchs' chief tax-farmer, the Jewish financier Abraham Senior, was made treasurer-general of the Hermandad in 1488, to insure prompt and efficient collection of the Hermandad tax.¹⁶

The bureaucracy of the Hermandad, besides supervising the Hermandad tax, was also used to collect two of the principal taxes of the crown, the Cruzada of the Pope, and the servicio y montazgo tax on sheep. Through this steady and reliable stream of money, the Crown was able to dispense with the services of the Cortes, which were not called into session from 1480 to 1498. Ironically, the Junta de Hermandad was more broadly representative than the narrowly franchised Cortes.¹⁷

The Jewish and Mudejar communities of Castile were also

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 19.

¹⁵ Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 70.

¹⁶ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 19.

¹⁷ Ibid.

groups amenable to royal pressure and were called upon to provide money for the war. The Crown forced these communities to make large contributions through subsidies and illegal local taxes. The decreasing wealth of the Spanish Jews is shown in the declining yield of these special taxes, from 18,000 gold castellanos in 1485 to only 10,000 gold castellanos in 1489. During the period of 1482 to 1492 the Jews paid a little less than fifty million mrs. for the war, an amount not considered exceptional at the time.¹⁸ Despite the comparatively small amounts received from these groups, the financial talents of some Jews were considered important. The finances of the war were in the hands of two leading Jews, Abraham Senior and Isaac Abravanel, whose skillful management provided the necessary wealth at the necessary time for the Monarchs.¹⁹

When these sources of revenue proved to be inadequate, the Monarchs resorted to less respectable ways of raising cash. Forced loans (emprestito) were levied on rich nobles, corporations and towns, on pain of seizure and sale of the victim's goods. The city of Burgos was forced to loan three million mrs. during 1482-1483. A few very strong organizations, such as the Mesta, and the city of Valencia, were able to some extent to dictate the terms of the loans. Some very large loans from leading nobles were paid off by grants of lands and towns,

¹⁸ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 441.

¹⁹ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. XVII.

while many loans to less powerful groups or individuals were never repaid.²⁰

During the long and desperate siege of Baza, the Queen herself was forced to resort to pawnbrokers to raise money. Isabel pawned both her own personal jewels and the Crown Jewels. The city of Valencia provided the money based on the security of the jewels to the amount of 35,000 florins for the royal crown and 20,000 florins for a collar of rubies.²¹

A more financially dubious source of money was the sale of government bonds or juros secured on certain revenues released for that purpose. The rate of interest on these bonds varied, from five to fourteen percent or even higher. This selling of future income contributed to the alienation of royal revenues since payments on the bonds could take up a considerable percentage of the royal taxes.²² The large scale sale of juros began in 1489 with the interest rate of ten percent. By 1504 annual payments totalled over 112 million mrs., and the payments increased dramatically in subsequent years.²³

A constructive reform was the attempt to rationalize the currency system. A traditional method used was to limit the debasement of the coinage. Over 150 mints were closed, and only

²⁰ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 380.

²¹ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 2:63.

²² Fernand Braudel, The Wheels of Commerce, Translated by Sian Reynolds (London: Collins, 1982), p. 522.

²³ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 49.

the royal mints at Burgos, Cuenca, La Coruna, Segovia, Seville and Toledo were allowed to mint coins. Unfortunately, the attempt to monitor the purity of the coinage was largely a failure.²⁴ The monarchs' financial difficulties led to Fernando's breaking of his own laws against such illegal minting of coins. In the city of Valencia Fernando's agents attempted to illicitly coin Venetian and Genoese ducats, French crowns, Florentine florins, "and other gold coins of Castile or Portugal,...at night and very secretly."²⁵ The opposition of the city magistrates rendered this minting operation unsuccessful.

More revolutionary methods of currency manipulation included efforts to regulate exchange rates and thus improve the currency. In 1483 the Valencian excelente was created, valued at twenty-one sueudos (252 pennies) of equal weight to the Venetian ducat and the Aragonese florin. In 1493 a Catalanian principat was established and the previously used florin ceased to be struck. In 1497 a Granadan excelente was created for Castile. By making the Valencian excelente, the Castilian excelente and the Catalanian principat all of equal value, 375 mrs., the Spanish Crown took a giant step to political and financial union of the Iberian Peninsula. For financial transactions at a less exalted level the monarchs also created

²⁴ Phillips, Enrique IV, p. 59.

²⁵ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 364.

the silver real valued at thirty-four mrs., and the copper blanca valued at one-half a mr..²⁶

These currency reforms decisively broke with the past by pricing gold at no more than ten times the price of silver, a departure from previously held Islamic models which overpriced gold. These new measures assisted trade among the Spanish kingdoms and with the rest of Europe as well, since the new measures were consistent with the European scale of gold and silver valuation.²⁷ Allied with these currency reforms came strict policies forbidding the export of gold, silver or copper money.²⁸

Fernando and Isabel did attempt some economic measures similiar to those of Enrique IV. They encouraged Italian and Flemish artisans to settle in Spain by exempting them from all taxes for ten years. All internal tolls in Castile were suppressed and an effort was made to standardize all weights and measures.²⁹ Other measures taken included a ban on the export from Aragon and Castile of all devices of war. From 1488 onwards the monarchs attempted to establish the principle of royal control over the production of arms, but this measure

²⁶ Ibid., p. 632.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 633.

²⁸ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 216.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 218.

failed due to an inadequate bureaucracy.³⁰

Other comparatively minor sources of revenue were the Inquisition and the Crusading Orders. In 1488-1489 a profit of 200,000 sueldos was realized from the confiscation of fourteen estates in Teruel by the Inquisition.³¹ The Orders of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara controlled massive estates and were milked heavily by the Crown. Santiago had the control of 700,000 vassals, Calatrava 200,000 vassals, and Alcántara 100,000 vassals; totalling approximately one-third of the population of Castile. Each year the royal tax-collectors levied taxes totalling 60,000 ducados on Santiago and 95,000 ducados on Calatrava and Alcántara combined.³²

These attempts to raise money from any and all sources invariably resulted in financial chaos. The sorting out of records and outstanding debts at the end of the war was virtually impossible with the very small bureaucracy used by the Crown at that time. After the war, the Crown attempted to create an army of bureaucrats to continue the military efforts demonstrated during the war. Fernando de Zafra, a royal secretary and Fernando's chief civilian lieutenant at the front, suggested a central bureaucracy to control and administer a special fund to cover campaign expenses. This was eventually

³⁰ Hale, War and Society, p. 226.

³¹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 460.

³² Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 270.

done and the resulting administration, although not a part of this story, is perhaps the most important and longest lasting effect of the efforts to conquer Granada.³³

Because of their enormous financial exertions the Spanish Crown successfully sustained its military effort. A Catalan novel, Tirant Lo Blanc, published at this time accurately reflects both the efforts and success of the monarchy to pay for war. At one stage the hero told the Emperor of Constantinople: "I shall now offer some advice: in war three things are necessary, and those who lack even one will fail...troops, money and provisions. If any of these is absent, your army will be defeated."³⁴ Fernando and Isabel provided all three and won.

A key factor in the increasing centralization of military force was the escalating cost of armies and navies to provide that force. The greatest weakness for any monarchy was the lack of money to pay the soldiers, buy weapons, and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the fighting troops. Fernando's attempt to bring Afonso of Portugal to battle in 1475 failed due to the lack of funds to support an army of 10,500 cavalry (most of it jinetes), and 12,000-15,000 infantry.³⁵

³³ Paul Stewart, "The Soldier, the Bureaucrat and Fiscal Records in the Army of Ferdinand and Isabella", Hispanic American Historical Review 49 (1969), p. 283.

³⁴ Joanot Martorell and Marti Joan de Galba, Tirant Lo Blanc, Translated by David H. Rosenthal (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), p. 215.

³⁵ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 360.

During the reigns of Fernando and Isabel the regular army, as opposed to the forces of the nobility, cost twenty million mrs. per year in 1482 and eighty million mrs. in 1504.³⁶

Unfortunately for the royal exchequer, these military expenses were not the sole demand on the royal purse. To these military expenditures must be added the costs of diplomacy, the salaries of royal officers and the pensions given to nobles. Such costs to the Crown occasionally proved greater than the already massive military expenditures. Grants and pensions totalled 52 million mrs. in 1483 and 112 million mrs. in 1504, while the court expenses quadrupled during the same period from eight million mrs. to thirty-five million mrs.. The marriages of the royal infantas alone cost fifty to sixty million mrs. each.³⁷

Some details of the costs are useful to bring such expenditures into a scale we can understand. To fully equip a man-at-arms with heavy plate armour, an armoured horse, and a lance or crossbow cost approximately 8,000 mrs., while a light cavalryman with a visored helmet, lance, and light armour to protect the chest, abdomen, arms and legs cost 7,000 mrs..³⁸ Added to these expenses were the daily wages of such soldiers. Each man-at-arms received 24,000 mrs. a year, a light cavalryman

³⁶ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 49.

³⁷ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 504.

³⁸ Lunenfeld, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 76.

18,000 mrs., and a foot soldier 15,000 mrs.. Each provincial captain that commanded a lance received 1,000 mrs. a year for each lance.³⁹ Some sense of what these figures mean can be seen by noting that Isabel promised Columbus a retainer fee in 1486 of 12,000 mrs. a year, "the pay of an able seaman...enough for a man of his simple tastes to keep body and soul together."⁴⁰

The increasing technological bias of gunpowder weapons also demanded massive amounts of money. The new weapons were dependent on a great increase of metal production, which required immense capital expenditures. In 1478, 409 sacks of charcoal were needed to cast just one large culverin.⁴¹ The ammunition and gunpowder were also expensive.

The cost of provisioning the army during the war was very high. No food was available in conquered towns because the Muslim working class and, in many areas, the rural population as well, were expelled. Food had to be purchased and transported to the army with incredible difficulty. 80,000 mules were needed to supply the relatively small armies of 1482-1483, stretching to almost the breaking point the transportation system in the rest of Spain. During the siege of Baza in 1489, the Crown spent approximately 80,000,000 mrs. to buy and transport cereals to the army and the numerous garrisons. This

³⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

⁴⁰ Samuel Eliot Morison, Admiral of the Ocean Sea (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942), p. 90.

⁴¹ Hale, War and Society, p. 213.

food was sold to the troops, but only half the original cost was ever recovered.⁴²

To organize and control these massive efforts an equally massive bureaucracy was needed. To this end the Monarchs co-opted the less rebellious nobility into the bureaucracy as royal agents, with enormous prestige but little independent power.

The experience of Catalonia was useful in creating an efficient bureaucracy under royal control. Fernando brought into the union of Aragon and Castile the wisdom of centuries of Aragonese administration in the Mediterranean. In the pursuit of royal power, and faced by the fact that only military power could assure civil control and that to surrender military authority to a nobleman risked losing it, the monarchs developed a bureaucracy with limited authority.⁴³

One such royal bureaucratic office was that of the Captain-General, created by the monarchs in the late fifteenth century. This concept of the Captain-General combined the medieval concept of joint military and civil authority with emerging ideas of bureaucracy. This office entailed the command of cities, frontiers, the royal guard, the Santa Hermandad, and fleets of ships and other military units, when a clear

⁴² Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 380.

⁴³ Paul Stewart, "Military Command and the Development of the Vice-Royalty Under Ferdinand and Isabella", Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies 5:2 (1975), p. 223.

assignment of leadership was necessary. The creation of a new office helped avoid the traditional viceregal titles associated with independent power. Especially after the conquest of Granada, the Captains-General became increasingly dependent on the Crown. This further emphasized the dominance of the Crown over the previously powerful nobles who had dominated Castilian military commands.⁴⁴

In just one example, the power of the Almirante Mayor was sapped by the monarchs. The tax of one-fifth of the value of merchant cargos normally due to him was not paid if the ship owners outfitted the ship for war. The nomination of the Capitan Major or navy commander was taken over by the monarchs. Thus, little by little, the Almirante Mayor was reduced to the role of a decoration in the royal presence.⁴⁵

To prevent noble leadership of the Spanish armies from becoming too prevalent, Fernando posted the traditional military leaders of the Admiral and the Constable to appointments in the civil government and the quiet northern frontiers. Since other nobles frequently sent troops to the front under sons or deputies, who were clearly socially inferior to the King, they were thus easier to control. Fernando's care in manipulating the powerful nobles through both rewards and coercion is shown when the monarchs gave control of the frontier to both great

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 224.

⁴⁵ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 165.

lords and to royal commanders. In this way the Crown received support from the great lords while preventing noble coalitions that might threaten it, by dividing and constantly shifting commands among its supporters. As well, the monarchs granted traditional privileges to the noble families, but the hereditary honours of Adelantado were not given any real power in Granada.⁴⁶ In short, the Crown attempted to raise the authority of its agents beyond that of the nobles and reduce the position of the nobles to that of royal agents.

An example of Fernando's care in minimizing the danger of noble prestige is that of the Count of Tendilla, whose family was one of the greatest of the border nobility, members of which had previously served as Captains-General of the Granadan frontier. Tendilla himself was assigned to a diplomatic mission to Rome in 1484, away from military command, and trained as a royal agent with effective power, because of Fernando's appointment and not because of any identification with any source of local power. He exemplified a transition between a nobility which was loyal to the monarchy only in their own family interests, and the nobles in bureaucratic careers who played so important a role after the Catholic Monarchs.⁴⁷

Not only the nobility were subordinated to the Crown by being co-opted into the royal bureaucracy. A more efficient

⁴⁶ Stewart, Military Command, p. 227.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Castilian bureaucracy was necessary to raise the monies necessary for an expensive army and to control it. This was promoted by the appointment of non-nobles into the bureaucratic ranks. Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, a nobleman, stated: "...The Catholic Kings placed the administration of justice and public affairs into the hands of letrados, people mid-way between the great and the small...whose profession was the law."⁴⁸ In this way men who owed their positions to royal favour were promoted over those who did not. These letrados, or men of letters, became lawyers, corregidores, ambassadors, chancellors, royal secretaries, royal chaplains, and other crown officials.⁴⁹ The formation of this bureaucracy was promoted by a law passed in 1493, which made a ten year course of university study in canon or civil law a necessary qualification for many administrative or judicial posts under the Crown.⁵⁰

An important ingredient in the development of royal control over the armed forces was the increasing use of records to document army affairs. These records helped to shape army development from decentralized to centralized control and thus to forge the army into a reliable instrument of the monarchy. To this end the Crown used its own agents (continuos) to organize recruitment and provisioning of the army. From 1481 to 1487 the

⁴⁸ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 29.

⁴⁹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 183.

⁵⁰ P. E. Russell, ed. Spain, A Companion to Spanish Studies (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 116.

number of these agents rose from 126 to 191.⁵¹

The actual payment of the troops was organized by paymasters (pagadores), to avoid problems that could occur without adequate amounts of money. Early in the war, a captain in charge of Almeria asked for royal troops accompanied by a paymaster. He cited the example of a contingent sent earlier by the crusading order of Santiago, which was so short of money that its men had had to sell their arms and starve their horses.⁵² The pagadores divided the military units into standard sizes of fifty and one hundred men for convenience in keeping records and to rationalize the pay accounts. The paymasters were paid according to these standard groupings rather than the exact number of men on the pay list. Thus, the bureaucratic system eventually regulated the actual size of units, a direct influence of bureaucratic rationalization on military affairs.⁵³

The army fiscal lists not only rationalized the military units but also established the principal of central control as opposed to control by the captains of the units in the medieval fashion. The Crown and not the nobility became the guarantor of each man's pay. These permanent records also helped establish the permanency of the military units. This emphasis on keeping

⁵¹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 379.

⁵² Stewart, The Soldier, the Bureaucrat and Fiscal Records, p. 282.

⁵³ Ibid.

records now made military affairs in general less susceptible to shifting loyalties, much as continuing records made military units more permanent entities and thus largely independent of personal loyalty to their leaders. Since the records of the unit were passed on from retiring captains to their successors, the units achieved a new identification totally separate from that of their commanding officers.⁵⁴

The slow takeover of the military bureaucracy by the Crown did not go smoothly. The nobles, jealous of their previous prerogatives, frequently conflicted with the civilian bureaucracy, especially in overseas expeditions. This conflict did not end with the fifteenth century, because despite the new rules, many soldiers and some bureaucrats just ignored them. Thus the centralized fiscal control had begun but was not yet completed.⁵⁵

As well as relieving the nobility of the control of the army, the monarchs appealed to their greed. During centuries past the Crown had attempted to buy the support of the nobility through grants of money or mercedes, which were demands on future revenues and increasingly alienated the income of the Crown.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, this system of grants was falling apart. Because the tax-farmer's payments to

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 285.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 292.

the holders of mercedes were not audited by treasury officials, too many such demands on the revenues meant that there was not enough money to pay all holders of mercedes, and many were not being paid. During the years 1477-1479 the accounts of Alfonso de Medina (5,000 mrs.), Maria de Mendoza (40,000 mrs.), Gomez de Rojas (20,000 mrs.), Maria Enriquez, the Duchess of Alba (32,000 mrs.), Pedro Fajardo, the Governor of Murcia (150,000 mrs.) and many others fell into arrears.⁵⁶

At the Cortes of Toledo in 1480, the Crown attempted to gain the support of the nobility by a reform of the merced payments. This reform included the use of strict auditing procedures from 1483 on. A list of true merced accounts was drawn up by Fernando de Talavera, Isabel's confessor and confidant. As a result of this investigation, 32,171,878 mrs. in mercedes accounts were suppressed, due to doubtful authenticity. However, this attempted reform failed, due to the laxity or corruption of many tax-farmers and treasury officials. The reforms were ignored and many accounts of the great magnates were maintained or even increased.⁵⁷

Closely related to these mercedes, granted for favours received or duties done, was the sale of bonds or juros, for immediate grants of cash. These were also demands on future

⁵⁶ Stephen Haliczer, "The Castilian Aristocracy and the Mercedes Reform of 1478-1482", Hispanic American Historical Review 55 (1975), p. 456.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 458.

revenues, and extended into the future the abuses of the past. While slow financial suicide, the jueros were a method of dealing with the nobility by tending to bind the royal subject who owned them closely to the fortunes of the Crown.⁵⁸

The Crown also gained control of the nobility by grants of prestigious titles, conciliation, patronage and constant personal contact. In social prestige the nobility received high honours. Financially they did not suffer, but militarily they were reduced to the state of lackeys. The Crown demanded obedience, but the grandees kept their immense lands, their vassals, their wealth and their prestige.⁵⁹

The successful conclusion of the war with Granada settled rewards, both financial and social, on the supporters of the monarchs. According to a contemporary chronicler, "All the grandees and caballeros and hijosdalgo who served in the conquest of this kingdom received mercedes - favours - each according to his status, in the form of houses, lands and vassals."⁶⁰ This resulted in a massive increase in the titled aristocracy of Castile during the reigns of Fernando and Isabel. The increase was of the nature of about twenty percent, excluding six houses which died out by natural causes or the marriage of an heiress. The family of Ponce de León received

⁵⁸ Hale, War and Society, p. 231.

⁵⁹ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 277.

⁶⁰ Elliott, Imperial Spain, p. 113.

the titles of Marquises of Cadiz for their capture of Boabdil in 1483, and Dukes of Arcos after the fall of Granada.⁶¹ By the end of the fifteenth century the nobility had largely lost its political but not its social and economic power. While numbering only about two or three per cent of the population of Spain, the nobility still owned most of the soil of the country.⁶²

In the military sphere, the great lords were prevented from dominating the campaigns and collecting the rewards, a system begun by Enrique IV. Royal control of conquered Granada was ensured, and the nobility were forced to serve as royal agents while being amply rewarded for their services.⁶³

These domestic and foreign endeavours were possible only because the monarchs took active steps to subvert the power of the nobility by allying themselves with rival houses to crush selected rebellious nobles. Diego Lopez Pacheco, the rebellious Marquis of Villena, the master of 25,000 square kilometers of land, 150,000 vassals, and with an income of 100,000 ducats a year, was curbed by the Crown, a state of affairs which encouraged Pedro Fajardo of Murcia to invade Pacheco's lands in 1476.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Highfield, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 373.

⁶² Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. XX.

⁶³ Stewart, Military Command, p. 229.

⁶⁴ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 20.

By uniting with the nobility the Crown could orient the power of these nobles in the appropriate direction. The monarchs' policy of the total conquest of Granada may have been forced upon them in part by their need to deflect the aggressive instincts of the nobility away from the monarchs themselves.⁶⁵ The knightly tradition of organized violence served the monarchs well during the war. By agreeing to serve under the Crown, the nobility quickly lost the basis of the real power, their independence.

A controversial aspect of the growth of royal power concerns the part artillery played in the process of subduing the power of the nobility. While the creation of the infrastructure to support the new technology was vital to the long term development of the nation state, was the artillery itself effective against the nobility?

According to J.R. Hale, artillery was not a strong feature of royal centralization, which began before cannon was effective or easily transportable. As well, many cannons were privately owned by the magnates or by fortified towns. As a result, Hale concluded that "An occasional rebellious baron may have been brought to heel by royal cannon, but the complex development of the feudal into the centralized state began before cannon became effective and can be explained without reference to

⁶⁵ Phillips, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 128.

firearms."⁶⁶

However, there can be little doubt that artillery was useful. According to J.F.C. Fuller, "Gunpowder blasted the feudal strongholds and the ideals of their owners. By changing the character of war, gunpowder changed the medieval way of life."⁶⁷ While this is a professional soldier's exaggerated view of artillery's effectiveness, it does have some grain of truth in it. Artillery was effective because it was capable of destroying castles quickly and it was far too expensive for any but the richest nobles. Because of its expense the monarchy quickly developed and enforced a monopoly of artillery fire power.⁶⁸

Also, in the Spanish context, artillery was vital. The Crown's efforts to subdue the nobility were aided immeasurably by the successful war against Granada, and the war was successful because of the use of artillery. Few nobles were intimidated by the royal artillery, but the nobles were none the less subdued by the growing authority of the monarchs, the authority provided by success against Granada, which ultimately rested on the new style of war demanded by artillery. Thus gunpowder artillery did aid in the birth of the nation state.

The Castilian monarchy used every weapon and technique

⁶⁶ Hale, Gunpowder and the Renaissance, p. 114.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 113.

⁶⁸ Rice, The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, p. 16.

possible to facilitate its conquest of Granada. The nobility, the military, new technology, organization, money and greed were all exploited to the fullest. The power of the Church and the religious faith of the masses were also conscripted to destroy Granada and enhance the monarchs' power.

One of the features of the Granada War that figured prominently in the mentality of Castile was that of the Crusade, the war against the heathen Muslims. Since the breakdown of convivencia during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, animosity towards non-Christians increased. According to Américo Castro:

It was no longer possible for Christians, Moors and Jews to live under the same roof, because the Christian now felt himself strong enough to break down the traditional custom of Spain whereby the Christian population made war and tilled the soil, the Moor built the houses, and the Jew presided over the enterprise as a fiscal agent and skilful technician.⁶⁹

The pogrom against the Jews in 1391 was a manifestation of this increasingly aggressive Christian expansionism.

Since the Papacy had only limited influence in Spain, because of the isolation of the Spanish Church from Rome during the centuries of Muslim domination, this aggression was a Spanish phenomenon. The Pope's influence was weakened even further by the Papal Schism from 1378 to 1429, when the Castilian Crown won the right in 1421 to intervene in Church

⁶⁹ Americo Castro, The Structure of Spanish History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 225.

appointments. In Castile and Aragon secular theorists of royal rights reinforced the claims that were successfully asserted against the Papacy by their respective monarchs.⁷⁰

The Spanish Crown frequently used for its own ends the Papacy's need for Spanish political support. Enrique IV received a series of papal bulls from both Nicholas V and Calixtus III for a crusade to recover Constantinople. However, the large income from the sale of indulgences associated with these bulls of crusade were used for the King's own political purposes, and not a crusade.⁷¹ Fernando and Isabel also manipulated the papacy. For the defense of Castile in 1475 against the invasion of Afonso of Portugal, the monarchs confiscated half of the Church plate in Castile, a foretaste of the subsequent looting of the Church.⁷²

The memory of the earlier and successful Bull of Crusade granted in 1457 to Enrique IV encouraged the monarchs to appeal to the Papacy for aid. The monarchs preached the war as a Crusade, and as such demanded and received various benefits. The first Bull of Crusade was granted to Fernando and Isabel in 1479 by Pope Sixtus IV; it conferred plenary indulgences on all those who participated in the war. The Bull's main impact was an increase in revenues available for the war, and the Monarchs

⁷⁰ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 92.

⁷¹ Phillips, The Council of the Santa Hermandad, p. 56.

⁷² Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 360.

set an example by donating 100 florins.⁷³

Further benefits to the Spanish monarchs came on July 3, 1482, in an agreement signed in Cordoba between the Spanish sovereigns and the papal representative Dominico Centurione. The Bull of Crusade was extended for a year by the Pope, and included a ten percent tax on all the benefices and tithes for a year on the Churches of Castile, Aragon and Sicily. The revenue from this tax and one third of the "Crusade" revenue was to go to the Pope for the eastern crusade against the Turks. This agreement with the Pope proved very profitable for the monarchs, for none of the resulting revenue went to the Papacy. The Spanish monarchs confiscated it all.⁷⁴

The compromise of 1482 with the Pope also gave the monarchs the patronage of all the bishoprics, archbishoprics, and the richest abbeys of Aragon and Castile.⁷⁵ There were other benefits as well. All the legacies left for the ransom of captives and the moneys allocated for public feasts were to be applied to the Crusade. The Pope proclaimed an official peace to apply within Spain and to all foreign relations with Spain. All those who broke this peace were to be excommunicated. A prohibition against interfering with the wars against the Muslims or using Crusade funds for anything but the Crusade was

⁷³ Goñi Gaztambide, The Holy See and the Reconquest, p. 355.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 356.

⁷⁵ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 250.

issued. The Papal Deputies in Spain had extraordinary powers to facilitate the war against the Muslims that included passing judgment on illegally acquired profits, to absolve anyone from the sin of simony, to ease the censure connected with simony, to absolve sins in certain degrees, to regularize marriages and legitimize offspring and to enforce the exhibition of wills. Sixtus IV presented a great silver cross to the Spanish monarchs as a standard, to be carried before the army throughout the entire campaign.⁷⁶ The monarchs used this last gift as a symbol of the Christian crusade against Granada. Carried in the King's tent during the military campaigns, it was raised by the royal standard bearer on the topmost point of each conquered town and fortress, where it was venerated with impressive ceremonies.⁷⁷

The Bull of Crusade conferred extensive spiritual benefits on those participating in the war. The benefits included a plenary indulgence, and the freedom to choose a confessor with the power to absolve major crimes, omission of canonical hours, simony, and censure. Those who gave two reales for the care of ill or wounded soldiers or for the building of churches in conquered territory received a share in all the good works performed within the Church. Soldiers were exempted from fasting on Fridays and Holy Days and from resting on Sunday.

⁷⁶ Goñi Gaztambide, The Holy See and the Reconquest, p. 358.

⁷⁷ Roger Bigelow Merriman, The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and the New, vol. II (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1962), p. 66.

Chaplains were allowed to celebrate the Mass in army camps before dawn, and were exempted from the obligations of residence, fasting, and the recitation of the Divine Office when inconvenient.⁷⁸

Despite the death of Pope Sixtus IV in 1484, which automatically nullified these agreements, the Crusade was revalidated for a year by the new Pope, Innocent VIII, who also extended the Crusade benefits to Navarre. The successful capture of Ronda in the spring of 1485 enhanced the Crown's prestige and forced Innocent to renounce his financial rights to the Tenth tax and the one-third of the Crusade revenue in favour of the Spanish Crown on August 26, 1485. He also renewed the Bull of Crusade unconditionally. The Crown secured a further Tenth tax on ecclesiastical revenues, set by the Cardinal of Spain at 100,000 Aragonese florins per year. This papal capitulation was eased by a "gift" of 10,000 ducats by the Spanish Monarchs to the Pope.⁷⁹

By 1486 Fernando and Isabel almost completely dominated the Papacy. A Papal Bull of December 13, 1486, gave the Spanish Crown the right of patronage and appointment to all the ecclesiastical benefices in Granada. This patronato secured for the Crown an invaluable source of appointments to reward their followers, and the precedence to the same right in the soon-to-

⁷⁸ Goñi Gaztambide, The Holy See and the Reconquest, p. 358.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.366.

be-discovered New World.⁸⁰ For these generous gifts the papacy hoped to secure Spanish aid in Italy against the French. Pressure by the Spanish cardinal Rodrigo de Borja forced Innocent to grant the "Crusade" for a further year, ending on September 1, 1488. The Bull of Crusade was extended, despite the opposition of the Roman cardinals, for one year on October 9, 1489, and again on October 1, 1491.⁸¹ The close ties between the Spanish Monarchs and the Papacy were strengthened by the Bull of 1493, Inter caetera, in which, because of the mutual hostility to France, Alexander VI granted to the Crown all the continents and islands overseas not belonging to any Christian sovereign.⁸² In 1496 Pope Alexander VI granted a continuation of the ecclesiastical Tenth, the Bull of Crusade, and a third of the Tenth as a perpetual grant, and the title of "Catholic Monarchs" for Fernando and Isabel.⁸³

The entire resources of the Church were used to further the conquest of Granada. The Pope's appeal to the religious feeling of the faithful resounded from every pulpit in Castile, Aragon, Sicily, and Sardinia, and exalted the ideal of holy war against

⁸⁰ Elliott, Imperial Spain, p. 101.

⁸¹ Goñi Gaztambide, The Holy See and the Reconquest, p. 366.

⁸² J. M. Batista y Roca, "The Hispanic Kingdoms and the Catholic Kings", The New Cambridge Modern History, Volume I: The Renaissance 1493-1520, Edited by Denys Hay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 332.

⁸³ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 398.

the infidel.⁸⁴ Military enthusiasm came easily to tongues already versed in the war-imagery of Saint Paul: the Christian was always on active service against Satan; he wore the helmet of salvation, brandished the sword of the spirit and turned temptation's darts on the breastplate of righteousness.⁸⁵

Despite the adherence of the vast majority of Spaniards to their religion, many looked on the practical application of these measures with less than enthusiasm. Priests, ministros de la Cruzada, visited every parish to urge all to buy indulgences, and the privilege of eating meat during Lent, for the price of sixty-eight mrs..⁸⁶ These visiting clergy used methods that were bitterly resented by the locals. The preachers

...keep the people in the churches one, two, and three days from morning to evening to listen to their sermons, and thus prevent them from earning their daily bread; and when they find that they cannot persuade them to take up the said Bull by that means, they parade through the streets, asking everyone they meet if he knows his Pater Noster and Ave Maria; and if perchance they find one who does not, they force him to take up the said Bull as penance; and if anyone refuses, they drag him around in shackles to hear their preachments, and thus prevail on him at last by force and threats to take up the said Bull.⁸⁷

The monarchs themselves fully subscribed to the Crusade mentality. They sought divine aid at the shrine of Santiago de

⁸⁴ Goñi Gaztambide, The Holy See and the Reconquest, p. 359.

⁸⁵ Hale, War and Opinion, p. 26.

⁸⁶ Batista y Roca, The Hispanic Kingdoms, p. 334.

⁸⁷ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 210.

Compostela.⁸⁸ In an era when spiritual faith had physical manifestations, the prophecy of the 'Beata de Piedrahita' (Sor Maria de Santo Domingo), "That he [Fernando] was not to die until he had won Jerusalem", was not completely scorned.⁸⁹ Through their legislation and public pronouncements, in their contemporaries' eyes, and in their own minds, the Spanish monarchs accepted crusade and prophecy as normal. The successes resulting from Christian feats of arms were directly attributed to the patronage of God himself for the Christian armies, thus equating military and spiritual virtues. In a letter to the Pope, Fernando described the war as a "Holy enterprise against the Moors of the kingdom of Granada, the enemies of our holy Catholic faith, to the praise and glory of our Redeemer Jesus Christ...".⁹⁰ This stress on the war as a Crusade was highlighted by the practice of hanging up the fetters of liberated Christian captives to commemorate their freedom, "...to be revered by successive generations as the trophies of Christian warfare."⁹¹

Diego de Valera saw the monarchs as crusaders, as did many contemporaries, perhaps as an attempt to wipe out the memory of the perceived failures of Enrique IV and the confusion of the

⁸⁸ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 33.

⁸⁹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 606.

⁹⁰ Goñi Gaztambide, The Holy See and the Reconquest, p. 366.

⁹¹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 372.

recent civil war. In 1485 he expressed the hope that God would give Fernando "the power to accomplish all that from far back in time has been prophesied of Your Most Noble Person...God is with you, and that through you and the most Serene Princess, Doña Isabel, He wishes to destroy and lay waste the perfidious Mahomedan sect."⁹² Diego de Muros, the secretary to Cardinal Mendoza, Isabel's chief adviser, reported that the monarchs "...take on the holy expedition with the intention rather to spread abroad the religion of Christ than to increase their earthly empire."⁹³ Isabel in particular was seen as the necessary link between God and the people of Spain. According to a contemporary, "The King overcomes mortals, the Queen immortals."⁹⁴ Diego de Valera told Fernando that the Queen "...fights no less with her many alms and devout prayers than you, Lord, with your lance in hand."⁹⁵

This emphasis on Crusade helped rally the people behind the monarchy and mobilized the warlike tendencies of the nobility against a common foe. The Holy War was considered not offensive to God, but positively pleasing to Him. The Christian warrior's fighting in a blessed cause was believed to be a virtuous act which merited God's special favor, as embodied in the crusading

⁹² Ibid., p. 605.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 372.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 373.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 372.

indulgences granted by papal proclamation.⁹⁶

The response on the part of those who had to do the actual fighting was largely enthusiastic. Many soldiers wore the crusader cross on their persons.⁹⁷ Volunteers poured in from all of Catholic Europe; from France, Germany, England, Ireland, Poland and especially Switzerland. In Pulgar's words, these men were "warlike men and fight afoot, and are determined never to turn their backs on their enemies."⁹⁸ In 1486 Sir Edward Wydeville, Lord Scales, took part in the campaign with 300 artillerymen and archers "to serve God and make war against the Moors."⁹⁹ During the difficult siege of Malaga, Andres Bernaldez commented upon the crusading emphasis amongst the troops: "...in the royal camp at Malaga were many clergy and friars of all the Orders who said masses and preached throughout the camp, to the sound as well as the ill, and gave plenary absolution to all by virtue of the Holy Crusade."¹⁰⁰ Gaming, blasphemy, brawling and prostitution were outlawed in the camps, and severe penalties were inflicted for contravening the spirit of the Crusade.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 278.

⁹⁷ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 33.

⁹⁸ Goñi Gaztambide, The Holy See and the Reconquest, p. 359.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 364.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 366.

¹⁰¹ Prescott, Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 2:28.

While we can admire that zeal for the faith that animated the monarchs, especially Isabel, pragmatic reasons of state provided some of the impetus for Fernando's zeal. He used the Italian Marinaeus Siculus and the Castilian Elio Antonio de Nebrija as propagandists of national unity and the fulfillment of the Gothic past.¹⁰² A twelfth-century justification for the crusade stated much the same thing, albeit in religious terms: "...since the Saracens occupied lands which had formerly been part of the Roman Empire, it was right that the church, the legitimate heir of that Empire, should seek to recuperate what had been torn from it by force...Moreover Christians were justified in law in punishing the people of Islam who were termed 'the most blameworthy nation' [summa culpabilis]."¹⁰³

The monarchs also used the Spanish Church indirectly as a fulcrum to centralize power. The Holy Inquisition was partially an institution for the Crown to acquire control of the Spanish Church, and was the first royal body to extend throughout Spain regardless of political divisions.¹⁰⁴ Much of the opposition to the Inquisition was based on the grounds that it violated provincial fueros. In Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia and especially in Barcelona, opposition was vocal.¹⁰⁵ While J.N.

¹⁰² Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 204.

¹⁰³ Contamine, War In the Middle Ages, p. 279.

¹⁰⁴ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 422.

¹⁰⁵ Kamen, A Society of Conflict, p. 40.

Hillgarth believes that it is unlikely that the Crown used the Inquisition as a tool for the drive to a centralized monarchy,¹⁰⁶ the view of this writer and of Jean Mariéjol is that "The Inquisition placed the civil power at the service of orthodoxy and the fanaticism of the Spanish clergy at the service of Spanish nationality."¹⁰⁷ This diffused the opposition of the high clergy to the monarchy, almost all of whom were nobles with large revenues and military retinues.

Fernando was adamant in his claim to be the leader of a Crusade rather than a large scale raid for booty. In reply to a demand from the Pope for the agreed upon one-third of the revenues from the Crusade, Fernando wrote that:

We have not been moved nor are we moved to this war by any desire to enlarge our realms and seigniories, nor by greed to obtain greater revenues than those we possess, nor by any wish to pile up treasures;...But our desire to serve God, and our zeal for His holy Catholic faith, make us put all other interests aside and forget the constant travails and dangers which continue to increase for this cause;...yet we refuse the treasures offered to us and pour out our own, hoping only that the holy Catholic faith will be multiplied and that Christendom will be quit of so constant a danger as she has here at her very doors, if these infidels of the kingdom of Granada are not uprooted and cast out from Spain.¹⁰⁸

The emphasis on secular issues in the beginning tends to put Fernando's financial altruism somewhat in doubt, since none of

¹⁰⁶ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 461.

¹⁰⁷ Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 331.

¹⁰⁸ Goñi Gaztambide, The Holy See and the Reconquest, p. 361.

the money was sent to Rome.

The revenues resulting from these agreements with the Church were truly massive and provided the bulk of the money spent on the Granada War. Guicciardini, the Florentine ambassador to Castile during the years 1512-1513, wrote:

At first, when the affair was fresh, they profited from it a good deal, and say in particular that in the year the king took Málaga [1487] 800,000 ducats were collected...without such subsidies this king not only would not have taken Granada and so many other foreign realms, but he would have had difficulty in keeping Aragon and Castile.¹⁰⁹

The Castilian Church provided almost one hundred million mrs., that of Aragon twenty million, and the Cruzada over five hundred million mrs.. According to M. A. Ladero Quesada "...it financed the greater part of the war."¹¹⁰

Once Granada was conquered, the achievement of Spain's territorial integrity forged a new emotional bond among the peoples of Spain, who shared a common sense of triumph at the downfall of Granada. The victory contained enormous religious symbolism for both Muslims as well as Christians.

En la ciudad de Granada
grandes alaridos dan
Unos llama Mahoma
otros a la Trinidad
Por un cabo entran las cruces
de otro sale alcorán

donde antes oían cuernos
campanas oyen sonar.

In the city of Granada
Great outcries are heard.
Some invoke Muhammad
Others invoke the Trinity.
Crosses enter from one end
And the Qur'an leaves from
the other;
Where horns were heard
before
Now the sound of bells are

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 372.

¹¹⁰ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 380.

heard.¹¹¹

Thus the capture of the city of Granada was a symbol of the victory of the Legions of God over the minions of the Devil, the Muslims. In the words of J.H. Elliott, "As the Christians saw the kingdom of Granada crumble before them, and the hopes of centuries realized at last, it was natural that they should think of themselves as entrusted with a holy mission to save and redeem the world, threatened as it was by the new advance of Islam from the east."¹¹²

The significance of the successful war was enormous for both Spain and the rest of Europe. The little time between the fall of Granada and Columbus' expedition suggests that the latter was an act of renewed dedication by Castile to the still unfinished task of war against the infidel, by outflanking the Muslims and allying with the Great Khan of the Indies. The key to the understanding of the discovery of the New World can be seen in the extension of the idea behind the Conquest of Granada, the crusade against Islam.¹¹³ According to Stephen Gilman, the exploitation of the discovery of America was inspired by the long Holy War and the Messianic feeling generated by the conflict of the three religions of medieval

¹¹¹ Chejne, Islam and the West, p. 6, citing M. Dánvila y Collado, La expulsión de los moriscos españoles (Madrid, 1889).

¹¹² Elliott, Imperial Spain, p. 105.

¹¹³ Fuller, The Decisive Battles of the Western World, p. 403.

Spain.¹¹⁴

Spain at the end of the fifteenth century was still living in the age of crusades; hence the importance of the conquest of Granada and the beginning of the expansion in North Africa, undertaken a few years later. "Not only did the occupation of southern Spain complete the reconquest of Iberian soil; not only did it present the Catholic Kings with a rich agricultural region, a region of rich farming land and industrious and populous towns: it also liberated for foreign adventures the energies of Castile, so long engaged in an endless combat with the remnants of Spanish Islam which refused to die - and these were youthful energies."¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 610.

¹¹⁵ Fernand Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, vol. II, Translated by Sian Reynolds (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1973), p. 670.

Conclusion

The society that Fernando and Isabel ruled was one of aggression and military prowess. This had grown out of the emphasis on success in battle that resulted from the reconquest. The nobility's natural rambunctiousness, a valued commodity in war, naturally carried over into times of peace. This proved detrimental to peace and security, at least in the eyes of the monarchs.

Up to and including the reigns of Fernando and Isabel, the nobility maintained their prerogatives - social, financial and military. As late as the end of the fifteenth century, the relationship between King and barons still remained the military partnership of the Middle Ages. The practical policy of Fernando and Isabel was that of concessions to the nobility for their support. This policy was a recognition that the monarchy was based, from the beginning, on the collective power of the nobles. The monarchs' determination was to reconstruct the royal patrimony and the authority of the Crown. In this drive for familial self-aggrandizement, the aid of the nobility, to whom they were frequently related, was often necessary. To Fernando and Isabel the state was their own patrimony to be defended, and they saw themselves as the first nobles in their kingdoms. In this programme the nobility was an essential ally,

an indispensable collaborator.¹

In an attempt to create at least the fiction of monarchical control, the publication of Pulgar's Claros varones in 1486 is seen as an attempt to unite the nobility behind the crown by "drawing a decorous veil over the recent and rebellious past."² To realize this ideal Fernando attempted a policy of strengthening royal authority, to the disadvantage of other existing powers, especially that of the nobility and the Church. Much effort was expended on the task of putting down the rebellions of the nobility and curbing the many persons who had lived by what Valera called "sweet tyranny."³ By the beginning of the Granada War, the effort was showing only meager results.

The power of the nobility was not destroyed by direct attacks but was dwarfed by the extraordinary development of royal power. To conquer Granada, Fernando and Isabel created an army which required expensive artillery, the mobilization of men and money on a massive scale, extensive propaganda resources, and a bureaucracy which would ensure royal control. The nature of these efforts was such that only a national effort could

¹ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 608.

² Ibid., p. 371.

³ Ramón Menéndez Pidal, "The Significance of the Reign of Isabella the Catholic, According to Her Contemporaries", Spain in the Fifteenth Century 1369-1516, Edited by Roger Highfield, Translated by Frances M. Lopez-Morillas (London: MacMillan, 1972), p. 397.

sustain them, and therefore they created a nation to do so. The nobility could not compete in either resources or reputation with the successful monarchs, and were enveloped by royal power and prestige that squeezed the independence from them.

A major reason for and benefit of the Granadan war was the drive for peninsular unification. Those who had attempted this goal included the Romans, the Visigoths, the Arabs, and finally the Christians, who were merely the heirs to a long tradition. The monarchs of Castile saw themselves as these heirs, and except for Portugal, succeeded in uniting the peoples of the Iberian Peninsula through the victorious war.

The successful prosecution of the war gained immense benefits for the Crown. The victory over Granada united the peoples of Aragon and Castile in a commonality of interests, and allowed them to think of extending their frontiers, of establishing Spain as a great power. Fray Iñigo de Mendoza expressed the "will to Empire" of Spain in the 1470's, which would come through the capture of Granada. Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, the Marquis of Cadiz, circulated the prophecy that Fernando would conquer Granada, Ethiopia, Jerusalem, Rome and the Turks.⁴

The result of this was that in the eyes of Machiavelli, the most practical political philosopher of his day, "We have in our days, Ferdinand, King of Aragon, the present King of Spain, who

⁴ Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, p. 371.

may, not improperly, be called a new prince, since he has been transformed from a small and weak king into the greatest monarch in Christendom."⁵

⁵ Elliott, Imperial Spain, p. 13.

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