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The Origins of the Nation

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PART ONE

THE ORIGINS OF THE NATION

CHAPTER 1

ETHNIC PATRIOTISM

THE BIRTH OF THE NATION

“Citizens of Madrid: With the imminent approach of the anniversary of the day that is the most glorious for our people and the most memorable in the annals of the Spanish nation, your constitutional town hall addresses you to announce that the day of the most noble and heroic remembrances, THE SECOND OF MAY, has arrived. On that day, in the name of independence, you made the throne of the most successful soldier of the century tremble beneath him, and, by offering your lives for the sake of your *patria*, you declared to the universe that a people determined to be free disdains all tyrants...”¹

The town council of Madrid in 1837 had no need to specify the year of the day to which it referred in its proclamation. Every last one of its citizens knew that the Second of May was the “glorious” day (as it was ritually described) of 1808 on which the people of Madrid had risen up against the French army which had occupied the country as a result of the shameful agreement reached in Bayonne in late 1807 between Napoleon and the Spanish prime minister, the infamous knave Manuel Godoy. Throughout the long afternoon and night of that day, the French troops overran the city, crushing the uprising and executing not only the insurgents but innocent by-standers too. The capital was put to the sword, but its rebellion was to be the catalyst for the visceral resistance that, in a matter of weeks, was to overwhelm the entire country and which would eventually result, six years later, in the defeat of the hitherto invincible Emperor of the French and, as a result, in the “independence of Spain”.

A quarter of a century after these events, the conflict was to become known in the history books as the “War of Independence”. Upon this foundation the dominant nationalist mythology of the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century would be built. Thus the Spanish Second of May is the equivalent of the American Fourth of July, the Argentinian Twenty-Fifth of May or the French Fourteenth of July. It was the dawn of the Spanish nation, the great initial affirmation of her existence.

The war fought in the Iberian peninsula between 1808 and 1814 was of huge complexity, but there is no doubt that those leading the struggle against the new king of Spain, Joseph Bonaparte (brother to the Emperor), deployed a rhetoric that verged on the national. From the outset it was claimed that the rebellion was in defence of “what is ours”, “what is Spanish”, as well as the dignity and freedom of the “*patria*”, while those who opposed Napoleon were called “patriots”. Although it took some time to invent a name as resonant as the “War of Independence”, there was talk at the time of a “rising” or an “uprising” (sometimes described as “national”), a “war with France” or “against the French”, a “holy Spanish insurrection”, “our sacred struggle”, and a number of other expressions that contained references to a sacralized collective identity.

Of those motives deemed to have inspired the struggle, the term “independence” found a place alongside those of “freedom” and “the dignity of the *patria*”. It may well be that,

at the time, the word meant little more than “insubordination”, “integrity” or “strength of character”; it was certainly a long way from referring to the political self-determination of an ethno-cultural group, as it subsequently came to mean in the era of nationalism.² But nobody can deny that it constituted, at the very least, language bordering on what can be identified as ‘national’. To explain the resistance of Zaragoza and Gerona to the French army, the legendary resistance to the Carthaginians at Saguntium or to the Romans at Numantia were invoked. This permitted a connection to be made between the conflict of 1808-14 and the remote past, which was supposedly characterised by the Spaniards’ unyielding resistance to all attempts at foreign domination and which thereby produced the “Spanish character”, one that was distinguished by an obstinate affirmation of its own identity in the face of the invader. It should also be underlined that in response to the questions “what are you?” and “what do you call yourself?”, as revealed in the *CatecismosPolíticos* published during the war, there was a surprising unanimity: “Spanish”. By contrast, some years earlier the answer would have probably been “loyal vassal of the King of Spain”. All discourse now revolved around the national entity, and, as a result, the anti-Bonapartist leaders won the propaganda battle by a wide margin, defeating those who chose to serve the new, French dynasty.³

As has often been observed, it was when *las Cortes* (or Spanish parliament), retreated to the south-westerly port of Cádiz in 1810 that the inherited terms of *kingdom* and *monarchy* were replaced by *nation*, *patria* and *people*.⁴ “*Patria*” and “love of one’s *patria*” were words originating in classical antiquity, but “patriotism”, an eighteenth century innovation that referred to the predisposition to sacrifice oneself for the community, received a decisive impetus from the constitutionalists in Cádiz. The *CatecismosPolíticos* mentioned above included emotional references, such as “*our patria*” (not *the patria*), “the nation in which *we* have come into the world”, or as “*our common mother* who took us to her breast at birth and since our infancy has secured our well-being”.⁵ The *patria*, presented as a loving mother who welcomes and protects us, and, in the process, transcends our lives while giving meaning to our miserable finite condition, resulted in the demand for ‘us’ to be willing to shed our last drop of blood on her behalf. And that was just the kind of emotion required to motivate the Spanish people in their struggle against the French invader. With an unconventional war underway - one that was neither organized nor sustained by the powers of the State but depended on the spontaneous response of the people - it was essential to convince individuals to risk both their lives and their possessions in favour of collective independence and freedom. This sacrifice could only be demanded in the name of patriotism, the new virtue that, in the words of the contemporary poet José Quintana, was “an eternal source of political heroism and prodigies”.

In the besieged city of Cádiz, the *Café of the Patriots* was opened and immediately became popular for staging plays with a patriotic content. Literary critics recommended that the plays should aim to teach the history of Spain; the press suggested that they

should end with the singing of patriotic songs; and the first flight of Joseph Bonaparte from Madrid in August 1808 was celebrated by dressing up the city's councillors "in the ancient and majestic dress that recalls the glory, perseverance, and courage of our magnanimous forebears."⁶ It was a complete change of emphasis, perhaps best expressed by the chants and catchwords most frequently heard: in contrast to "Long live Ferdinand VII!" or "Death to the French", which had resounded in the insurgent Madrid of May 1808, "Long live Spain" soon prevailed in Cádiz some months later. Still, for the eminent patriotic publication *El Revisor Político* nothing was sufficient, and it continued to complain that "in Spain, love of the *Patria* has still not achieved the necessary level and substance", whilst recognising that "national hatred and many other things have already become part of our revolution."⁷ This reflected the first stirrings of Romanticism, and it would soon be claimed that any human being of an elevated nature should feel an emotionally, even morally, charged "passion" - transcending any other experience - for the place or country they called the "*patria*".

Historians have long argued over the motives for, and ultimate significance of, the war of 1808-14, and probably will long continue to do so. What is in no doubt, however, is the violent chain reaction triggered by the actions of the French troops in Madrid, which spread like wildfire throughout the kingdom from late May 1808, generally flaring up as soon as news came through of the massacre in the capital. Neither is there any doubt that, parallel to the conventional war, there was a military mobilisation of a barely planned nature that remained constant throughout the six years of the war and whose impact on contemporary observers was such that it led to the incorporation of the term "guerrilla" into everyday language. Moreover, the guerrillas would not have survived without widespread popular support, people thereby risking their lives in order to provide the insurgent groups with shelter, food, money and intelligence.⁸

The hundreds of thousands who rose up against the invading army, and the millions who supported their actions, shared a deep-seated hatred of the "French", while appearing to accept a definition of themselves as "Spanish". Further, the call to rebellion sounded by those groups most capable of articulating their convictions were made in the name of "Spain". One can therefore start out with the hypothesis that, in 1808, there existed a collective identity that was characterized as *Spanish* and that this originated in the early modern period, prior to the era of nations.

The fundamental question addressed in the first part of this book derives from this hypothesis. What did it mean to be "Spanish" to those people who fought, killed, and died while invoking that name? In other words, what did it mean to those people who believed in an identity that, to judge by their behaviour, they considered superior to their individual lives and interests? In Chapter One, this issue is addressed by examining the political and cultural factors that contributed to the creation of this identity in earlier centuries. In Chapter Two, the most important obstacles from the early modern age to the formation of a national identity in the 19th century will be

examined. Chapter Three centres on the war of 1808-1814 and analyses its subsequent mythification as the “War of Independence”; that is to say, as a struggle governed by a spirit of national emancipation in the face of an attempt at foreign domination. This chapter also scrutinizes the difficulties that lay ahead for the liberal elites which sought to deploy the Spanish identity which had been inherited, reinforced and reformulated during the Napoleonic Wars in the service of their mission to modernize ‘Spain’.

THE DISTANT PAST: FROM “HISPANIA” TO “SPAIN”

Only an ardent nationalist would claim today that national identities are eternal creations preordained by divine intervention since the beginning of time. However, in the nineteenth century, and even the first half of the twentieth, when nationalism in Europe was at its peak, many people did indeed believe that claim. The histories written during this period accepted that there had been “Spaniards” in “Spain” since virtually the Creation. That was how the primitive inhabitants of the Peninsula were referred to by the great majority of authors, from Tomás de Iriarte at the end of the eighteenth century (“the Spanish offered resistance” to the Carthaginians) to Dalmau Carles in the mid-twentieth (“the Spanish defended their independence” against the Romans). Between these dates, it was a truism uttered by everyone. For the influential and erudite mid-nineteenth-century historian Modesto Lafuente, “the Spanish attack on the Phoenicians [was] the first protest in defence of their independence”. More subtly, Miguel Cervilla distinguished between the “original” inhabitants of Spain (who had arrived from elsewhere - the Iberians, according to him, were from India) and the “foreign peoples” who invaded afterwards, such as the Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians.⁹

This book is based on the opposite assumption: that the Spanish identity has not existed since time immemorial. Neither, it should be added, was it an invention of the nineteenth century, as has recently been claimed. To start with, the name “Iberia” in Greek, or “Hispania” in Latin, dates from classical antiquity, although its significance has of course varied with the passage of time. Both words had an exclusively geographical content and referred to the Iberian Peninsula as a whole i.e. they always included what is today Portugal. It was a Peninsula that, for a very long time and due to its remoteness from the first European civilizations, was seen from afar as a distant territory where the *Finis Terrae*, or limits of the known world, were to be found. As the ultimate frontier it was a land of danger and adventure in which legend locates several of the twelve Labours of Hercules.

‘Hispania’ only appeared on the principal stage of history at the beginning of the Second Punic War (214 BC), when Roman legions reached the Peninsula. From then on, and during the last two centuries before the Christian Era, the first reliable reports and descriptions from travellers and visitors began to trickle out. Following the Peninsula’s complete conquest by Caesar and Octavian at the end of this period, the Peninsula was

fully incorporated into the Roman world over the course of the next five centuries, to which the cities, roads, bridges, aqueducts and even the majority of languages still spoken today in the Peninsula bear witness. Those five hundred years went by without any significant manifestations of a specifically “Hispanic” personality emerging in contrast to the other Roman territories. Not only did there not exist a political unit that encompassed the whole of the Iberian Peninsula, but in addition there never existed an administrative unit or a province of the empire that corresponded to the name “Hispania”. References to “ancient Spain” or “Roman Spain” are therefore unwarranted distortions of the remote past, governed by an interest in uncovering early examples of a modern national identity and which lack any historical meaning in the same way as references to a “Roman Portugal” or a “Roman Catalonia” do.¹⁰

It was only with the arrival of the Visigoths in the 5th century AD that “Hispania” began to acquire an ethnic meaning in addition to its geographical one, as can be seen in the expressions of pride in the land and its peoples exemplified in the *“Laus Hispaniae”* by Bishop Isidoro of Seville. He was so passionate in his praise of a land of such incomparable beauty and fertility that, he claimed, it was worthy of the violent, amorous rapture of the invincible Goths, successors to glorious Rome in their domination of the Peninsula:

“You are the pride and ornament of the world, and the most illustrious part of the earth, in which the glorious fecundity of the Gothic people rejoices and flourishes most splendidly. In all justice, indulgent nature blessed you in great abundance with all things created. You are rich in fruits, plentiful in grapes, joyful in harvests; you clothe yourself in corn, shade yourself in olive trees, crown yourself with vines. You are fragrant in your fields, leafy in your hills, plentiful in fish along your coasts. With good reason were you coveted by golden Rome, leader of peoples. But although the victorious heirs of Romulus were the first to espouse you, at last came the flourishing nation of the Goths, after innumerable victories throughout the world, and it conquered you in order to love you; and since then, among regal emblems and abundant treasure, it has enjoyed you in the joyous safety of the empire.”¹¹

The nationalist ideologues of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were to magnify this change to the point of transforming the Visigoths into the creators of a political entity that was defined as “Spanish”, partly because it coincided with the peninsular territory, partly because it was independent of ‘foreign’ powers and partly because, following the conversion of king Reccared in 589, its inhabitants could collectively be identified with the Catholic religion. The conservative thinker Ramiro de Maeztu even stated that “Spain came into being on the conversion of Reccared to the Catholic religion”, while GarcíaMorente wrote that the Councils of Toledo, the ecclesiastical council-cum-parliament of the 6th and 7th centuries, had been the first expression of “national awareness.”¹² Neither Maeztu nor Morente were historians, but many historians of the period allowed themselves to be seduced, though in a more sophisticated way, by this “Spanish” vision of the Visigothic world. Even today, in the central *Plaza de Oriente* in Madrid, there is a series of statues dedicated to the kings of Spain, of which the first is Ataúlfo, a nomadic Visigoth leader who did no more than set

foot in the north-eastern corner of the Iberian Peninsula during the last months of his life. There are no monuments, however, to the Cordoban Omeyyads who dominated the greater part of the Peninsula for over three centuries, but who were alien to a Christian faith that was considered to be consubstantial with Spanish nationhood.

This vision of the Visigothic world as a period of political, religious and even legal unification, in which the “Spanish nation” came to life, is nothing but an idealization. First, because the territorial limits of the Visigothic kingdom were different not merely from those of contemporary Spain but even from those of ‘Hispania’ or the Iberian Peninsula. For almost two of the three centuries of Gothic domination, the Suevi occupied Galicia in the north west, while the Byzantines controlled the southern and south-eastern parts of the peninsula from Seville to Cartagena. And for a long time, the Visigoths chose to establish their capital in the south of France while calling their monarchy *regnum Tolosanum*. As regards religion, the adoption of Catholicism as the official religion took place in 589 AD, when almost two thirds of the Gothic era had already run its course. To this must be added the instability, civil wars, palace plots and other political crises that distinguished the period. However, even in the seventh century, and more so in the following ones, the process of its idealisation had already begun, despite the disappearance of the monarchy set up by Ataulfo. We should not forget that nobody benefited more from the system of power established in the last century of Visigothic rule than the Catholic Church, whose Councils of Toledo not only passed legislation but even selected the successor to the throne. It is understandable that the bishops and monks who chronicled these events made an effort to create an awareness of an identity based on that particular monarchy and its faith, presenting the Catholic kingdom as united, flourishing and master of the entire Peninsula. But any present-day mediaevalist with a sense of history would take issue with this interpretation of the Visigothic world as the initial, idyllic manifestation of Spanish identity.

The catastrophic battle of Guadalete in 711, when the Visigoths were defeated by an invading Muslim army, not only put an end to the Visigothic monarchy but also shed much light on its political system. One aspect was the disloyalty of the élites towards their own community, as they had no qualms about calling in their Muslim neighbours to resolve an internal dispute. Another was the astonishing ease with which a people with an excellent fighting reputation was crushed in a single battle by a relatively modest Muslim army. Yet a third was the passivity that characterized the rest of the country, whereby all the cities opened their gates to the Muslim invader with no hint of mass resistance. This is in stark contrast to the supposition of an enduring “national character” marked by fierce opposition to foreign domination. Lastly, the relative scarcity of buildings, objets d’art or even linguistic survivals from the Visigothic era indicates how weakly rooted the culture was within the Peninsula.

In spite of all this, what certainly was kept alive in the monasteries and bishoprics was an idealised memory of a Visigothic Hispania unified under a single king and assimilated into a single faith. When those centres of resistance still holding out against the Muslims achieved sufficient strength and stability to proclaim themselves Christian kingdoms and to prepare for their expansion, clerics and jurists hastened to provide them with a past to consolidate their legitimacy. First the leaders of the Asturs, and later those of the Navarrans, Aragonese, Catalans and Portuguese, declared themselves to be successors to the Gothic kings because they understood that it made them heirs to a power base illegitimately wiped out by a foreign invader. Insofar as they were able to express their pretension, it was that Christian dominion over the whole Peninsula should be consistent with the historic rights of the Visigoths. This pretension was first presented in the chronicles of the time of Alfonso III, which were written during the last third of the ninth century, some two hundred years after the landing of the Muslim leaders Tarik and Muza. Later still, the poets were to add feelings of nostalgia, based on the idea of the “loss of Spain” at Guadalete, that served to reinforce this construction from a sentimental point of view.

The arrival of the Muslims was decisive for the construction of a “Spanish” image from other perspectives. Because their defeat at the hands of Charles Martel at Poitiers in 721 forced the Muslims to retreat south of the Pyrenees, the Iberian Peninsula became a frontier once more and, as a result, an exotic and fantastic place, just as in pre-Roman times. It is no coincidence that the great French epic poem of the Late Middle Ages, the *Chanson de Roland*, was situated in *Espagne* (and in which, incidentally, Zaragoza is confused with Syracuse in Sicily - both distant lands ruled by Muslims). Many of the German epic poems were the result of pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela, and the name Santiago - Saint James – likewise appears in Nordic sagas. The mediaeval Hispania once again became a remote place of danger and adventure in European imagery. One travelled there to fight, to earn special indulgences, to study the art of necromancy. It was a land almost permanently at war and, accordingly, with possibilities for advancement, but it was also a land of confusion caused by the typical mix of races and religions of a frontier milieu. Consequently it was a perilous place, but also one that had the attraction of being the conduit for jewels and fabrics from the East, along with illuminated classical Greek texts, translated into Latin from Arabic.

A fundamental element of Hispanic identity, and a magnet for Europeans, was the tomb of Santiago. The legend that this apostle was the first to preach the Gospel in Roman Hispania, supported in a moment of weakness by none other than the Virgin Mary herself (who appeared to him on a column in Zaragoza), was firmly established by around the twelfth century. He was then supposed to have returned to Jerusalem where, we are told in the *Acts of the Apostles*, he was the first of the direct disciples of Christ to die, executed as early as 44 AD. Apart from this last fact, the legend passed down about Santiago is totally lacking in historical truth, and any connection with the Iberian Peninsula in particular has no bearing on reality. It was simply not possible to travel to

the other end of the Mediterranean and carry out an effective evangelizing mission there in such a short period. Neither is it comprehensible that, having died in Jerusalem, the apostle's body should have been buried in Galicia. Moreover, prior to the ninth century, ecclesiastical histories did not link Santiago to Hispania, a land whose early evangelization was attributed to seven bishops or preachers sent by Jesus' disciples from Rome.

The legend actually took shape in the ninth century, during the reign of Alfonso II, at a time when the Astur kings were desperately in need of miraculous elements to support their political and military enterprise against the Muslims. It was a very long time, however, before it was accepted by the rest of Christendom, including Hispanic political and ecclesiastical circles. The main impetus for the cult of Santiago only came at the end of the eleventh century, under Alfonso VI, at a crucial moment when the spirit of crusade had penetrated Hispania at the same time as the balance of military power finally tipped in favour of the Christians. From the year 1000 onwards, after the death of Almanzor and the break-up of the Caliphate of Cordoba, three powerful kings in succession were able to expand their territories and unify the Christian north of the peninsula in a manner that not one of their predecessors had been able to do: they were Sancho the Elder of Navarre, his son, Ferdinand I of Castile and Leon, and the latter's son, Alfonso VI of Castile. These kings also established links with Christendom on the other side of the Pyrenees and, in particular, with the ducal house of Burgundy and its protégés, the Cluniac monks. This order was embroiled in a struggle with Rome for the reform of Christendom. The reformers understood the importance of the holy relic that was venerated in Galicia: it was an excellent instrument for launching the idea of a crusade in the Iberian Peninsula while undermining papal pretensions by becoming guardians of the only tomb with the complete body of a direct disciple of Christ. The Church of *Saint Jacques* was built in Paris as the point from which the majority of pilgrims set out. They followed the street known as the *rue Saint Jacques*, which led away from the church and through the city in a south-westerly direction, finding shelter at the Cluniac monasteries along the way. It was a French Pope, Calixtus II, who sanctioned the *Liber Sancti Jacobi* or *Codex Calixtinus*, a resumé of the life and miracles of the Saint that included a sort of itinerary or guide for pilgrims, including practical advice and explaining spiritual rewards. This is why the route became known as *the French road*; why the towns along the way were filled with exquisite Romanic churches (built by the masterbuilders brought by Cluny), and why there were streets and neighbourhoods in these towns known as *of the Franks*. The pilgrims' songs that have come down to us, when not written in Latin, are in Parisian French or Occitan.

Under the Burgundian and Cluniac influence, both the significance of the saint as well as the struggle against the Muslim underwent a sea change. From being an enterprise for the recovery of territory that had been wrenched from the Visigoths by the Muslim invader, it became a religious struggle or *crusade* - a term recently invented by the Papacy - which was the Christian equivalent of the Islamic *jihad*. Alfonso VI himself

asked for, and obtained, international assistance against the second wave of Muslim invaders, the Almoravides. And the Santiago who reappeared after so many centuries of obscurity was no longer the peaceful Galilean fisherman whom no-one ever saw on horseback or wielding a sword, but a warlike horseman, the hammer of the Saracens. The new phase of the fight against Islam required supernatural support and, from his place in heaven, Santiago was willing to come to the aid of the land he himself had evangelized and was now seeing suffer under the yoke of the infidel. Against a backdrop of clouds and mounted on a white horse, in the same way as the Book of the Apocalypse described Christ's descent from the heavens for the last battle, Santiago appeared in the heat of the battle against the Muslims and decided its course.

Just as the idea of the crusade was the Christian adaptation of the Muslim "holy war", the mediaeval Santiago was its answer to Mohammed. But his transformation was to continue until he became the incarnation of a patriotic, later *national*, identity, and, more particularly, of the *martial* aspect of that identity. Santiago was not only "*matamoros*" (the Killer of Moors), he was the saviour of Spain (or Hispania, we should say, for the latter continued to include Portugal),¹³ the patron saint or heavenly intercessor of Spain. The kings of Castile and Leon, early aspirants to pre-eminence in the Peninsula, proclaimed themselves to be "the standard-bearers of Santiago". At the end of the twelfth century, the Order of Santiago was created. It was an Hispanic version of the Order of the Temple, both of which were dedicated to administering the vast resources that kings and the faithful assigned to the Crusade. His name was taken up as a battle cry by the Spanish not only in the Middle Ages but in the conquest of America, as demonstrated by Pizarro, the conquerer of the Incas, whose words at the decisive moment when facing the Inca emperor Atahualpa, were "*Santiago y a ellos!*" ("For St. James, up and at them!"). It was actually in America where the apostle lived on in the many important cities founded in his name. Centuries later, during the conflict of 1808-1814, when modern national Spanish sentiment was born, Santiago was to reappear yet again, invoked by the clergy as a guarantee of victory over the French who, curiously enough, were descended from those who had endorsed the tomb of the Apostle and launched the Jacobean road on its way centuries earlier.¹⁴

The ironies of history do not cease here. Philologists have maintained that it was north of the Pyrenees, in the period of the initial success of the cult to Santiago, that the adjective "español" was invented and that it was used to refer to those belonging to the national entity whose remote origins are the subject of these pages. The logical evolution of the word *hispani*, the Latin name for the inhabitants of Hispania, in passing into the romance language most widely spoken in the Iberian Peninsula, should have given rise to "*hispanos*", "*espanos*", "*espanienses*", "*espanidos*", "*españeses*", or "*españones*". Yet the termination that triumphed was "*ol*", typical of the Provençal family of languages and very rare in Castilian. Although the controversy between specialists has been intense, and still cannot be considered conclusive, it seems logical to assume that it would not have been easy for the generic name referring to such a large and diverse

human group, comprising the inhabitants of all the kingdoms of Hispania, to have been derived from those living there: they had neither the perspective nor the necessary maps. It seems far more likely that outsiders, particularly from what is today France, which was so deeply involved in the creation of the *Camino de Santiago*, would feel the need to name those Christians living south of the Pyrenees. This they duly did by referring to “*espagnols*” or “*espanyols*”. Within the Peninsula, when a king as European in outlook as Alfonso X *el Sabio* (the Wise) ordered the *Crónica General*, which was nothing less than the first *Estoria de Espanna* (History of Spain), to be written in the future national language, he decided to have all the passages in which his sources had written “*hispani*” translated as “*espannoles*”. The term, therefore, did not emerge as a result of the development of everyday language – the usual path – but took a radically different route in that it originated from an outside source and was turned into common currency by the educated classes within.¹⁵

If nationalists read something other than their own literature, they would probably relativize the sacrosanct nature of their idols and legends to a far greater degree. It is a huge irony that the myth of Santiago, the personification of Spain and an instrument of anti-Napoleonic mobilization, should owe its initial success to a court and monks whom we would now, with our vision of a world divided up into national entities, be obliged to call ‘French’. It is no less ironic that the community to which Europeans would later attribute an innate “crusading spirit” was, in the Middle Ages, a world of coexisting cultures, and that the idea of “holy war” should be imported from central Europe. Lastly, it is verging on the satirical that the very term designating the members of a nation has, in its origins, all the appearance of being what a purist would have to admit is an *extranjerismo* foreign expression.

THE MORE RECENT PAST: THE EMPIRE OF THE *SPANISH* HAPSBURGS

It seems undeniable that, throughout Antiquity and the Middle Ages, an identity was gradually forged for the Iberian Peninsula and its inhabitants that differentiated it from its neighbours and as a result of which the place became known as “*España*” and its people as “*español*”. Until the reign of the Catholic Kings in the late 15th century, however, the division of the Peninsula into several independent kingdoms of similar power and unstable borders prevented these terms from acquiring any political significance. Still, at the beginning of the early modern age, the Catholic Kings held the crowns of most of these kingdoms, thus forming a monarchy whose borders coincided almost exactly with those of present-day Spain, thereby providing an example of extraordinary territorial stability in view of the constant changes to European frontiers over the last five hundred years. This is sufficient for us to consider that, in principle, Spanish identity – and I stress, not Spanish *national* identity - has endured in a manner comparable to the identities of the French and the English, which were the earliest in Europe (and, at the time, not national either).¹⁶ Moreover, during the early stages of this

process the monarchy, in all of these cases, was the backbone of the future nation.

Ferdinand and Isabella not only united their kingdoms but, almost simultaneously, established the new monarchy as a great Christian power. This “Spanish” hegemony in Europe was a strange phenomenon since the lands of the Iberian kingdoms were neither especially fertile nor well-populated and, with the exception of Aragón, they had played only a marginal role on the European stage during the mediaeval period. Their sudden promotion to the leading ranks of continental politics towards the year 1500 can be partly explained by what their contemporary, Machiavelli, called the *virtù* of the King and Queen – their ability and determination to extend their power – and partly as a result of what the astute Florentine called *fortuna*, or the combination of unplanned, fortuitous events.

One of the earliest events that no-one attributes to chance but to the ambition, audacity and farsightedness of the two future monarchs of Castile and Aragón, was their marriage itself, which created the initial foundation for the power of the new monarchy. After the death of Henry IV of Castile, who was revealingly dubbed *The Impotent*, the succession to the throne was disputed by two women. One was his sister, Isabella, with the support of her cousin, Don Ferdinand of Trastámara, prince and heir to the throne of Aragón; the other was Juana, recognised by law as the legitimate daughter of Henry and his wife but whose true paternity was attributed to the Queen’s lover, a courtier by the name of Don Beltrán de la Cueva – which is why Isabella’s supporters nicknamed her *la Beltraneja* – and whose claim had the support of the King of Portugal. Of these two couples, it was Isabella, the sister of the dead king of Castile, and her suitor, Ferdinand of Aragón, who displayed the necessary determination and political and military abilities. Not only did they marry in haste, falsifying a papal dispensation because they were cousins, but they triumphed over the armies of the Portuguese, or pro-*Beltraneja*, party in the war that inevitably followed.

The aggregation of territories was to continue with the war against Granada, which brought about the downfall of the last Moorish kingdom in the Peninsula in 1492, and the consolidation of Aragonese power in Sicily along with its expansion into Naples, thanks to a combination of the diplomatic cunning of Ferdinand and the military innovations of his generals. The Castilian infantry, which, until the 1490s, had never fought outside the Peninsula, was first taken to Naples under the leadership of the *Gran Capitán* NAME HERE and was thereafter to become the most fearsome fighting force in Europe for the next century and a half. After Isabella’s death in 1509, Ferdinand continued to increase his kingdoms with the annexation of Navarre, which was justified by his second marriage to Germaine de Foix and accompanied by the usual armed intervention. Those commentators who have presented the matrimonial policy of the Catholic Kings as an operation designed to achieve “Spanish national unity” overlook the fact that one of the clauses in the matrimonial agreement between Ferdinand and the Princess of Navarre obliged him to bequeath his Aragonese kingdoms to the

potential offspring from the marriage, separating anew what had cost so much to unite. In fact, this segregation almost came about when Germaine gave birth to a male heir, but the opportune intervention of *fortuna* led the baby to die within a few hours of birth.

The most momentous territorial expansion of the newly unified monarchy was, to some extent, also due to *fortuna*. Christopher Columbus, the Genoese navigator who hawked his services around the courts of Europe with a view to exploring the western route to India, discovered vast lands unknown to Europeans because of his mistaken calculations as to the size of the planet. The Portuguese, experts in geography, had already rejected his plan: they accepted that the Earth could be circumnavigated but rightly maintained that the shortest route to India was still that which skirted the African coast in a southerly direction. In spite of the fact that the University of Salamanca expressed an opinion as unfavourable as that of the Portuguese geographers,¹⁷ Queen Isabella in Castile decided to finance Columbus' expedition. He went on to discover land, more or less where he had expected to do so, and died in the conviction that events had proved him right and that he had sailed westwards to "the Indies". Shortly afterwards, a shrewd Florentine by the name of Amerigo Vespucci interpreted correctly what had happened: the Castilian caravels had stumbled upon a continent hitherto known to Europeans. As they had returned without naming it, he gave it his own name, in its Castilian version, and in the feminine, as befitted a continent: America. If the renowned Genoese adventurer had not been so obstinate, the continent would no doubt be known as Columbia. As to how it affected the meteoric rise of the Hispanic monarchy, the unexpected discovery of these boundless lands was to provide the Castilian crown with a huge income, mainly in the form of silver ingots, for several centuries, and this played no small part in maintaining its European hegemony.

Fate, or fortune, also played a part in shaping the results of the matrimonial policy of the Catholic Kings. Many felt that the alterations to their plans led to the imperial splendour which distinguished the royal house under subsequent kings, while, for others, they were the cause of the many collective misfortunes that were to befall it. As already mentioned, the untimely death of the son of the Aragonese King Ferdinand and Germaine de Foix meant that the territories brought together by his marriage to Isabella remained united. However, the only son born of that earlier Castilian-Aragonese union, the prince Don Juan, who was the heir to the whole legacy, also died in the fullness of youth. To quote Roger Merriman, it was a "terrible catastrophe" for the Catholic Kings, who "must have felt inexpressible things".¹⁸ He was survived by his four sisters, whose marriages had been carefully arranged by a King and Queen who were fully aware of the benefits of an advantageous union. With the aim of uniting the peninsular kingdoms under a single crown, two of them were married off to the scions of John of Portugal; and with the aim of isolating France, one of the other two was wedded to the son of the Tudor King Henry VII of England and the other to the son of the Hapsburg Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian, both of which powers were traditional enemies of France. These

aims were achieved: never before had France been surrounded by so many enemies nor defeated as she was in the succession of wars that took place during the sixteenth century, while the Portuguese crown adorned the brow of Philip II, the great-grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella. Nevertheless, a succession of deaths, particularly that of the heir to the throne, led to an unexpected change in the dynasty: the Castilian and Aragonese Trastamaras were to see their heritage pass to the Hapsburgs, successors to the Holy Roman-Germanic Empire, who vied with France for the lands of Burgundy.

Consequently, the vast dominions acquired by Charles V in 1516 derived from four inheritances: the Imperial one, the Burgundian one, the Aragonese one – including Sicily and Naples – and the Castilian one, with its recently discovered American territories. The defence alone of this fabulous ensemble of territories forced him to embark upon an interminable series of military campaigns, which were neither limited to the Emperor's reign nor to the period of hegemony experienced by his immediate successors. From the time of the *Gran Capitán* to the Napoleonic invasion or, in other words, during the reigns of all the Hapsburgs and the first four Bourbon kings, the Catholic Monarchy – the title that had corresponded to the new collection of kingdoms since the conquest of Granada in 1492 – participated in *all* the European military conflicts of importance. While any king of that era expected to wage war indefatigably against other rulers in order to survive, or to enlarge his dominions, it was a more acute and perpetual problem for those who believed it their destiny to occupy the principle seats of power in Europe.

This aspect is of direct relevance to our subject because the “nationalizing” function of the monarchy was exercised primarily through the wars in which it was constantly engaged. Not that the wars were waged in the cause of national interests, because it was the king who won or lost territory; there was still no “national essence” staking its prestige on every new conflict, as occurred with the colonial wars of the nineteenth century. The troops were fighting *in the service of the king*, and although, for a very long time, the crack troops of His Catholic Majesty's army were the Castilian *tercios*, these were a minority, swamped by the multitudes of Italian, Swiss and Walloon soldiers. It was not a national army, nor did it exhibit national or even pre-national sentiments: its “soldiers” were, above all, professionals – mercenaries - who could pass from the service of one master to another overnight on receipt of their wage. This situation, however, was beginning to change as it was principally the effect of war on the population that had a necessarily nationalizing impact. Wars led to the existence of common enemies and the emergence of a collective image of both oneself – imposed by the enemy – and the “other”, creating bonds of unity and contributing to the rise of a collective identity that would soon come to be called national, as early modern specialists have demonstrated in the case of other European states.¹⁹ Moreover, as any researcher into national phenomena is all too aware, nothing unites a people like a common enemy. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the fact of having not just one but numerous external enemies for a very long period – the greater part of three hundred years – and

living in permanent tension with neighbouring kingdoms made a profound impression on the subjects of that monarchy. This is in contrast to the very few wars waged between the peninsular kingdoms (only two, in 1640 and 1700, though each one lasted some twelve years).

This unifying, warring monarchy required a level of resources that inevitably affected all its kingdoms, but without question Castile more than any other. This territory became the central nucleus of the monarchy and its principal source of men and money, especially from the moment that the defeat of the 1521 uprising of the towns of Castile, known as the revolt of the *Comuneros*, left its representative institutions defenceless before the exigencies of the crown. The monarchy's demands on the peripheral kingdoms, which were less tightly controlled politically, led to mounting tensions that erupted into attempts at secession, such as the crisis of 1640, the year of the Catalan and Portuguese uprisings. The former failed, while the latter succeeded. But not all was dissension. The Catholic Kings and the early Hapsburgs could also boast of an apparently interminable series of diplomatic and military successes to their subjects. Under the Catholic Kings, there were already messianic songs and millenarian prophecies expressing pride in the amazing events that the people had lived through, with a tendency to attribute them to divine favour in accordance with the providential vision of history prevailing at the time. There was a feeling that the history of the world had taken a new turn, that a new empire had arisen which was comparable with that of the Persians or the Romans, and even that the universal monarchy, the culmination of all history, had arrived. The apologists of Ferdinand and Isabella prophesied that the crowning achievement of their reign would be the conquest of Jerusalem, as the prelude to the second Coming of Christ. Empires, they observed, were moving from East to West, following the course of the sun: originating in Assyria and Persia, embodied successively in Greece and Rome, they now culminated in Spain, a *Finis Terrae* that would also be the *Finis Historiae*.²⁰ Pedro de Cartagena, in his zeal to praise Queen Isabella, explained this, on the basis of the letters of her name: "*la I denota Imperio / la S señorear / toda la tierra y la mar...*". [the I denotes Empire / the S Seigniorship / over all the land and sea...]. When he reached *Regina*, anticipation soared:

"Dios querrá, sin que se yerre, / que rematéis vos la R
en el nombre de Granada... / No estaréis contenta bien
hasta que en Jerusalén / pinten las armas reales".²¹

Although the protagonist of this millenarian promise was the monarchy, and not "the Spanish people", early hymns to the greatness of the people or *nation* can also be found. It must be remembered that the first foreign military expedition of the Catholic Kings marched on Renaissance Italy, where it was received as a barbarous invader. Thus, both the monarchs and their supporters had a vested interest in demonstrating not only that they were militarily superior, but also that they were the rulers of a highly cultured country. The Gothic myth – that of being successors to the Visigoths – had come to the end of its useful life after the disappearance of the Kingdom of Granada and was hardly

likely to impress the descendants of the Roman Empire. Neither could the Castilian language, which was widely spoken within the Peninsula but not outside it, be of service in changing the image of the country in the eyes of the rest of Europe. The upshot was that the Catholic Kings, in contrast to Alfonso *el Sabio* (the Wise), ordered their chroniclers to write in Latin, even having the histories written hitherto in Castilian to be translated into Latin. What characterized these histories was the obsessive stress on the millennial antiquity of the Spanish monarchy, dating back – they insisted – beyond that of the Romans. The *Comentarios*, published in 1498 by the humanist Annio de Viterbo, were most timely, as they claimed that the Spanish monarchy originated six hundred years before the founding of Troy, no doubt in order to flatter the new rulers. This was also the line taken by Lucio Marineo Sículo, another Italian humanist imported by the King and Queen for this purpose, along with the Catalan, Joan Margarit, and the Castilians, Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo and Antonio de Nebrija. All of them praised the exploits of the soldiers who had conquered Granada and were then securing victories in Italy, portraying them as the continuation of the race of heroes which began with Hercules and Tubal, later resisted Rome, and which, finally, rebelled against the Muslims. However, it was Nebrija, “extraordinarily sensitive to the disdain shown by Italian scholars towards the cultural traditions of Spain”, who published the first book of Castilian grammar and who established in his prologue the famous parallel between the expansion of political domination and its linguistic counterpart (“language was always a companion of empire”), a language whose perfection and sonority he considered a source of pride for its speakers. This puts him several centuries ahead of his time in making the connection between state power and official culture which is typical of all nationalisms.²²

Under Charles V, identification of the successes of the monarchy with “Spain” became more difficult. Not only was the King unmistakably Flemish but he held the imperial crown in far higher esteem than those of Castile, Aragón, Navarre or Granada. His Chancellor, the Italian NAME?Gattinara, was driven by the Dantean ideal of universal monarchy, which was shared by even the Hispanic counsellors and thinkers surrounding the Emperor, such as Alfonso de Valdés and Bishop Guevara. Valdés himself explained the imperial mission the day after the battle of Pavia (1525) in these terms: “God has miraculously given this victory to the Emperor [...] so that, as is prophesied by many, under this Most Excellent Christian Prince all the world will be received into our Holy Catholic Faith and the words of our Redeemer will be fulfilled: *Fiet unum ovile et unus pastor.*”²³ This image of the shepherd and his flock would be repeated by Hernando de Acuña, a soldier and poet in the style of Garcilaso de la Vega, in a vibrant sonnet dedicated to Charles V, which expresses like none other the universalist, messianic imperial optimism of his court, and whose two quartets proclaim:

“Ya se acerca, señor, o ya es llegada
la edad gloriosa en que promete el cielo
una grey y un pastor sólo en el suelo
por suerte a vuestros tiempos reservada.
Ya tan alto principio en tal jornada
os muestra el fin de vuestro santo celo,
y anuncia al mundo para más consuelo
un monarca, un imperio y una espada [...]”²⁴

It was a poem much to the liking of twentieth century Falangist or fascist poets, who interpreted it as an expression of the *españolismo* or Spanishness of the imperial era. Note, however, that there is no mention of Spain, only of an Emperor who rules the globe in the name of Christ. This is not only a mediaeval idea, but also one which is entirely alien to the Hispanic tradition since lawyers at the peninsular courts had been insisting for centuries that each king was an emperor in his own kingdom, in defiance of imperial pretensions of supremacy. This was ratified by the scholars of the sixteenth century, such as Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Suárez, and, more than any other, Domingo de Soto.²⁵ Driven by his ecumenical ambition, Charles V actually turned his back on peninsular tradition, even that which prevailed in his own time. Consistent with the idea of his mission, he spent his time travelling constantly around his European territories and lived less than one third of his life in the Peninsula. His ministers and advisers, apart from Gattinara, were Granville, Granvelle, Adrian of Utrecht, Charles de Lannoy, Guillaume de Croy and the Count of Nassau. Although he had generals called Alba and Leyva, others were called Savoy, Pescara, Farnese, Bourbon and Orange. His bankers, once the Jews had been expelled from Spain, only rejoiced in German or Italian names: Fugger, Welser, Schetz, Grimaldi, Marini, Centurione. And although there were Castilian *tercios* in his armies, there were also German lansquenets and Swiss mercenaries. In no way could this Empire be called a Spanish, or even an Hispanic, monarchy: during the reign of Charles V, the most appropriate title was the Empire *of the Hapsburgs*, and, from the next generation onwards, in order to distinguish it from its imperial Austrian cousins, the monarchy of the Spanish Hapsburgs (as long as it remains clear that this referred to Hispania or Iberia).²⁶

The progressive identification of the monarchy with Spain gathered pace in the harsh political climate of the Counter-Reformation. It forced the Emperor himself to take refuge in his peninsular territories in 1555 (CORRECT?), where he had not set foot in the previous thirteen years, but which had, by then, become the safest of his broad dominions in which to end his days. The tendency was accentuated by his son who, after travelling in his youth, spent the last forty years of his life without leaving the Peninsula, which was completely under his dominion from 1580 onwards with the incorporation of Portugal, from which point on the Catholic Monarchy became increasingly defined as Hispanic or Iberian. Thus, the universalist imperial messianism became progressively replaced by an identification with “Spain” as the chosen nation.²⁷

The intellectuals of the time tended, in effect, to liken the glories of the Hapsburg monarchy to the legendary episodes attributed since time immemorial to *Hispania*. Between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, there was a period of huge cultural creativity, particularly in the spheres of literature and painting, known as the *Siglo de Oro* (literally, the Century of Gold) of Spanish culture, which continues to be analysed by literary and art historians in innumerable publications. In the field of painting, Diego de Velázquez and Bartolomé de Morillo are only two of the great names of that era and their canvases reflect the splendour of the royal house and the martial glories of “Spain”, among other subjects. But it was, above all, a glorious moment for literature, with Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Lope de Vega writing plays that made an illiterate public feel proud of what it was to be “Spanish”. Such literature identified Spain with a hierarchical social order under the protection of the king and defended this as the natural order consecrated by God. A renowned early modern specialist, Ricardo GarcíaCárcel, concludes that, during the sixteenth century, the word “Spain”, “used until then in an almost exclusively geographical sense, began to take on political connotations”, and the term, particularly in the historical sense, was “used preferentially by poets [...]; epic poetry was passionate in its exaltation of the imperial deeds of the Spanish and invented a singularly exaggerated Spanish narcissism.”²⁸

All the plays and poetry of the *Siglo de Oro* are sprinkled with references to the glories of the monarchy, which are simultaneously presented as “Spanish”, in which battles from the early modern era are mixed up with legendary acts or actors from the Middle Ages, or even Antiquity, such as Viriato, Numantia and El Cid. Outstanding in this endeavour was Lope de Vega due to the directness of his style and his indisputable popular appeal. Lope repeatedly invoked Spain in his poetry, and in his plays he often located the action in Flanders, and either had Don Juan of Austria put in an appearance or even Philip II himself (with the world at his feet), or else simply included a character called “Spain”. In *Jerusalén conquistada*, he attempted to write the great epic poem of the nation, which was in turn that of the monarchy:

“también donde el Jordán los campos baña
pasó el castillo y el león de España”.

There are no lack of references in the poem to the “loss of Spain” at Guadalete (a theme to which Fray Luis de León had also dedicated his “*Profecía del Tajo*”) nor is any opportunity missed to express a very “Spanish” pride bordering on intolerable boastfulness:

“Teme a español, que todas las naciones
hablan de sí, y al español prefieren [...]
Todas grandezas del español refieren;
español vence en todas ocasiones [...]
El español no envidia, y de mil modos
es envidiado el español por todos.”²⁹

With less of a swagger, Miguel de Cervantes also sketches a collective “Spanish” stereotype based on the Numantians in his *El cerco de Numancia*. One of their traits is religiosity, which dates back to the Goths (“*católicos serán llamados todos / sucesión digna de los fuertes godos*”), but the most outstanding one is courage:

“indicio ha dado esta no vista hazaña
del valor que en los siglos venideros
tendrán los hijos de la fuerte España,
hijos de tales padres herederos [...]”
¡Qué envidia, qué temor, España armada,
te tendrán mil naciones extranjeras...!”³⁰

This was no longer the ecumenical climate of Charles V. Cervantes was certainly talking about a powerful empire whose existence was devoted to the “universal good” - who could doubt it - but it existed in competition with the other “thousand foreign nations”. The monarchy of the Hapsburgs was coming to be defined as a limited one and the adjective that characterized it was *Spanish* or *Hispanic*.

Although ecumenism was on the wane, this did not effect either the elite’s sense of providentialism or their awareness of being the chosen people. The political works of Ginés de Sepúlveda and Francisco de Vitoria, who rationalised imperial expansion in America, dated from the high point of imperial power; as did those of Alfonso de Valdés and Guevara, who elaborated upon the ideals of imperialism and justified the Sack of Rome as divine punishment. Later on, when the differences faced by the empire began to mount, the works of Gracián, Saavedra Fajardo and Quevedo defended the kings against their European rivals. In the first half of the seventeenth century, when the imperial edifice was beginning to show signs of collapse, the ideologues of the minor Hapsburgs – made up almost exclusively of the Catholic clergy – still continued to express their faith in the messianic nature of the *Spanish* people, which was identified with the Catholic Monarchy. In 1612, the Dominican, Juan de la Puente, interpreted the prophecies of Isaiah on Mount Zion as referring to Toledo; seven years later, Juan de Salazar, a Benedictine, insisted on identifying the Spanish people as the Chosen People of the Lord; in 1629, yet another Benedictine, Benito de Peñalosa, published his *Libro de las cinco excelencias del español*, in which there is a whole chapter entitled “How the Spanish spread the Catholic Faith, Office and Prerogative of God’s Chosen People”. And in 1636, another priest, Juan Caramuel, wrote a *Declaración mística de las armas de España* in a similar spirit.³¹

Together with the polemical and apologetic works, a whole new literary genre began to grow up under the heading of “The History of Spain”. Already, in the time of Charles V, alongside the traditional chroniclers dedicated to praising the memorable deeds of the monarch,³² historians began to eulogise not so much the king as the kingdom of Castile,

which was frequently identified with “Spain”. The earliest of these, Florian de Ocampo, wrote a *Crónica General de España* that only covered the period up to the Romans and merely reproduced the fables invented by Annio de Viterbo. At the same time as Ocampo, Pedro de Medina, Lorenzo Padilla and Pedro de Alcocer were also writing ‘general histories’ or ‘chronicles’ of ‘Spain’, and those written by Esteban de Garibay and Ambrosio de Morales, who succeeded Ocampo as official chroniclers in the time of Philip II, bore similar titles.³³ These histories not only had a wider readership than the mediaeval accounts because they were printed, but also their contents were substantially different to those of the purely royal chronicles because they began with the exploits of the *nation* in antiquity.

Not one of these authors could rival in importance the Jesuit, Juan de Mariana, who, in 1592, began publication of his *Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*, which was translated into Castilian from 1601 onwards as a *Historia general de España*. Mariana was a true intellectual and he set out to produce a more rigorously accurate work than that of his predecessors, leaving out the kind of inventions to be found in Annio de Viterbo.³⁴ This, however, did not mean that his work was in any way impartial. The inscription itself signalled a personal identification with the glories of the *patria*, which was not exempt from a certain tone of vindication: “I was encouraged to take up the pen by the urge I held within me during those years when I journeyed beyond Spain, through foreign lands, to understand our own affairs and the origins and the means which placed it on the road to the greatness it enjoys today”. History, for him, is a source of collective pride: the pride of “lineage”, a term which he employs in preference to race, people or nation. And the history of a lineage is, in effect, what he provides: a genealogy of illustrious men and a chronicle of the glorious feats of arms of forebears, both of which illustrate the superior quality of their blood. As a result, although he refuses to give credence to some of the mythological fables of ancient Iberia, he begs indulgence for including many others because “to all and by all is granted the establishment of the origins and beginnings of their people and to make them much more illustrious than they are by mixing falsehoods with truth”. And “if some people can be granted this liberty, the Spanish, for their nobility, should be more than others because of the greatness and antiquity of their doings”. Consequently, repeating the words of San Isidoro, Mariana claimed that Tubal, son of Japheth, had been the “first man to reach Spain” and was the founder of “the Spanish people and their valiant empire”; and that no less than a procession of gods and heroes - Osiris, Jason, Hercules and Ulysses - followed him to the Peninsula.³⁵ This was a means of tracing the Spanish people back to one of the original “lines” or “peoples” of the world, so that there was no possibility of a greater antiquity. Indeed, they were even earlier than the Romans. Mariana and all the intellectuals educated in Italy may have felt a great reverence for the Romans, but they were equally committed to the task of creating a patriotic identity.

It is clear that Mariana’s work represents a huge step forward in the creation of the identity of what he himself calls the “nation”. Still, the leading figures continued to be

the monarchs. It is true that the bedrock underlying royal succession is “Spain”, but this is an ambiguous term which, at times, possesses little more than a geographical significance, while at others it clearly has a racial or group connotation in which Mariana demonstrates an undeniable pride. In addition, the rationale behind his pride is complicated: in his description of the collective nature of the Spanish he is unable to avoid emphasising their martial prowess yet, even as he does so, one can detect a faint note of disgust. Although he considers Numantia to represent the “glory and honour of Spain” (because it struck “fear and terror in the hearts of the people of Rome”), he describes the primitive inhabitants of the country as “more like wild beasts than men”, and though no doubt loyal and excellent warriors, they were “contemptuous of the study of the sciences”. There is little sense of pride in these lines. It should not be forgotten that Mariana wrote this work in Latin and that, only against his better judgement (“far removed from what I anticipated at the beginning”), did he translate it into Castilian (“corrupt Latin”), all of which distances him from the pride in Castilian of, for example, Nebrija.³⁶

Juan de Mariana’s *Historia general de España* proved to be a watershed. The work was republished many times over the centuries, with additional appendices. It became the fundamental point of reference for studying the history of the *patria* for two hundred and fifty years. Not many books can lay claim to such a legacy.

A QUESTION OF TERMINOLOGY

This chapter has examined the main features of the formative process of a collective identity prior to the modern era, the existence of which – at least among the educated élites - is unquestionable, to judge by the amount of surviving evidence. What is the most appropriate term to describe this identity and the expressions and feelings of pride which it generated? When Cervantes speaks of the envy that a “thousand foreign nations” feels towards Spain, or when Father Mariana says that in his wanderings through “foreign nations” he was moved by the desire to know “of our own affairs”, in what sense are they using the word “nation”? Are we perhaps talking about *nationalism*?

The answer, in essence, is that we are not. *Natio* was a term used in classical Latin to designate the foreign communities, usually composed of merchants, which were established in the outlying suburbs of imperial Rome. The same word was applied to the various linguistic groupings in the few mediaeval centres or meeting places of European scope, such as the great universities and the ecclesiastical councils. “*Nation*” must therefore be interpreted as a human group that is characterised by having been *born* in the same territory, with the result that all its members speak the same language. Many stages are required in order to make the transition from nation, in this sense, to nationalism. First, there is the necessary attribution of common psychological features

to such peoples, which generally occurred during the sixteenth century. Many of these alleged psychological traits already contained ethical judgements, so that nations went on to become ideal moral collectives. A people then had to be transformed into the “voice of God” - as in the case of Protestantism - and presented as being in opposition to the monarch who had, until then, been the earthly incarnation of divine authority in competition with none other than the Papacy. One such event took place with the Cromwellian Revolution in the England of the mid-17th century.³⁷ Next, the process had to attain intellectual acknowledgement from men such as Hobbes or Locke, the thinkers behind the theory of the “social contract”, culminating in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who defended the existence of a “common ‘I’” endowed with a “general will” different to the sum of the individual wills that comprise society. The conviction that this collective being was the only legitimate subject of sovereignty, rather than the monarch, was the result of the enlightened intellectual environment that led up to the rebellion of the British colonies in North America in 1776 and France in 1789. Only when the collective being becomes the subject of political rights does one come to the onset of nationalities, or the demand for the alignment of a State with a previously defined ethnic entity. This necessity was not felt until the nineteenth century and there was no attempt to apply it in any systematic way until after the First World War. Strictly speaking, it was only in these latter stages, when a logical or necessary link was established between a people or *ethnos* and its dominion over a territory, that one can talk about *nationalism*, a doctrine whose fundamental core consists of making the nation the depositary of supreme political power. It was also at this point that States *officially* adopted and promoted a culture that they considered identifiable with whichever people or *ethnos* they believed themselves to be representative of in order to ensure their legitimacy.

Although the development of nationalism is subsequent to the era discussed, it must be understood that a nation, like any other viable mobilising identity, cannot be invented or constructed *ex nihilo*. There is no doubt that the term *Hispania* is the origin of “Spain”, a word that identifies the cultural and political entity whose evolution in the nineteenth century is the main theme of this book. Neither that, over the centuries, Latin, the language of Roman origin that came to dominate the Peninsula, would become Castilian or “Spanish”, one of the cultural foundations of this national identity. In other words, in the pre-modern world there was no nationalism but there were collective identities whose cultural components – whether geographical, religious, linguistic, of estate, lineage or “historical memory” - were subsequently introduced by nationalists as elements of their political agenda. Accordingly, the purpose of this chapter has not been to tackle Spanish nationalism as such but to explain the admixture of collective identities prior to the emergence of a truly national identity, a condition *sine qua non* for the development of Spanish political nationalism.

The fact that these identities preceded nationalism does not necessarily mean *pre-* or *proto-nationalism*, as many historians and political scientists have done. It is true that these phenomena culminated in the nationalism of the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries, but they might not have done. A seed does not necessarily grow into a tree; a child does not always reach adulthood. To define them as *pre-tree* or *pre-man* is not only inadequate (as it is deterministic), it also implies a lack: to talk about “pre” or “proto” is to refer to an absence, to define something by what it has not yet become or by what it has already ceased to be. The usage of this kind of prefix reflects an Aristotelian vision of reality, a definition of entities in accordance with their assumed purpose. An exact language should aspire to name each phenomenon at each stage without reference to its assumed evolution.

In a bygone age, one talked of “love of one’s *patria*”, an expression originating from Latin. During the early modern period, the idea of the “*patria*” was used less and less to refer to the *patria chica* (one’s home town or local area) and increasingly to the global political unity of which it formed a part. In the eighteenth century, the word “patriotism” first appears, a term which can be applied to this kind of sentiment. Moreover, expressions of dynastic loyalty to the monarch or the royal house gradually became indistinguishable from loyalty to the group, which was defined in cultural or ethnic terms. Still, such terms were closer to those of the clan, *genus* or lineage because collective identities adopted the forms and sentiments previously reserved for aristocratic lineages and families. It is therefore not incorrect to talk of a growing “ethnic patriotism”, a pride in one’s *ethnos* or cultural group. It is a *patriotic* and also an *ethnic* feeling because it is related to the genus, lineage or “nation”, but it is not *nationalist* because two crucial links are absent: the first is that between an official culture and state power and the second is between the legitimacy of the state and its sanction by the collective or popular personality.³⁸

This adhesion to a human group which believes itself to be imbued with its own cultural identity and which merges with the political structure of the monarchy is what can be termed more accurately as *ethnicpatriotism* rather than *nationalism* or *pre-nationalism*. It is the development of this phenomenon that has been traced here, from the *LausHispaniae* of Isidoro to the history of the “nation” by Juan de Mariana. The feature common to all these outpourings was an exaltation of the deeds of “the Spanish” in terms similar to those praising the great noble houses: for their antiquity, for the martial exploits of their ancestors, for the fertility and abundance of their lands and for the religious devotion of their inhabitants, all of which was made manifest by the riches that they bestowed upon the Church or by the miraculous relics – sure signs of divine grace - that they treasured. In short, the paradigm had been established by Isidoro, Bishop of Seville, in his eulogy to the Visigoths who, after a long, arduous courtship had conquered the favours of radiant *Hispania*.

NOTES

¹ Manifest of the constitutional Madrid City Council, 1-V-1837. The Spanish word *Patria* combines a masculine meaning from the Latin, *pater* – father - with a feminine ‘a’ ending. Its significance is a combination of fatherland, motherland and even homeland. As no single one of these words captures its essence, it has been left untranslated.

² See, for instance, A. Flórez Estrada, *Introducción para la historia de la revolución de España*, Londres, 1810 (B.A.E., Madrid, 1958, p. 260), or *El Procurador General de la Nación y del Rey*, 108, 1814, p. 997.

³ V. Gebhardt, *Historia general de España y de sus Indias*, Barcelona, 1860-73, vol. 6, p. 468; or B. J. Gallardo, *Alocución patriótica en la solemne función con que los ciudadanos del comercio de Londres celebraron el restablecimiento de la Constitución y la libertad de la patria*, Londres, A. Taylor, 1820, p. 22. On the persistence of the essential traits of character, see Pardo de Andrade’s manifesto in December 1811: “Numantia and Saguntum are reborn in the ruins of Zaragoza, Gerona...” (G. Lovett, *Napoleon and the Birth of Modern Spain*, N. York Univ. Press, 1965, vol. I, p. 402).

⁴ Words with very different meaning, certainly, since *nación* is used in official documents with a juridical content, while *patria* is more emotional and therefore used in military or political speeches with mobilising aims, while *pueblo* is preferred by Liberal radicals (according to F.-X. Guerra, *Modernidad e Independencias*, Madrid, 1992, p. 335, in Jacobin pamphlets it almost replaced “the word nation and its ambiguities”).

⁵ *Catecismo católico-político...*, 1808 (*Catecismos políticos españoles...*, p. 38). On “patria” and “patriotismo”, v. M. C. Seoane, *El primer lenguaje constitucional español*, Madrid, 1968, pp. 78-80; or M. P. Battaner, *Vocabulario Político-Social en España (1868-1873)*, Madrid, 1977.

⁶ Quintana, in “Reflexiones sobre el patriotismo”, *Semanario Patriótico*, 3, 15-IX-1808 (cfr. F.-X. Guerra, *Modernidad e Independencias...*, p. 242). R. Solís, *El Cádiz de las Cortes*, Madrid, 1969, pp. 345-346 and 349-350 (Café de los Patriotas, p. 136); and *Semanario Patriótico*, 5, 29-IX-1808 (quoted by F.-X. Guerra, *Modernidad...*, p. 328).

⁷ R. Solís, *El Cádiz de las Cortes...*, p. 80.

⁸ Guerrillas as a revolutionary war, in M. Artola, *La España de Fernando VII*, vol. XXXII de la *Historia de España Menéndez Pidal*, Madrid, 1992. Cfr. A. Moliner Prada, *La Guerra de la Independencia en España*. Barcelona, 2007.

⁹ J. Dalmau Carles, *Enciclopedia de grado medio*, Gerona and Madrid, 1954, p. 325. On historians, see, *infra*, chap. 4.

¹⁰ Roman provinces --Lusitania, Tarraconense, Gallaecia, Cartaginense, Bética—did not coincide with future political or administrative units, such as Portugal, Catalonia, Galice, Castile or Andalucía.

¹¹ See Isidoro de Sevilla’s *Las Historias de los Godos, Vándalos y Suevos*, edited by C. Rodríguez Alonso, León, 1975; A. Castro, *La realidad histórica de España*, México, 1966, p. 82; R. Menéndez Pidal, preface to *España Visigoda*, vol. III, *Historia de España Menéndez Pidal*, pp. XXXIV-XXXV; or J. L. Romero, “San Isidoro de Sevilla. Su pensamiento histórico-político y sus relaciones con la España visigoda”, *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 8 (1947), pp. 5-71.

¹² See R. Valls Montes, *La interpretación de la historia de España y sus orígenes ideológicos en el bachillerato franquista (1938-1953)*, Valencia, 1984.

¹³ Saint James fights for “Spain”, for instance, in Coimbra. PetrusHispanus, the only medieval pope who bore that patronymic, was born in Lisbon.

¹⁴ B. Bennassar, *Saint-Jacques de Compostelle*, París, 1970; J. Herrero, *Los orígenes del pensamiento reaccionario español*, Madrid, 1971, pp. 227-228.

¹⁵ See P. Aebischer, *Estudios de toponimia y lexicografía románicas*, Barcelona, 1948; A. Castro, *Sobre el nombre y el quién de los españoles*, Madrid, 1973.

¹⁶ See J. J. Linz, “Early State-building and Late Peripheral Nationalism against the State: the case of Spain”, in S. N. Eisenstadt and S. Rokkan, *Building States and Nations*, London, 1973, pp. 32-109.

¹⁷ The Salamanca geographers agreed with Columbus on the round shape of the Earth, but they disagreed on its size. See F. FernándezArmesto, *Columbus*, Oxford U.P., 1992, pp. 53-54; or W. and C. Phillips, *The Worlds of*

Christopher Columbus, Cambridge U.P., 1992, pp. 110, 121-122. On Vespucci, L. de Matos, *L'expansion portugaise dans la littérature latine de la Renaissance*, Lisboa, 1991, pp. 277-318.

¹⁸ R. B. Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire, in the Old World and the New*, N. York, 1962, vol. II, pp. 320-21. On the matrimonial policies of the Catholic Kings, a good synthesis in J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716*, Londres, 1970, chaps. 1-3; marriage to G. de Foix, p. 138.

¹⁹For the British case, L. Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, Yale U.P., 1992. Western Europe in general, in Ch. Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton U.P., 1975, especially introduction and chapter 9 (by Tilly), S. Finer, "State and Nation-Building in Europe: The Role of the Military" (pp. 84-163), and S. Rokkan, "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation-Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations within Europe" (562-600).

²⁰See J. Cepeda Adán, "El providencialismo en los cronistas de los RR CC", *Arbor*, 59 (1950). On Nebrija, E. Asensio, "La lengua compañera del imperio", *Revista de Filología Española*, 43 (3-4), 1960, pp. 398-413. D. Catalán, in his preface to Menéndez Pidal's *Los españoles en la historia*, Madrid, 1991, p. 52, observes that most of these writers belonged to a first generation of *conversos*, prone to assign some providential mission of the Iberians rather than accepting the antiquity and superiority of the Romans.

²¹Quoted by O. H. Green, *Spain and the Western Tradition. The Castilian Mind in Literature, from El Cid to Calderón*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1963-66, vol. I, p. 97. Cfr. P. Marcuello (on the conquest of Granada and Jerusalem by Ferdinand), or A. Hernández, both quoted by R. del Arco y Garay, *La idea de imperio...*, pp. 111-112. Nebrija also calls Ferdinand and Isabella "orbis moderatores" (R. B. Tate, *Ensayos sobre la historiografía peninsular del siglo xv*, Madrid, 1970, p. 210).

²² R. B. Tate, *Ensayos sobre la historiografía...*, p. 27, 185, 194, 209 (on Annio de Viterbo, pp. 25-27; on Sánchez de Arévalo and Nebrija, pp. 22 and 191). On Annio de Viterbo, see also J. Caro Baroja, *Las falsificaciones de la historia (en relación con la de España)*, Barcelona, 1992, pp. 114-120. More on Nebrija, E. Asensio, "La lengua compañera...". Quotes of J. del Encina, C. de Castillejo, V. Espinel, J. de Valdés or A. Laguna in O. H. Green, *Spain and the Western Tradition...*, I, pp. 250, 257, 264.

²³ Valdés, *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*. See also J. A. Maravall, *Carlos V y el pensamiento político del Renacimiento*, Madrid, 1960, especially pp. 183-226, and *Utopía y reformismo en la España de los Austrias*, Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1982, pp. 346-354; or R. Menéndez Pidal, *Idea imperial de Carlos V*, Madrid, ed., 1963. The idea was kept throughout the 16th and early 17th centuries; in 1621, the count of Villamediana addressed a famous sonnet to Philip IV's coronation, with the prophecy: "... uno el redil, una la ley perfecta, / habrá un solo Pastor y un solo Imperio" ("there will be one sheepfold, one perfect law, one Shepherd, one Empire"... quoted by O. H. Green, *Spain and the Western Tradition...*, t. IV, p. 5).

²⁴"The time has come when Heavens have promised one single herd and one shepherd... one king, one Empire, one sword". Hernando de Acuña (c.1519-1580), poet and soldier, fought at San Quintín, 1557. The most perfect expression of the so called "imperial poetry" was Fernando de Herrera (1534-1597); in his ode to the Lepanto victory, he refers to the "claro Español, y belicoso" and compares the Spanish lion to Babilone, Egypt or Greece.

²⁵See J. A. Maravall, *El concepto de España en la Edad Media*, Madrid, 1954; or R. del Arco y Garay, *La idea de imperio...*, pp. 133-144.

²⁶ Although future nationalist historiography presented as "Spanish victories" battles such as Pavia's (1525), where most of Charles V's troops were German *landsknecht*, writers of the time, as Gutierre de Cetina, spoke of the honor that these victories would report to "Spain" because they were commanded by "gentlemen from Spain" (R. del Arco y Garay, *La idea de imperio...*, p. 175). On bankers, see R. Carande's *Carlos V y sus banqueros* or F. Ruiz, *El siglo de los genoveses en España, 1527-1627*. See also K. Brandt, *The Emperor Charles V*, London, 1965; P. Chaunu, *La España de Carlos V*, Barcelona, 1976; and, above all, H. Kamen, *Imperio. La forja de España como potencia mundial*, Madrid, 2003. B. Bennassar, *Historia de los españoles*, Barcelona, 1989, vol. I, pp. 372-379 concludes: "the Spanish monarchy at its peak was led by a real *International*, both in its monarchs, their counsellors and its military or financial chiefs".

²⁷ The young Charles V, asked by the Castilian Cortes not to appoint as his aids but "people born in these Kingdoms", coldly replied that his intention was to take advantage of "all nations from his Kingdoms". Forty years

later, the situation had changed and his son Felipe II declared before the Cortes, in Toledo, his open preference for Castile (see R. del Arco y Garay, *La idea de imperio...*, pp. 145, 231 y 178). When Charles V dictated a kind of memoirs, or rather a list of his travel and battles, he seems to have done it in French (see *Carlos V. Memorias*, edited by por M. Fernández Alvarez, Madrid, 1960).

²⁸“El concepted'Espanya als segles XVI i XVII”, *L'Avenç*, 100 (1987), pp. 38-40. On this, J. A. Maravall, *Teatro y literatura en la sociedad barroca*, Madrid, 1972, and *La cultura del Barroco*, Barcelona, 1975.

²⁹“The river Jordan also saw the lion and castle of Spain”; “Fear the Spaniard, for all nations refer great feats accomplished by him; the Spaniard does not envy anyone, but all envy the Spaniard” (R. del Arco y Garay, *La idea de imperio...*, pp. 300 and 310).

³⁰“This unseen feat has indicated the sons of Spain’s valour in future centuries; one thousand foreign nations will fear and envy you, armed Spain” *El cerco de Numancia*, 1584. Other patriotic referents in Cervantes’ poems in R. del Arco, *La idea de imperio...*, pp. 286-299: in some, Spain is referred as a “mother” (sorrowful mother, at times), although in general is a glorious, famous warrior.

³¹De la Puente, in A. Milhou, “La cultura cristiana frente al judaísmo y al islam: identidad hispánica y rechazo del otro (1449-1727)”, *Monarquía católica y sociedad hispánica*, Fundación Duques de Soria, 1994, pp. 33-34; Salazar, in F. Castillo Cáceres, “El providencialismo y el arte de la guerra en el Siglo de Oro: la ‘Política Española’ de fray Juan de Salazar”, *Revista de Historia Militar*, XXXVII, 75 (1993), pp. 135-156; Peñalosa, in M. Herrero-García, *Ideas de los españoles del siglo XVII*, Madrid, 1928, , pp. 16-17; Caramuel, in R. García Cárcel, “El concepted'Espanya...”, p. 46.

³²For instance, Alonso de Guevara, Ginés de Sepúlveda, Pedro de Mexia, Luis Ávila Zúñiga, Alonso de la Cruz... Among the Aragonese historians, Jerónimo de Zurita.

³³L. Padilla, *De las Antigüedades de España*, 1538; P. A. Beuter, *Crónica general de toda España y especialmente del reino de Valencia*, 1546; P. M. Carbonell, *Chroniques d'Espanya fins a no divulgadas...*, 1547; P. de Medina, *Libro de grandezas y cosas memorables de España*, 1548; F. Tarafa, *De origine acerbussis regum Hispaniae*, 1553; P. de Alcocer, *Historia, o descripción de la Imperial ciudad de Toledo... Adonde se tocan... cosas notables de la Historia general de España*, 1554; E. de Garibay, *Compendio historial de las crónicas y universal historia de todos los reynos de España*, 1571; A. de Morales, *Crónica General de España*, 1586; etc. See R. B. Tate, *Ensayos sobre la historiografía...*, pp. 29-30; or G. Cirot, *Études sur l'historiographie espagnole. Les histoires générales d'Espagne entre Alphonse X et Philippe II*, Bourdeaux, 1904.

³⁴Truth is “the first law for a historian”; “I am determined to write what is correct according to the laws of history, rather than what will please our people” (*Historia general de España*, preface and chapter X). On Mariana, see G. Cirot, *Études sur l'historiographie espagnole. Mariana, historien*, Bourdeaux, 1905.

³⁵ Preface and chapter I; “I will not dare to deny what other serious authors said and testified” (book I, chapter 7).

³⁶ Ancient Spaniards, book I, chap. 6. Numantia, III, 1, 6 and 10; Saguntum, II, 9; Viriato, “de nación lusitano”, “was almost the liberator, one could say, of Spain” (III, 3-5). Geographical meaning of the word “Spain” in the preface, but there are references to “the greatness of Spain”. “Corrupt Latin”, lib. I, chap. 5.

³⁷See G. Zernatto, “Nation: The history of a Word”. *The Review of Politics*, 6,3 (1944), pp. 351-366. In Castilian Spanish, the word was used in the first half of the 16th century. The *Diccionario de autoridades*, by the Spanish Royal Academy, in the 18th Century, keeps the meaning of “nación” as “foreigner” (“he is fair haired; he must be a nation”). *Fernán Caballero*, in her novel *Clemencia*, still uses it in this sense (Madrid, 1852, vol. I, p. 165).

³⁸It could be defended, though, that the connection between nation and sovereignty is sketched by Mariana in his *De Rege et Regis Institutionis*, as well as in other works by Spanish scholastic political philosophers, if we interpret “pueblo” or “regnum” as nation.