

HAPSBURG SPAIN

1516 to 1700

REIGN OF CHARLES V TO WAR OF SPANISH SUCCESSION

Era Summary—Hapsburg Spain

Spanish throne descends to the Habsburgs—Ferdinand and Isabella had five children, and under Isabel's guidance, all were raised with the utmost care and rectitude. Their son John, the intended heir to the throne, however, died soon after he was married, and their eldest daughter and grandson also died young, leaving [Juana of Castile](#) and her sons as heirs to the Spanish throne. After much intrigue, the throne passed to her eldest son Charles I of Spain, better known as [Charles V](#), who was also the sole heir to the Habsburg empire of Austria, inherited from his father.

The vesting of so much power in one throne was bound to cause division and sure enough, the reign of Charles V was an endless series of wars. Some of these wars accomplished worthy goals, such as opposing Turkish advances in the Balkans and defeating the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean, but others were mainly intrigue. The [Wars of Italy](#), for example, were fought between France and Spain for control of Italy, and during the seventy year conflict, virtually every power in Europe was at some point drug into the fray.

The Protestant Reformation occurred during the reign of Charles V, but he dealt with the problem much more as a political difficulty than a theological one. He saw his primary enemies as the Ottoman Turks and Catholic France, so to a large extent he tolerated the dissensions in Germany. One of the prominent popes early in Charles's reign was Clement VII, who allied himself with France against Spain and failed to support the idea of a Council to reform problems in the Church. For these reasons, Charles V, the supposed protector of the Church, did not hold the Pope in high regard and allowed his army to sack Rome and take the Pope prisoner.

Also during the reign of Charles V, large quantities of gold and silver were found in the New world colonies, and development of the region expanded rapidly. Likewise, the Portuguese settlements in Asia became firmly established. In a relatively short period, therefore, the Iberian Peninsula became the wealthiest region in Europe.

Reign of Philip II of Spain—Charles V was succeeded by his son [Philip II](#), who is often portrayed by Protestant historians as a narrow-minded bigot for his stalwart defense of the faith. Although he is best known as the Catholic antagonist of [Elizabeth I](#) of England and [William the Silent](#) of the Netherlands, the most significant military accomplishment of his reign was a crushing victory against the Ottoman Turks. At the *Battle of Lepanto*, Philip's half-brother, [Don John of Austria](#), demolished the Turkish navy, who in league with the Barbary pirates, threatened all the Christian kingdoms of the Mediterranean.

The [Netherlands War of Independence](#), and the [Anglo Spanish Wars](#) occurred during the reign of Philip II, and although these wars are generally thought of as religious conflicts, there were political and commercial aspects as well. The nemesis of Dutch Protestants during the Dutch Revolt was the [Duke of Alva](#) but he only served for a few years and even the Spanish leaders came to see that his heavy-handedness was counter-productive. All following Spanish governors of the Netherlands took a more diplomatic approach and succeeded in bringing much of the rebellious region back to Catholic Spanish control.

Even though Spain eventually lost the struggle against Protestantism in both England and Holland, she remained at the height of her power for several generations, due largely to the vast wealth inflowing from her American colonies. Unfortunately, the inevitable corruptions that follow easy and sudden wealth were soon to bring about her downfall. During the late Hapsburg era, Spain's American provinces suffered from piracy and smuggling, mainly at the hands of her Protestant enemies. Even more destructive, however, were the indulgence, bureaucracy, and lack of industry bred by excessive wealth. There was more money to be made in trade, taxes, and government offices than in industry or efficient agriculture. Indulgence and corruption were as destructive to Spain as conflicts with outside enemies, and during the 17th century she fell from being the leading power in Europe to an inept dependent of France.

The last Habsburg King of France was Charles II, and because he was severely deformed, it was understood even before his death that he was unlikely to produce a Habsburg heir. At this time, France was at the height of her power and all of Europe feared what would happen if France and Spain were united under one crown. The Austrians, therefore, put forth the claims of a Habsburg cousin and almost every independent country in Europe joined forces against the behemoth France. The resulting [War of the Spanish Succession](#) continued for 14 years and consumed the whole continent in conflict. Although the allies failed in their objective of placing a Habsburg on the throne of Spain, the conflict finally curtailed the power of France.

Leaders of the Counter Reformation—Aside from political developments during the Habsburg era, several important religious occurrences are worthy of note. The Spanish kings tended to see Protestantism as a political threat and dealt with it in that manner. They did, however, see a tremendous need for a genuine reform of the Catholic Church and several Spanish religious orders, most notably the Jesuits, led these critical reforms.

Besides [Saint Ignatius of Loyola](#), who founded the Jesuits, [Saint Teresa of Avila](#), [Saint John of the Cross](#), and [Bartholomew de las Casas](#), were at the forefront of both the reform of existing orders and the propagation of the faith in the new world. Since the loyalties of the bishops and parish priests were closely aligned with those of the state, it was primarily the religious orders who had enough independence to promote the interests of the universal church, especially when it opposed the material interests of the crown.

Characters—Hapsburg Spain

POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS

Juana of Castile	79–1555	Daughter of Isabel, mother of Charles V. Deposed by Ferdinand due to insanity.
Charles V	1500–58	16th century Hapsburg Emperor who ruled Austria, the Netherlands, Spain and parts of Italy.
Don Carlos	1545–68	Mentally unbalanced prince of Spain who was imprisoned and possibly murdered.
Duke of Alva	1567–73	Governor of the Spanish Netherlands who opposed Protestants during the Dutch Revolt.
Don John of Austria	1545–78	Illegitimate son of Charles V. Hero of the naval <i>Battle of Lepanto</i> .
Philip the Handsome	78–1506	Heir to the Burgundian and Hapsburg estates, and married to Juana of Spain.
Philip II	1527–98	Catholic king of Spain during Netherland revolt and Anglo-Spanish Wars.
Valetta	1494–68	Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers who defended Malta from the siege in 1565.
Charles II	1661–99	Last of the Spanish Hapsburgs. His death precipitated the War of the Spanish Succession.

RELIGIOUS

John of the Cross	1542–91	Carmelite priest, poet and author associated with St. Teresa of Avila.
Teresa of Avila	1515–82	Mystic Nun, reformed the Carmelite order, wrote books on prayer, Doctor of the Church.
Francis Xavier	1506–52	Jesuit Missionary to India. Said to have converted thousands to Christianity.
Ignatius of Loyola	1491–56	Founder of the Jesuits order, dedicated to the Pope. Important counter-reformation figure.
Bartholomew de las Casas	1484–66	Priest who accompanied the Spanish conquistadors to the New World and tried to protect the native inhabitants from abuses and maltreatment.
John of God	95–1550	Dedicated life to helping the poor. Founded Hospitaller Order, which cared for the sick.

ARTISTS AND AUTHORS

Murillo	1617–82	Spanish artist who painted during the reign of the Spanish Habsburgs.
Cervantes	1547–16	Author of the classic <i>Don Quixote</i> , the most famous novel in the Spanish Language.

Recommended Reading—Hapsburg Spain

CORE READING ASSIGNMENTS

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| I | Ober - <i>History of Spain</i> | <i>When Spain was Great</i> to <i>The Seventeenth Century</i> (4) |
| I | Horne - <i>Greatest Nations - Spain</i> | <i>Spain Under the Hapsburgs</i> (1) |
| II | Bonner - <i>Child's History of Spain</i> | <i>Charles the First</i> to <i>Charles the Second</i> (15) |

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Baldwin - <i>Stories of Don Quixote</i>	<i>entire book</i>
Abbott - <i>Romance of Spanish History</i>	<i>Charles V and his Son Philip</i> to <i>Philip II, III, and IV</i> . (3)
Morris - <i>Historical Tales - Spanish</i>	<i>A King in Captivity</i> to <i>Henry Morgan and Buccaneers</i> (9)
Stockton - <i>Buccaneers and Pirates</i>	<i>entire book</i>
Pollen - <i>Saint Ignatius of Loyola</i>	<i>entire book</i>
Esquemeling - <i>Buccaneers of America</i>	<i>entire book</i>

I: Introductory, II: Intermediate

Timeline—Hapsburg Spain

REIGN OF CHARLES V

- 1516 [Charles V](#) ascends the throne of Spain.
- 1517 Protestant Reformation breaks out in Germany.
- 1526-1530 **Italian War:** War of League of Cognac is fought in Italy.
- 1527 [Charles V](#) sacks Rome and imprisons the pope.
- 1521 Conquest of Aztecs in Mexico by [Hernando Cortez](#).
- 1521 **Diet of Worms**—Lutheran doctrines condemned as heresy.
- 1525 Charles V establishes a **Council of the Indies** to govern American territories.
- 1529 [Solyman the Magnificent](#) leads a Turkish army against *Vienna*, forced to withdraw.
- 1532 Conquest of Incas in Peru by [Francisco Pizarro](#).
- 1534 [Saint Ignatius of Loyola](#) founds the Society of Jesus.
- 1535 Charles V leads the Spanish navy to victory at the *Conquest of Tunis*.
- 1545 First Session of the **Council of Trent**.
- 1555 **Peace of Augsburg**—Lutheranism tolerated in Holy Roman Empire.

REIGN OF PHILIP II

- 1556 Charles V Abdicates, [Philip II](#) becomes King.
- 1560 **Holy League** naval fleet organized under Andrea Doria.
- 1562 [Saint Teresa of Avila](#) begins reform of the Carmelite religious order.
- 1566 Spanish Treasure fleet to Americas and Philippines established on schedule.
- 1568 Beginning of the *Revolt in the Netherlands*
- 1569 Morisco rebellion in Catalonia put down by [Don John of Austrian](#).
- 1571 The *Battle of Lepanto* destroys the Ottoman fleet in the Mediterranean.
- 1579 Union of Utrecht—Northern Netherlands declare independence from Spain.
- 1580 After death of heirless king, Portugal is united under the Spanish Crown.
- 1584 [William the Silent](#), Protestant patriot of the Netherlands is assassinated.
- 1588 *Spanish Armada* sent to invade England is defeated.

LATER HAPSBURGS (Philips III, IV, and Charles II)

- 1605 [Cervantes](#) publishes *Don Quixote*
- 1609 Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain
- 1640 Portuguese noble declared King John IV, leads war of Portuguese independence.
- 1635-59 Franco-Spanish War ended with Treaty of the Pyrenees.
- 1700 Death of [Charles II](#), last Habsburg king of Spain. War of Spanish Succession