3.1 The changing geographical reach of Spanish power 1474–1598

KEY QUESTIONS

- Why was Spain able to expand and maintain its power throughout Italy and the Mediterranean, 1474–1598?
- How effectively did Spain extend its influence to the north and west, 1474–1598?

INTRODUCTION

The Spanish Empire became one of the most powerful of all time – by the end of the 16th century it had a global reach unparalleled by any other European state. In the period from 1474 to 1598, the crown of Spain was able, through conquest and inheritance, to extend its control over substantial territories, from northern Africa, Italy, the Americas and Portugal to central and northern Europe.

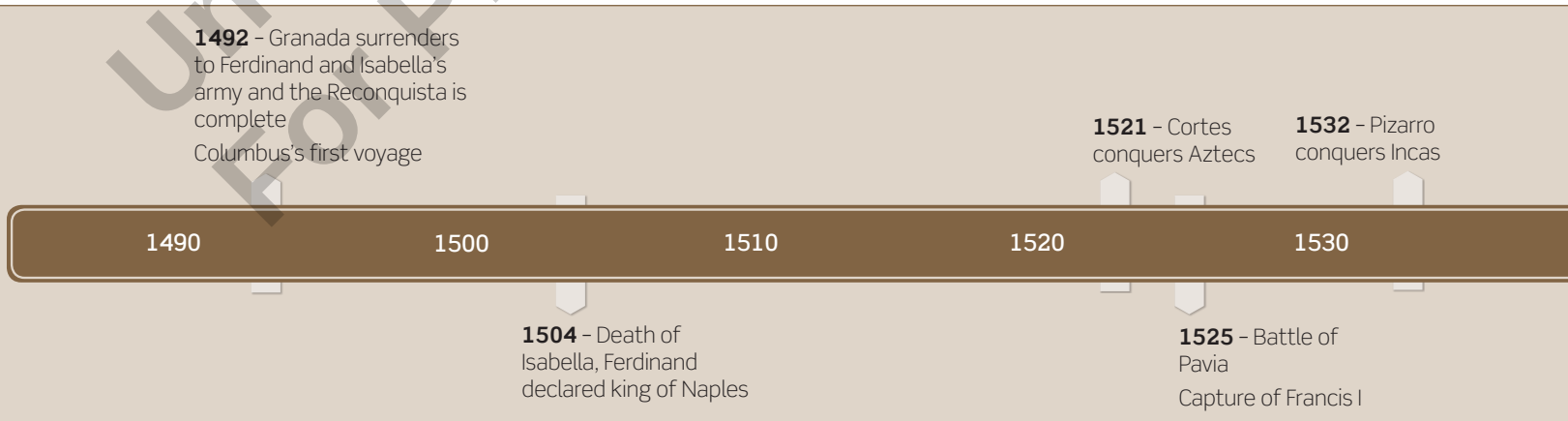
KEY TERM

Grande
Member of the leading nobility.

When the crowns of Castile and Aragón were united with the secret marriage of 17-year-old Ferdinand and 18-year-old Isabella in 1479, the Iberian peninsula had experienced a sustained period of instability. In Castile, civil war raged between the warring **grande** families in the face of a weak monarchy under Isabella's half-brother Henry IV. On his death, Isabella led a constitutional coup to have herself proclaimed queen, despite the existence of his daughter and proclaimed heir, on the basis that she was the illegitimate result of an affair between the queen, Juana of Portugal, and the king's favourite Beltran de Cueva. At one point both Isabella and Henry's daughter Juana were declared his heir – the latter largely through the support of the nobles. Even so, on Henry's death and in an act of supreme confidence in her destiny, Isabella with only a small following proclaimed herself queen in Segovia and dispossessed Juana. What followed were four years of civil war in which Isabella had to repeatedly defend herself against the rival claim to the throne.

In Aragón, the situation was also fluid. Ferdinand's father had had to deal with a rebellion in Catalonia and civil war was still going on when Ferdinand inherited the three kingdoms of Aragón, Catalonia and Valencia in 1479. Their secret marriage, arranged against all custom by themselves, established a dynasty that would unite Spain and extend to all points of the compass by the end of the 16th century.

The growing influence of Spain in the Mediterranean and northern Europe needs to be seen in the context of the struggle between the main power blocks in Europe, which in this period was formed largely by France, the Habsburg Empire and Spain, and the Ottoman Empire with its capital centred in Constantinople, modern-day Istanbul. The struggle between each for ascendency in Europe



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was played out in a number of **proxy conflicts**, for example in Italy, Navarre, **Flanders**, Malta and Tunis, and through alliances with emerging powers such as England. By the first decades of the 16th century Spain had become a dominant power in the Mediterranean after victories in Italy, southern France and on the fringes of the Ottoman Empire. In the West, Spain and Portugal were expanding across the Atlantic to establish dominance over the New World, opening up new trade and wealth from the West Indies to Mexico and Peru.

This chapter will explore the reasons why Spain was able to extend its influence and power over a significant portion of Europe and beyond, through its new territories in the Americas. It will deal with the challenges faced by Spain's monarchs to maintain control over its territories and in the Mediterranean.

KEY TERMS

Proxy conflict
A war or series of battles which are not fought on either side's territory but in disputed lands such as in Italy.

Flanders
Flanders represented a region that encompassed roughly modern-day Holland, Belgium and the north-eastern tip of France.

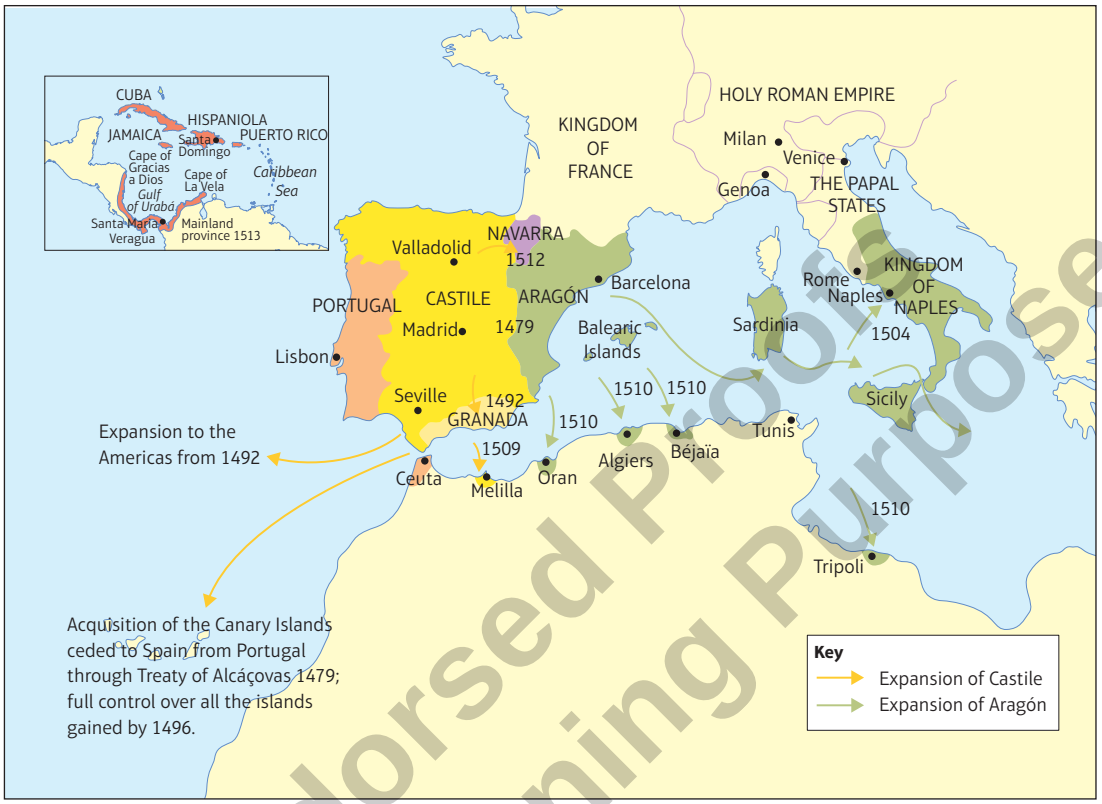
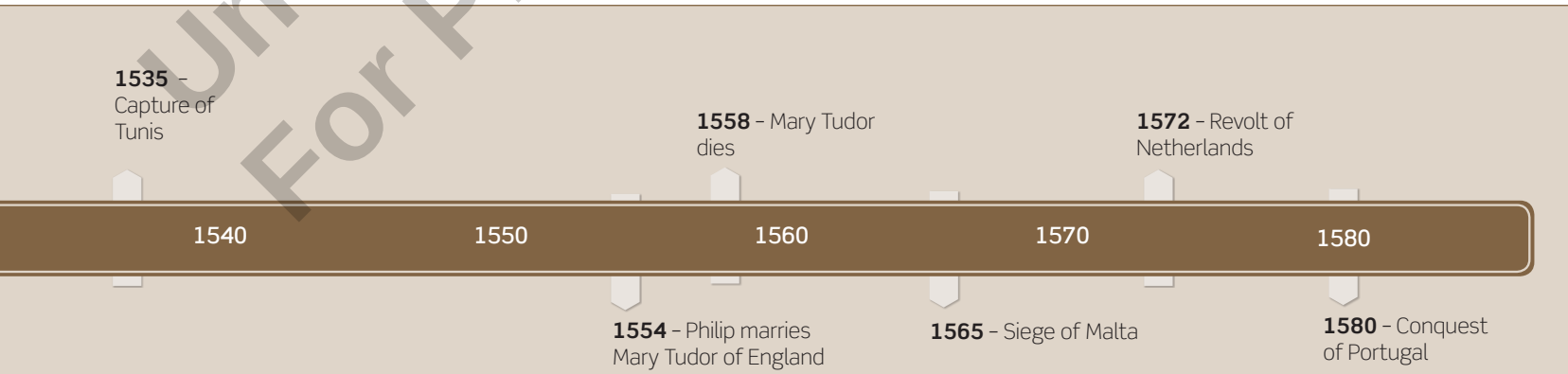


Figure 1.1 The expansion of Castile and Aragón under Isabella and Ferdinand between 1479 (the year of the 'union' of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragón) and c1510.

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WHY WAS SPAIN ABLE TO EXPAND AND MAINTAIN ITS POWER THROUGHOUT ITALY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1474–1598?

Why was Spanish influence extended to Italy?

KEY TERMS

Reconquista
The military campaign which took place from the 8th century to the end of the 15th century by Christian kings in Spain to drive out and reconquer lands held by the Muslims in Spain.

Vassalage
A system under which subjects fell under the direct control of the nobility or the monarchs, or were their vassals. Vassals would owe their allegiance, pay taxes or raise troops for their ruler.

Fealty
Loyalty owed by a vassal to his lord.

Christendom
The collective name used to describe Christian, Catholic Europe.

Both Italy and Spain remained fragmented through the medieval period. But while Spain was gradually moving towards unification, at times by force as with the **Reconquista**, or at others through marriage, such as that of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Italian peninsula had a highly developed system of smaller kingdoms, duchies and city states which retained a semi-autonomy. They were organised through a complicated system of **vassalage** and **fealty**. Geographically, Spain was a more cohesive territory, separated from northern Europe by the Pyrenees, whereas Italy, long and narrow, was effectively split in two by the Apennine Mountains. The north was fertile and its people had more in common with their northern Habsburg neighbours; the more arid regions south of the Apennines focused on the Mediterranean; while key mercantile cities such as Venice looked east towards the Adriatic and Greece. At its centre, the Papal States were an amalgam of the religious and temporal, with the pope fulfilling both the role of secular lord and spiritual leader of **Christendom**. As a result, Roman Catholic monarchs looked to Italy not only as the heart of their religion, but also as an opportunity to compete for power and control – both political and economic.

TIMELINE: FERDINAND'S PATH TO CONTROL OF NAPLES

1458
Trastámara family gains kingdom of Naples and Sicily: territory disputed by Angevin kings of France

1483
Ferdinand of Aragón negotiates with Charles VIII of France for diplomatic solution to dispute

1493
Treaty of Barcelona signed between crown of Aragón and French: French cede Rossello and Cerdanya and establish alliance with Spanish monarchs

1494
Charles VIII marches his army into Italy and takes control of duchy of Milan then Rome

1495
French army takes control of Naples, forcing its king, Alonso, to flee

1496
Ferdinand's army under Gonzalo Córdoba retakes Naples Pope nominates the late king of Naples' uncle, Federico, as king of Naples

1498
Charles VIII dies and his successor Louis XII launches a new campaign in Italy

1500
Under Treaty of Granada between Louis and Ferdinand they agree to invade and partition the kingdom of Naples

1501
Naples conquered and King Federico expelled France and Aragon resume war over Naples

1504
French withdraw and Ferdinand declared king of Naples

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How did Ferdinand come to be recognised as king of Naples in 1504?

A **cadet branch** of the Trastámara family, to which both Ferdinand and Isabella belonged, had held the kingdom of Naples and Sicily since 1458 under their king, Ferrante, but the territory was disputed by the rival claims of the Angevin dynasty inherited by Louis XI of France. As part of these claims the French king also inherited the territories of Navarre, Rosello and Cerdanya to the north of Aragón in south-west France and these were contested by Ferdinand, king of Aragón. In addition, Louis took control of Provence and its ports, and from there was able to threaten the Catalan coast on the eastern limits of Aragón. This threat to the north and east of Aragón had a direct impact on Ferdinand's decision to involve himself in the politics of Italy and specifically in support of the Trastámara king of Naples.

KEY TERM

Cadet branch
The branch of a family descending from a younger son of a royal or noble house. In dynastic terms this makes the branch junior to the branch of the family that descends from the eldest son, or inheritor of the royal or noble title.

When Louis XI died in 1483, Ferdinand's army was deeply committed to the war of Reconquista with Granada, which left him unable to exploit the power vacuum in France by pressing his claim militarily. Ferdinand chose instead to negotiate a diplomatic settlement with Louis' successor, Charles VIII, which led to the Treaty of Barcelona in 1493. This gave Ferdinand and Isabella possession of the disputed territories of Rosello and Cerdanya and established an alliance with France. As a result of this alliance Charles hoped that Ferdinand would support him, or at least not oppose him, in his campaign to remove Ferrante from Naples. In 1494 Charles VIII marched into the north of Italy with an army of 22,000 and took control of the duchy of Milan, ostensibly by invitation from the ruling Sforzas, enemies of the Borgia Pope Alexander VI and the Neopolitan Trástamaras. The scene was set for a European conflict in Italy in which Ferdinand would reveal his personal ambitions.

Ferdinand's Italian ambitions

Ferdinand had a personal stake in Italy. In addition to Aragón's strong links with Naples there were existing interests in Sardinia and Sicily. In 1493 Ferdinand signed a treaty re-establishing good relations with Genoa and Venice, both important mercantile centres which were crucial to Aragonese trade.

When Charles VIII entered Rome on 31 December 1494 after meeting no resistance from Florence or the pope, he seemed sure of success. Taking advantage of the death of the king of Naples, Ferrante, Charles advanced to Naples to stake his claim to the kingdom, but encountered his first reversal when Pope Alexander VI refused to nominate him as Naples' king; not only was the pope a native of Aragón, and therefore likely to be sympathetic to Aragonese interests, but French troops had caused damage as they had moved through the Papal States. Even so, by February 1495, Charles' army had succeeded in taking control of Naples, and forced Ferrante's son and heir, Alonso, to flee to Sicily.

Once Charles VIII had won significant parts of Naples for the French crown and assumed control, it was much more of a challenge to maintain his gains. Ferdinand fielded his army under his commander, Gonzalo Córdoba, who successfully retook those fortresses held by the French such that, by 1496, Ferrante's grandson was back on the throne of Naples.

For Ferdinand, the outcome was not all good for despite forming the Holy League – an alliance against France between Spain, England, Milan, Venice, the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor – he still needed a French alliance and had stood by when his Trastámara cousins were forced out of Naples. In reality, Ferdinand wanted the kingdom of Naples for himself. Ferdinand

- had a professional army well trained and experienced through the campaign against Granada which he was keen to use to expand his territories and was concerned that they were fruitfully occupied outside of the Spanish mainland
- was already king of Sardinia and Sicily and wanted to ensure the continuation of Italian trade such as the imports of wheat from Sicily on which the Spanish depended
- wanted to contain the influence of the French on the Italian peninsula

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- hoped that if he assisted in the defeat of the French in Naples the pope, who held the right to nominate and approve the ruler of Naples, would support his own claim over that of his Trastámara cousins.

In fact, in 1496 the pope nominated the late king of Naples' uncle, Federico, and not Ferdinand to succeed to the throne.

When Charles VIII died in 1498 his successor, Louis XII, launched another campaign focused on capturing the strategically important duchy of Milan. He also had his sights on Naples and before the campaign tried to assure the neutrality of the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian, England and Spain by renewing or establishing new treaties. In addition, the Treaty of Granada signed in 1500 between Louis and Ferdinand effectively invited Spain's continued involvement in Italy in support of Louis' campaign to claim Naples. To all intents and purposes it looked as if Ferdinand had deserted his Trastámara kinsman but he knew that Naples came under the vassalage of the papacy and the treaty he had agreed with France was superseded by any he already held with the pope – which meant he had risked little and kept open his options.

The king of Naples, Federico, was in a precarious position as the major powers seemed aligned against him and in desperation he was forced to ally with Suleiman, the Muslim sultan of the Ottoman Empire. This gave Ferdinand the opportunity to sacrifice him and launch his own campaign to implement the conditions of his treaty with Louis and approved by Pope Alexander VI to partition Naples between the French and himself. Conveniently, Federico's alliance was deemed to be contrary to that of a Christian ruler and he was abandoned. The cynicism of the partition seems to have shocked foreign rulers and the Great Captain Córdoba, who had run the military campaign for Ferdinand in Italy, who apparently did not wish to fight against a former ally.

The relations between the French and the Spanish quickly deteriorated after the effective conquest of Naples and the expulsion of Federico. The conflict which followed saw Ferdinand achieve complete control over Naples. Historians have questioned why Louis allowed Ferdinand to establish his dominance in Naples but it seems that his priority was Milan; in any event by giving way to Ferdinand in Naples and retreating from southern Italy he allowed Ferdinand to be established as the dominant power in southern Italy. By 1504 Ferdinand had succeeded in being established as king of Naples.

The significance of the Italian Wars in extending the influence of Spain

Ferdinand and Isabella's ability to expand Spanish influence into Europe was a result of both effective diplomacy and an increasingly professional military. The establishment of Spanish ambassadors who were resident in the courts of the kingdoms of other European powers followed a model established by the Italian states but had yet to be widely adopted. This gave them an early advantage in both establishing good relations and in gathering intelligence. This resulted in a number of marriage alliances which succeeded in further extending Spanish influence. The marriages of Ferdinand's children with the heirs of the Habsburg dynasty, for example, greatly expanded Spanish reach into Europe. Even so it is important to remember that Ferdinand and Isabella's foreign policy had more to do with containing the power of France, then the most powerful country in Europe, than with consciously expanding their geographical reach. Ferdinand's campaigns in Italy can be seen in this context where, over and above the status and economic benefits afforded by his becoming king of Naples, he succeeded in halting the dominance of France on the Italian peninsula. The Italian campaigns, carried out with a growing modern military and led by seasoned soldiers such as Córdoba, established the groundwork which allowed a much more dramatic extension of Spanish influence over Europe under Charles V. However, Ferdinand and Isabella's dynastic alliances were to be much more significant in putting Spain at the heart of European affairs. Their marriage alliances with Portugal, the Habsburg dynasty and England did much to isolate France irrespective of any temporary alliances or treaties.

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SOURCE 1

From Machiavelli's *The Prince*, first published in 1532. This is a political treatise that analyses the political motives and strategies of European Christian monarchs in the context of the political machinations and conflicts of the 15th and early 16th centuries. Machiavelli describes the period of turmoil in Italy when the rivalries of powerful leaders are played out. Whereas he praises Ferdinand as an example of a good prince, he criticises Louis XII's failure to capitalise on his campaign and successfully establish his full control over Naples by inviting the Spanish king into Italy. The treatise is in the form of a pamphlet, a format popular with scholars of the time, who used them to give Christian princes advice on how to be a good ruler. Machiavelli's *The Prince* was unusual in that, unlike most pamphlets, which focused on the religious and moral responsibilities of a ruler, it was concerned with how political power could be successfully established and retained.

Nothing makes a prince so much esteemed as great enterprises and setting a fine example. We have in our time Ferdinand of Aragon, the present King of Spain. He can almost be called a new prince, because he has risen, by fame and glory, from being an insignificant king to be the foremost king in Christendom; and if you will consider his deeds you will find them all great and some of them extraordinary. In the beginning of his reign he attacked Granada, and this enterprise was the foundation of his dominions. He did this quietly at first and without any fear of hindrance, for he held the minds of the barons of Castile occupied in thinking of the war and not anticipating any innovations; thus they did not perceive that by these means he was acquiring power and authority over them. He was able with the money of the Church and of the people to sustain his armies, and by that long war to lay the foundation for the military skill which has since distinguished him. Further, always using religion as a plea, so as to undertake greater schemes, he devoted himself with a pious cruelty to driving out and clearing his kingdom of the Moors; nor could there be a more admirable example, nor one more rare. Under this same cloak he assailed Africa, he came down on Italy, he has finally attacked France; and thus his achievements and designs have always been great, and have kept the minds of his people in suspense and admiration and occupied with the issue of them. And his actions have arisen in such a way, one out of the other, that men have never been given time to work steadily against him.

ACTIVITY
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Ferdinand and the throne of Naples

1 Produce a flowchart to show the steps that led to Ferdinand becoming king of Naples.

2 Shade in one colour those that were a direct result of Ferdinand's actions and in another those that were to do with the actions of others.

The struggle with France and the Turks under Charles V

The conflicts that permeated Italian politics throughout the 16th century were as a result of the continuing power struggle between Spain and France. The complex web of royal marriages and vassalage throughout the medieval period had resulted in many contested territories. As we have seen, the kings of Aragón claimed the kingdom of Naples and other territories in Italy, while the duchy of Burgundy was contested by the Habsburg dynasty. The English monarchs claimed the title of Kings of France and the French monarchs claimed that of England during the marriage of Francis II and Mary Queen of Scots (through her claim to the English throne). In addition, the intricate web of marriage alliances negotiated throughout the 16th century led to constant realignments which could change from year to year. When Catherine of Aragón, the youngest daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, married Henry VII's eldest son Arthur in 1501, the Spanish alliance was so valued in England that on the death of Arthur five months later she was betrothed to his younger brother Henry. However, the death of her mother, Isabella, in 1504, meant Castile was now ruled by her mentally unstable daughter, Juana, and there was a real possibility that the unification of Castile and Aragón would disintegrate. This diminished the importance of Spain to Henry VII and Catherine languished in England for four years before her future was secured.

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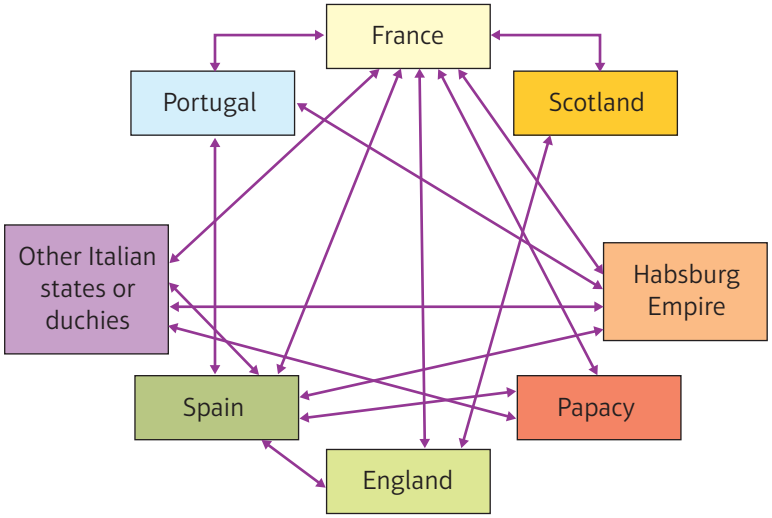


Figure 1.2 The complex web of marriage alliances in 16th-century Europe.

ACTIVITY
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Marriage alliances and power in Europe

1 Study Figure 1.2. What does this tell us about the purpose of marriage alliances?

2 Use Figure 1.2 to list the countries in order of strength through marriage alliances, with the strongest country at the top of your list and the weakest at the bottom. Compare your list with others in your group, and through discussion draw up a list with which you all agree.

Charles V's accession to the thrones of Aragón and Castile in 1516–17 united north-east and central Europe with Spain under the Habsburg Empire and this was to cause some difficulties for both France and Spain. While France was now encircled by anti-French alliances, Charles' territories were separated geographically by France. In this context Spain's dominance over the Mediterranean trade routes and its control over its territories in Italy needed to be protected and maintained, particularly from the threat of new alliances between France, independent Italian states and the Ottoman Empire.

In the previous century Castile had had an uneasy alliance with France, which had supported the Trastámara takeover of the Castilian throne; as a result, Castile tended to be pro-French. However, relations with Aragón were more strained because of the long-running dispute over Montpelier and Languedoc, which bordered France and Aragón. The Treaty of Castile of 1477 led to an uneasy peace and the French king Louis XI stopped French raids into Catalonia. Even so, the regions of Roussillon, Rossello and Cerdanya as well as Navarre continued to be disputed. Ferdinand's claim to Rossello and Cerdanya were finally recognised through the Treaty of Barcelona in 1493 and the Treaty of Blois provided a temporary peace between Ferdinand and Louis which was sealed by his marriage to his great-niece, Germaine de Foix, and confirmed Ferdinand's claims to Naples. Navarre was the last territory acquired by Ferdinand but this time through conquest when in 1512 he was able to annex it to Aragón. It was unlikely that this rash of treaties would permanently resolve the conflict between France and Spain, and the accession of Ferdinand's successor, Charles, would herald a period of almost uninterrupted conflict with France between 1521 and 1559.

The accessions of Francis I to the French throne in 1515 and Charles to the Habsburg and Spanish thrones by 1517 were likely to reawaken the long-standing conflict between their countries. While their rivalry was personal – both saw themselves as warrior kings and wanted to prove themselves – Francis' decision to launch a new campaign in Italy had much to do with his country's vulnerability, surrounded as it was by Habsburg territories, and the need to uphold his territorial dynastic claims. Italy was again the centre of this conflict.

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In 1515, Francis I launched a successful attack in Italy, making gains at Marignano and successfully occupying Milan. A truce signed by Charles and Francis at Noyon the following year was short-lived. When Charles was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519, Francis saw this as a further extension of Habsburg power. The trigger for war in 1521 was Charles' failure to abide by the conditions of the treaty under which he was to return Navarre to France. The first battles took place in northern Spain but it is likely that Francis was attempting to draw out Charles and divert his attention from Italy.

Charles' pro-French chief advisor Chièvres de Croy died at this point and was replaced by Mercurio Gattinara, who persuaded Charles to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy and advised a campaign to re-establish Imperial dominance of the Italian peninsula. Gattinara, a Piedmontese humanist scholar, encouraged Charles in a vision of Christendom led by a single dynasty under his role as Holy Roman Emperor. While Gattinara's vision was not fulfilled it marked a shift in Charles' foreign policy leading to an expansion of his empire which reached its zenith under his monarchy.

Battle of Pavia and the capture of Francis I in 1525

SOURCE 2 This tapestry depicting the Battle of Pavia was produced in Brussels, a part of the Habsburg Empire, between 1528 and 1531. It shows the invasion of the French camp and escape of the ladies and civilians in the wake of Francis I's defeat. It is the fourth of seven tapestries representing the Battle of Pavia.



Despite reverses on both sides, the Battle of Pavia in February 1525 was the decisive engagement of the Italian War of 1521–25. A Spanish-Imperial army under the command of Charles de Lannoy, Duke of Bourbon, attacked the French army under the personal command of Francis I of France. With its first use of the arquebus the Spanish army was able to push back the French cavalry and the French army was defeated. Francis himself, captured by Spanish troops, was imprisoned by Charles V and forced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Madrid, surrendering significant territory to his captor. The way Charles would deal with the French king had huge long-term significance in the expansion of the power of Habsburg Spain. Charles' prestige and influence was greatly increased as a result and his dominance of the Italian peninsula was confirmed. The continuing wars with France would in the future be located to the north on the disputed lands bordering Flanders.

The majority of Charles V's reign was consumed by conflict with France. The origin of this rivalry stemmed from four issues:

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- The annexation of Navarre by Ferdinand in 1512 but which France claimed as her own.
- The annexation of the duchy of Burgundy by France in 1477 but which Charles V claimed as part of his inheritance.
- The continuing dispute over control of the duchy of Milan.
- Charles' success in his election as Holy Roman Emperor, a title to which Francis I had aspired.

Francis' first step in 1521 was to take advantage of the revolt of the Comuneros in Spain (see Chapter 3) to launch a diversionary attack on Navarre in the hope of keeping Charles away from Italy. On his northern borders, he played on local discontent in the Netherlands to support rebellions from the nobility who seized control over Friesland, Groningen and Overijssel, and invaded Luxembourg. These gains were short-lived for Francis, and Charles was able to re-establish and consolidate his control over Navarre, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. As a result, Charles was able to remove the **suzerainty** of France over Flanders and Artois. In Italy, Francis lost control of Milan and Genoa to an Imperial, papal and Neapolitan army. Within France, Francis was also contending with the rebellion of one of the highest nobles in the country when Charles of Bourbon, the Constable of France, defected to Charles and the Imperial army. At the head of his own army, Francis was able for a short time to regain control of Milan but it was Charles of Bourbon and another of Charles V's close allies, Lannoy, leading the Imperial troops, who defeated Francis at Pavia in 1525.

KEY TERM

Suzerainty
A superior feudal lordship to whom fealty is due from satellite regions which retain a level of self-determination.

After Pavia Francis was sent to Spain as a prisoner of the emperor and remained his captive until his release in 1526.

Charles V decides what to do with France in defeat

Charles received Francis in Spain and kept him imprisoned in the citadel of Madrid until he agreed his terms. Charles' brother, Ferdinand, and Henry VIII advised him to deal harshly and bring France into the Habsburg Empire. However, Charles was less concerned with the further expansion of his empire – already difficult to manage because of its geographical extent – than with confirming his legal claim to disputed lands. He was also facing financial difficulties as a result of his military campaign, and following an alliance between Louise of Savoy, regent of France, and the Ottoman Turks, the latter had launched attacks on the Habsburg Empire in Hungary.

Agreement was achieved over the Netherlands and Italy when Francis relinquished his claims, but he refused to concede Burgundy. In the event, Francis was not in a position to bargain. The treaty that defined the peace between France and Charles was signed in Madrid in January 1526. It not only forced Francis to concede Burgundy, but his two young sons, Francis and Henry, were exchanged for Francis and were not to be released until all terms of the treaty were fulfilled. For the princes this meant three years in prison in increasingly poor conditions, and this entrenched Francis' hatred against Charles. When Prince Francis later died, both King Francis and his son, the future King Henry II, blamed the prince's imprisonment in Spain. In addition to relinquishing his sons as hostages, Francis was to marry Charles' sister Eleonore and take part in a crusade against the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire. Charles accepted Francis' oath as a Christian king but, in the event, the French king was to argue that he had signed the treaty under duress. For the time being, the princes' liberty was sacrificed and the Treaty of Madrid was repudiated by Francis on his return to Paris.

In his failure to fully exploit his victory over France by taking over France – as his allies, including Henry VIII, advised – Charles allowed enough time for not only Francis, but his own allies, to regroup and reflect. Far from waging a crusade against the Ottoman Empire, Francis confirmed the alliance with its sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, and encouraged him in an invasion of Austria from the south. Charles' allies Henry VIII and the pope, along with many of the Italian states, began to worry about the huge power base which victory over the French had handed Charles; France had represented the only bulwark against the Spanish-Habsburg Empire. As a consequence, Francis was able to call together an anti-Habsburg league – the League of Cognac, 1526 – comprising the papacy, Venice, Florence, and the ex-duke of Milan. Even Henry VIII was supportive of the league.

It is debatable whether Charles could have realistically spread his already over-extended empire to rule over France in the short term and extremely unlikely that he could have retained the country in the longer term. Francis was able to regroup, and shifting alliances meant that although Charles had gained territory and recognition as the most powerful ruler in Europe, this of itself brought him more problems as he began to be seen as too powerful a force and a potential threat to even his former allies.

The conflict between France and Habsburg Spain was to continue unresolved into the 17th century.

ACTIVITY
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

The significance of the defeat of France in Italy

1 On a copy of the map on page XX, label those areas where Spain and France came into direct conflict under the monarchies of Ferdinand and Charles. What can you infer about:

a) the origin and nature of the war with France

b) the difficulty Spain faced in achieving a decisive and lasting victory over France?

2 With a partner discuss what options Charles had in dealing with the French king after Pavia. How successful was his policy towards France after Pavia in achieving a long-term peace?

The struggle with the Turks

The importance of the Muslim incursions into medieval and early modern Europe is sometimes overshadowed by the crusades, focusing as they did on the long struggle to control Jerusalem. In the 8th century, Muslim armies under the Umayyad caliphate had reached as far as central France and occupied a large part

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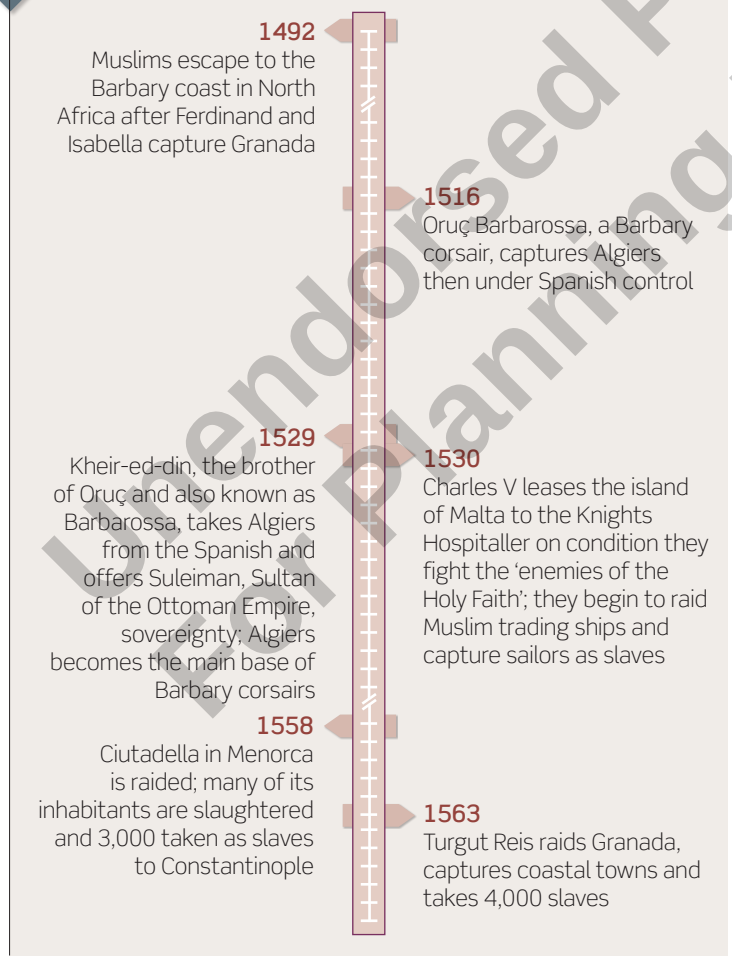
of the Spanish peninsula where they were gradually pushed back to the southern tip of the country (known as al-Andalus). By 1492, the Nasrid dynasty, the last Muslim dynasty in Spain, finally succumbed to the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella with the fall of Granada (see Chapter 3). The struggle with the Ottoman Turks was one of control over the Mediterranean and its trading routes.

The rise of the Ottoman Empire

To the east, Constantinople, ancient capital of the Byzantine Empire, was captured by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 and by the 16th century it was the Ottoman Empire ruled by Suleiman the Magnificent that was in ascendency, reaching its own 'golden age'. Constantinople, later known as Istanbul, was substantially larger than Paris – the largest of the European cities. The Ottoman Turks in the east of the Mediterranean had established a powerful empire under a succession of effective sultans, which at its height extended from the Black Sea to the east, engulfing the kingdoms of Hungary and Poland, to Egypt in the south, and west to Algeria.

After the capture of Granada, Spanish kings had had to contend with the support of North African pirates to Spanish Muslims and later with the disruption of Aragón's Mediterranean trade. Coastal raids in the east and the south of the peninsula were regular but the impact of the Ottoman Empire was first felt as a significant threat under the reign of Charles V.

TIMELINE: PIRACY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN



The threat of piracy by North African corsairs

Ferdinand and Isabella failed to capitalise on their victory over the Nasrid rulers of al-Andalus. When the Muslim kingdoms of North Africa did not come to the aid of the Nasrid an opportunity was lost to extend Spanish control over the North African coast which meant Barbary pirates continued to raid the Spanish coast and shipping following the trade routes between Spain and Italy. When Cisneros, a Spanish cardinal and chief advisor to Ferdinand, argued in 1499 for a crusade that would recapture North Africa for Christendom, he was allowed to fund and personally lead the expedition which succeeded in capturing the city of Oran for the Spanish crown. However, distracted by the issues in Italy, Ferdinand refused to extend the crusade further and arguably lost the opportunity to limit the extension of Turkish power in the Mediterranean. Muslim pirates and the Turkish fleet were to become a serious threat to Spain itself both within the kingdom by allying and supporting the large and disaffected Muslim population, and outside its boundaries by disrupting its trade routes to Italy.

Ferdinand's concern had been largely to limit the ability of Muslims in North Africa to assist the **Moriscos** in Granada and in Aragón. In order to do this, he seized the cities of Melilla, Penon d'Argel, Oran, Hugia and Tripoli and secured the sea routes between Sicily, Naples and Genoa. This did not eradicate the problems of Muslim pirates who continued to raid Spain's coast, at times with the collusion of the Morisco population. Under Ferdinand, the towns of Malaga, Cadiz and Gibraltar were lost to Spain when the pirate leader Barbarossa allied with the Ottoman Turks, and was made commander of the Turkish fleet. Under Charles V the problem became more severe as Vienna itself came to be threatened by the incursions of the Ottoman Turks.

KEY TERM

Morisco
A former Muslim who converted to Christianity after Spain outlawed the practice of Islam in the early 16th century.

The threat from the Ottoman Turks

For Charles the danger posed by Suleiman and Barbarossa went beyond the struggle for territory. He saw his role as crucial in the protection of the Christian faith in a climate where the pope himself could be implicated in secret alliances with the Turks when under threat of Christian kings. Charles' campaign for religious orthodoxy within his empire against the Moriscos, and Lutherans both in Spain and the Netherlands, came from his view of himself as the protector of the Roman Catholic faith (see Chapter 6). For Charles the struggle against the Ottoman Turks was a religious crusade. In addition, the Greek dynasty which had been removed from the Byzantine imperial throne in Constantinople had given their hereditary rights to Ferdinand, Charles' grandfather, in exchange for pensions and loans. Charles therefore saw himself as the rightful heir to the Byzantine Empire.

Suleiman's reign began in 1520 and finished in 1566. During this time he was able to consolidate the gains his father had made in the annexation of Egypt and Syria. By 1521 he had moved north

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to capture Belgrade and effectively reduced Ferdinand, Charles' brother and ruler of the Habsburg territories, to the position of a vassal, paying him tribute. Calls for support from Charles were ignored in the face of his preoccupation with the Protestant revolts of the German states further north. When the Christian island of Rhodes and the **Knights Hospitaller** fell to Suleiman after a siege of 145 days the routes in the west of the Mediterranean were effectively open to the Turks, leaving Sicily, Italy and potentially Spain itself vulnerable to attack. To make things worse the French were, on occasion, prepared to offer the Turkish fleet safe haven in their southern port of Marseilles.

KEY TERMS

Knights Hospitaller (also known as Knights of St John)
A military order of monks who protected and cared for Christian pilgrims on their journey between Europe and Jerusalem. By the 16th century they had established a permanent base in Malta after the island was gifted to them by Charles V.

Privateer
A sea captain licensed by the Crown to attack and capture ships and cargo from enemy countries, be they military or merchant in exchange for a percentage of the haul. In England, Elizabeth I benefited from the privateering activities of Francis Drake and John Hawkins.

Peace of Cambrai, 1529
The peace treaty between France and the Habsburg Empire after the former's defeat at Pavia. It brought a temporary end to the war and confirmed Charles' dominance on the Italian peninsula.

EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Kheir-ed-din Barbarossa, scourge of Spanish shipping (c1478–1546)
Barbarossa was born on the island of Lesbos to a family which became involved in maritime trade. He and his brothers became **privateers** to counter the privateering of the Knights Hospitaller of Rhodes. His father was killed by Christian privateers and his brother was imprisoned in the Hospitaller' prison in Bodrum. Barbarossa was able to rescue him and on their return the brothers were given a fleet of ships by the Ottoman Sultan in order to protect Turkish trade routes and shipping under attack from the Knights of St John. Although he concentrated his attacks on Sicily and Naples, in 1503 Kheir-ed-din and his brother Oruc, both called 'Barbarossa', captured Djerba, off the coast of Tunisia, and used it to establish a base in the western Mediterranean. From there they attacked shipping between Aragón and Naples, at one point capturing 380 Spanish soldiers. The Balearic Islands were raided, their inhabitants captured and taken back to be sold in the slave markets of Constantinople. The brothers were also responsible for transporting Muslim Spaniards to northern Africa after they were given the choice of conversion or expulsion in the first decades of the 16th century. By 1518 Barbarossa's experienced and sizeable fleet was placed under the protection of the Ottoman Empire.

The capture of Tunis 1535

With the **Peace of Cambrai** in 1529, Charles was belatedly able to turn his attentions from war with the French to dealing with the incursions the Turkish fleet had made in the Mediterranean. Initially, Charles was able to make some gains largely through the Genoan fleet commanded by Andrea Doria. By 1532 Doria had captured the Greek ports of Coron and Patras from the Turks. In retaliation, Suleiman allied with the North African pirates led by Barbarossa whose raids on the Italian mainland took him near to Rome itself. Appointed admiral of the Ottoman fleet, Barbarossa (Kheir-ed-din) captured the port of Tunis in 1534 and ousted its Muslim ruler, Muley Hassan, an ally of Spain. He then took the Ottoman fleet and his pirate ships to conduct raids on the Balearic islands and the coast of Valencia.

Tunis, together with the port of Algiers, gave Suleiman a significant advantage in his dominance of the eastern Mediterranean. The city was strategically important given its position on the North African side of the Mediterranean and directly opposite Sicily. It overlooked the busy trade routes from Spain, and in particular Aragón, to the eastern Mediterranean. Charles' response was not simply based on political and economic factors. He saw this as the impetus for a new crusade to finally rid the Mediterranean of the encroaching Turks.

KEY TERM

Cortes
The legislative bodies of Castile and Aragón-- much like England's parliament – whose main function was to vote grants raised through extraordinary tax levies for the monarch.

Charles' self-perception as a crusader and a warrior-king led him to lead the campaign personally to recapture Tunis. He wanted to restore his reputation as a military leader after his fleet had been forced to retreat from Coron. The **Cortes** of Castile was prevailed upon to vote him the funds necessary for this latest campaign and the papacy also contributed, albeit a relatively small amount. The first bounty of silver from Peru was appropriated and the sale of bonds provided the funds necessary to raise 400 ships and a 60,000-strong army. The campaign was successful; the fortress of La Goletta was taken, and the inhabitants of Tunis slaughtered because as Charles said 'they did not appear to greet their restored sovereign [Muley Hassan] as they should have done'. Barbarossa's fleet of 80 ships was captured and he was forced to retreat to Algiers.

Charles' victory marked the restoration of his reputation as a warrior-king across Europe. He had pushed back the Turkish threat in the Mediterranean and had struck a great blow for Christendom against the infidel. Significantly he was now able to establish control over the stretch of the Mediterranean between Tunis and Sicily and impede the passage of the Ottoman fleet between Algiers and Istanbul.

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The outcome of the capture of Tunis

While the short-term successes of the campaign were clear, it did not resolve the threat posed by the Ottoman Turks in the longer term.

- Charles, already overloaded with distant territories to manage, failed to maintain direct control of Tunis and reinstated his Muslim ally Muley Hassan.
- Charles failed to recognise that the strategic importance of Algiers was probably greater than that of Tunis, and did not press his advantage to go on to capture it.
- His uneasy alliance with France was fractured when Francis I agreed an alliance in 1536 with the Ottoman Turks and offered their fleet the protection of the French ports of Toulon and Marseilles.

Charles may have been appalled by the treachery of the French king, but it was a demonstration of the pragmatic politics which all European monarchs adopted as expedient despite the fact that collaboration with the Turks sat uneasily with the crusade against the Muslim kingdoms. Not only France but Charles and the pope himself had resorted to alliances with the 'infidel'.

Charles, inspired to push his gains further into Ottoman territory, decided in 1538 to launch another attack, this time further east in the Mediterranean. With the support of Venice and the pope a fleet – commanded by the Genoese admiral Doria – met Barbarossa's fleet off the coast of Albania. Outnumbered, Doria retreated before any engagement – to the great enhancement of Barbarossa's reputation and damage to that of Charles. Venice itself was lost to the Christian alliance and forged closer links with the Ottoman Empire.

Another campaign in 1541, this time to capture Algiers and to be led in person by Charles, was a catastrophic failure. The campaign had widespread support as Barbarossa's pirates continued to raid the coast of Spain and threaten Habsburg territories from their base in Algiers. Charles set off with a well-provisioned and large force but the fleet was hit by a terrible storm as they landed on the coast near Algiers and wrecked many ships. Charles' diminished force was easily repulsed and had to return to Spain in overcrowded ships, defeated. As a result, the North African pirates were left free to continue their raids in the Mediterranean and he failed to contain the Muslim threat. Charles continued the policy of his grandfather Ferdinand in limiting any North African gains to a handful of coastal cities; he did not venture further inland to secure greater control. Historian William S. Maltby argues that Charles' campaigns succeeded in slowing the spread of the Ottoman Empire but the activities of the Muslim pirates continued unabated even after the death of Barbarossa. His successor, Dragut, continued to raid the coast of Spain even after a truce was signed between Charles and Suleiman. While the complex and shifting power play in Europe allowed him only a few opportunities to campaign against the Turks he was unable to contain and protect Christendom and viewed this as his greatest failure.

The siege of Malta 1565

When Philip II succeeded to the Spanish throne in 1556 he inherited a kingdom close to bankruptcy, an ongoing war with France, and Spain's only alliance in Europe, England, collapsing with the death of Mary Tudor. The threat from the Ottoman Empire and the North African pirates continued and threatened Spain from within as they were suspected to be in league with the oppressed Morisco population.

Nonetheless, the peace of Câteau-Cambrèsis of 1559 heralded another period of peace in the long-running conflict with France, and this enabled Philip to look again at the Ottoman threat in the Mediterranean. In 1551, Tripoli – in modern Libya – fell to Suleiman's forces. The conquest of Tripoli, together with Rhodes and Algiers, now consolidated the Ottoman advance leaving Tunis under threat. Philip's first campaign focused on the recapture of Tripoli and Admiral Doria sailed with 47 galleons and a force of 12,000 men. Anchored and camped at the island of Djebar, the Spanish forces were surprised by the Turkish fleet and were all but destroyed as they tried to flee; 28 galleys and 10,000 men were captured. This led to a rebuilding of the Spanish fleet and although the Ottoman fleet remained undefeated, there were some successes during the 1560s against North African pirates at Oran and Peñón de Velez.

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Malta, held by the Knights of St John (Knights Hospitaller) for Christian Europe, had considerable strategic importance as the island was positioned in the middle of the narrow channel between Sicily, held by Philip, and Tunis, held once more by the Ottomans Turks. When Suleiman launched an attack on Malta 30,000 of his troops landed and besieged the capital where the Knights of St John and its Maltese inhabitants held out for four months. Philip's delay in coming to the aid of Malta can be explained by a more cautious approach adopted after the disaster at Tripoli, but once a sufficient force was assembled by his admiral, Don Garcia de Toledo, a fleet left Sicily in September and on its arrival the Turks lifted their siege and retreated. While the short-term outcome was a victory for Christian Europe and led to a four-year respite in attacks from the Ottoman Turks, this was not all as a result of the victory at Malta. The death of Suleiman in 1566 meant his successor, Selim II, needed time to secure his position and this limited the Ottoman Turks' incursions into the western Mediterranean.

The renewal of attacks by the Ottoman Turks bear a strong similarity to the outcomes of Charles' decisions regarding Tunis and Algiers. Philip was unable to consolidate his gains after the Spanish victory and failed to use the period of instability within the Ottoman leadership to drive home his advantage. Diverted by a resumption of rebellions in the Netherlands, to which he sent the Duke of Alba with his best troops, and having to deal with the Morisco rebellion in Spain itself, gave time for the Turkish forces to regroup. Philip was therefore unprepared when the Turks seized Tunis and invaded Cyprus.

As a response, a Holy League was assembled by the pope and Philip provided half the funding for the campaign to be headed by his young half-brother Don Juan. It was essentially an Italian campaign led by Naples and Sicily, and the pope contributed 60 galleys. The naval Battle of Lepanto in October 1571 was a huge victory for the Holy League. Out of the 230 Turkish galleys only 35 escaped and an estimated 30,000 men were killed or wounded.

KEY TERM

Infidel
A pejorative term used for a non-Christian or enemy of Christianity.

As with Charles' victory at Tunis, the victory at Lepanto was heralded as a great blow to the **infidel,** but resolved nothing in the long term. Cyprus was held by the Turks, who by 1574 had rebuilt a fleet even larger than before. Philip was not prepared to follow up his victory and risk his fleet in the eastern Mediterranean as his interests lay in the west. His ally Venice was concerned with matters in the east, and as a result the Holy League began to disintegrate.

Don Juan was able to retake Tunis in 1573 but it was abandoned to the Turks in 1574. Spain was heading for its third bankruptcy in 1575 and Philip was preoccupied with the continuing revolts in the Netherlands. Through the formal peace treaty between Philip and Selim in 1580 the Turks had managed to extend their control west to Morocco – only 14 km from the southern coast of Spain and its sympathetic Morisco population – and east to extend into Persia.

While the peace was not particularly favourable to Spain it did end the conflict and settled territories which accepted the dominance of the Turks over North Africa. Philip was criticised by his contemporaries for his failure to support the Holy League and the pope accused him of betraying his faith. To modern historians Philip's policy seems considered and cautious; however, the focus of his foreign policy was changing towards the Netherlands and England, and the latter was to form the basis of his next crusade.

ACTIVITY
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

The struggle for ascendency in the Mediterranean

1 How important were the North African corsairs in the expansion of Turkish power in the Mediterranean?

2 Why was Charles V successful in the capture of Tunis but not in his attempt to capture Algiers?

3 Using the sections on the 'Struggle with the Turks' and 'The siege of Malta', produce a Venn diagram to identify the similarities and differences between the Spanish campaigns in Tunis, Algiers and Malta.

4 Write down five reasons why Spain was unable to maintain its gains in the Mediterranean. Prioritise these from most to least important and annotate to explain your judgement.

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HOW EFFECTIVELY DID SPAIN EXTEND ITS INFLUENCE TO THE NORTH AND WEST, 1474–1598?

Building an empire in the New World

While it might be argued that medieval Christendom was inward-looking and dominated by internal conflicts and power plays, it is clear that 15th-century Europe was outward-looking. The long stream of medieval crusades was instigated by a papacy keen to refocus an essentially martial society towards campaigns **Outre-mer** designed to recover Jerusalem from the 'infidel'. As the European population began to recover from the devastation of the Black Death and a growing mercantile class had established trade with the Middle and Far East, Europe began to look outwards – intrigued by the unknown and the potential for glory and gold.

By the late 15th century, Portugal had led the way in establishing sea routes to the East largely as a result of the collapse of the Silk Roads, which ran overland to India and Cathay. Henry the Navigator, a prince of Portugal, had developed the design of the **caravels**, ships which were designed for long journeys, faster and more manoeuvrable. Armed with maps from the best Italian and Balearic cartographers he sponsored the exploration of the North African coast to the Azores and out into the Atlantic Ocean. His aims were synonymous with those of all later explorers: the discovery of legendary sources of gold and the spread of Christianity. The African-European slave trade was begun as a result of his voyages, as were the quests to find mythical Christian kingdoms such as that of Prester John, where Europeans believed Christianity had been preserved in the East from ancient times and where strange, legendary creatures lived.

Explorer Bartolomeu Dias found the route via the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, and Vasco de Gama the sea route to India in the late 1490s. Portugal's dominance in exploration established it as a major power in Europe as it gave it a definitive advantage in trade and great prestige. It is telling that it was considered a better option to connect to the markets of China and India, on which Europe depended for spices and silks, by sea, rather than to brave the Arabian peninsula or pay the punitive duties levied by Arabic middlemen.

Above and beyond this, however, were the writings of philosophers and theologians who looked to rediscover what they imagined had been a global Christendom destroyed and separated by non-Christian races. The rise of missionary zeal went hand in hand with the drive for wealth and glory.

KEY TERMS

Outre-mer
Literally 'overseas', this term was used to refer to the territories in the Middle East controlled by the European crusaders from the First Crusade (1096) onwards.

Caravel
A small, light, highly manoeuvrable sailing ship developed by the Portuguese, characterised by a broad beam and two or three masts.

Columbus' first voyage 1492

By the late 15th century, Spain was also open to joining the age of exploration. Ferdinand and Isabella cannot have been blind to the gains the Portuguese were making through their **nascent imperialism** and already held the Canary Islands some 1,200 km and two weeks' voyage from Spain. While Portugal was focused on the east of Africa and sea routes eastwards to India and the Far East, Christopher Columbus (Cristóbal Colón) was able to persuade Ferdinand and Isabella to explore a route west across the Atlantic. Columbus was a Genoan seaman who had been involved in the sea trade that had been opened up through the Portuguese and Genoan trade in West Africa. It was during the years he sailed in the Portuguese fleet that he conceived the idea of a voyage westwards out into the Atlantic. His goal was to reach Japan, then known to Europeans as 'Cipangu', avoiding the land routes which were controlled by the Ottoman Empire and its Muslim allies. Columbus struggled for some time to attract sponsorship for his voyage. Portugal refused from the outset, believing rightly that his estimate of the size of the Atlantic was too small and an expedition could not be provisioned for such a long voyage. So he travelled to Castile, where he hoped to persuade Ferdinand and Isabella to fund the trip. From Columbus' move to Castile in 1485 it was not until between 1490 and 1492 that a payment is known to have been made of 1,157,100 **maravédis** to his main supporter at the Castilian court, the bishop of Avila, Talavera. The details of Ferdinand and Isabella's sponsorship of Columbus' voyage have been coloured by later propaganda. Initially, the lack of detailed records point to the fact that the investment was relatively small and only enough to resource an expedition of three caravels. Columbus secured support ultimately with promises of vast riches to be gained, but he also struck a crusading chord with the Spanish monarchs. By 1492, the conquest of the last of the Muslim kingdoms in Spain, Granada, as well as the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, had restored a Christian Spain – and Europe – which led the pope to confer on them the title of 'Catholic Kings'. Part of their support for the expedition proposed by Columbus was to see if the Holy Land and Jerusalem itself could be wrested back from the Muslims by attack from the east.

KEY TERMS

Nascent imperialism
The word 'nascent' refers to something that is just coming into being or emerging. 'Imperialism' is when a state extends its power and area of control, usually by taking over political control of other states or areas, and often by force.

Maravédi
A unit of coinage used in Castile until early in the 16th century, after which the government kept its accounts in ducats.

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That Columbus' voyage set out in 1492 in the same month as the expulsion of the Jews from Spain lent it a significance that was recognised at least later, if not at the time.

SOURCE 3 From Columbus' journal of his first voyage, written by his son, Ferdinand, partly as a response to the criticisms circulating after his father's death that diminished his achievements in the light of his loss of favour with Ferdinand and Isabella following his disastrous last expedition. The work was written in the three years before Ferdinand's death in 1539 but was not published until 1571, when it was bought by a Genoese physician, who had it translated into Italian. This translation forms much of what historians know about Columbus, but needs to be seen in the context that it is fragmentary in parts and written with the purpose of re-establishing Columbus' reputation.

In the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Because, O most Christian, and very high, very excellent and puissant Princes, King and Queen of the Spains and of the islands of the Sea, our Lords, in this present year of 1492 after your Highnesses had given an end to the wars with the Moors who reigned in Europe, and had finished in the very great city of Granada, where in this present year, on the second day of the month of January, by force of arms, I saw the royal banners of your Highnesses placed on the towers of the Alfambra [Alhambra]... and saw the Moorish King come forth from the gates of the city and kiss the royal hands of your Highnesses... and presently in that same month, acting on the information that I had given to your Highnesses touching the lands of India and respecting a Prince who is called Gran Can, which means in our language King of Kings, how he and his ancestors had sent to Rome many times to ask for learned men of our holy faith to teach him, and how the Holy Father had never complied, insomuch that many people believing in idolatries and heresies were lost by receiving the doctrine of perdition: YOUR HIGHNESSES, as catholic Christians and Princes who love the holy Christian faith... and who are the enemies of the sect of Mahoma [Mohammed] and to all idolatries and heresies, resolved to send me, Cristóbal Colon, to the said parts of India to see the said princes, and the cities and the lands, and their disposition, with a view that they might be converted to our holy faith; and ordered that I should not go by land to the eastwards as had been customary, but that I should go by way of the west, whither to this day, we do not know for certain that any one has gone.

Thus having turned out all Jews from all your kingdoms and lordships, in the same month of January your highnesses gave order that with a sufficient fleet I should go to the said parts of India, and for this they made great concessions to me, and ennobled me, so that henceforward I should be called ...Chief Admiral of the Ocean Sea.

Columbus used the Canaries as his set-off point across the 'Ocean Sea', as the Atlantic was known. He left in August 1492, reaching a landmass in October of the same year which he named San Salvador or 'Holy Saviour'; it was the one of the islands of the Bahamas. He went on to explore the islands and landed on another island he named Española (Hispaniola), modern-day Haiti, where he found the inhabitants friendly but was unable to find the source of the gold jewellery the people wore. One of his ships, the *Santa Maria*, ran aground and was left with a number of its crew to establish a colony in Española, called La Navidad. Columbus returned to Spain with his two remaining ships and 15 captured natives, of whom only half survived the voyage. Columbus talks in his journal about the gentleness of the people they met but mentions it only to illustrate how easily they could be controlled and converted.

When Columbus returned, Ferdinand and Isabella were sufficiently impressed to provision another expedition, this time much more substantial. The second expedition was provisioned with 17 ships and 1,500 crew including an apostolic delegate for the conversion of the native population.

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EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)

Columbus' first expedition resulted in a realisation that some form of agreement should be reached about what sections of the 'New World' would belong to which maritime nation – at this time, Portugal and Castile. The Treaty of Tordesillas agreed between Portugal and Spain in 1494 gave all the rights to newly discovered lands west of a meridian (line of longitude) some 320 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands to Spain and all newly discovered lands east of that line to Portugal. Clearly, Spain's influence with the pope was able to gain them an advantage when claiming new lands, despite more established Portuguese explorations.

Columbus made further voyages with some setbacks. His second expedition was a disaster, with 300 of his crew succumbing to disease and his fleet destroyed by hurricanes. He was able to return to Spain on two patched-up ships, but in disgrace. His third voyage was reduced and crewed by criminals and he was unwelcome in Española, where the indigenous population turned violent and the colonists refused to help. Columbus was taken back to Spain in chains, accused of abusing the indigenous population. By his last voyage he had lost the patronage of Ferdinand and Isabella and had to seek private funding for the trip.

Despite his personal tribulations, Columbus' expeditions had momentous consequences for Spain. The city of Santo Domingo established by the Spanish in Hispaniola became the administrative capital of the Spanish New World empire and the gateway of further exploration – exploration which, thanks to the Treaty of Tordesillas, would be controlled by Spain. Columbus' 'discovery' of what are still called the West Indies was the stepping stone to the full exploration of the Americas. Crucially, his voyages established a 'map' of the prevailing winds and currents which helped later explorers to take the most effective routes across the Atlantic. It opened the door to what was later referred to as the Columbian Exchange – that is, the transfer of plants and animals and other natural resources which opened up trade and opportunities to Europe while at the same time resulting in diseases and large-scale slavery which would decimate the native population. In Europe the advent of the printing press also ensured that descriptions of these new territories – as Europeans saw them – were widely known and disseminated, sparking new debate and discussion among scholars about the nature of man and his place in the universe. For Spain, Pope Alexander's support ensured that his adjudication in the Treaty of Tordesillas went in its favour. Even after the discovery of Brazil, which according to the treaty went to Portugal, Spain still controlled the lion's share of the Americas and this brought with it great prestige and, most importantly, great wealth.

ACTIVITY
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

The significance of Columbus

1 Produce a table with two columns headed 'Successes' and 'Failures' and use the information above to list what Columbus achieved in his expeditions.

2 Why did Columbus' reputation and support from Ferdinand and Isabella wane over time?

3 Assess the contribution of Columbus in the Spanish conquest and colonisation of the Americas. Use the information above and in the rest of this section.

The impact of Cortés and the conquest of the Aztecs 1521

In the early years of their colonisation, the Spanish explored many parts of the New World, one of the most impressive of which was Yucatan, or present-day Mexico. Earlier expeditions had reported the presence of a sophisticated civilisation and, more importantly, rich sources of silver and gold. In 1519 Hernán Cortés, a Spaniard resident in Cuba, set off with 600 men for Mexico. Cortés arrived in Veracruz on the coast and was able to build an army from the disaffected vassals of Moctezuma, the ruler of the Aztec Empire. Marching with an army largely composed of Indian foot soldiers he headed to the capital, Tenochtitlan. Cortés was able to play on local conflicts in order to undermine the support for Moctezuma and to divide and conquer. It is clear that Cortés' success was as much to do with his ability to exploit regional conflicts and his ability to engage native inhabitants to join his army than any military superiority.

Initially, Moctezuma welcomed the **conquistador** and offered him gifts, wary of the Spaniard and aware of the prophecy which spoke of a pale conquering snake god which would return to avenge the people the Aztecs had conquered when their empire was established. He attempted to pacify the Spaniards by offering them rich gifts of gold and silver ornaments but this only served to intensify the Spaniards' belief that there was a great source of gold and silver to be discovered. In the event in 1521 the city was razed to the ground, its holy statues and temples destroyed as idolatrous. The Spaniards were able to point to the barbaric use of human sacrifice and moral lassitude of the Aztecs as a justification for their actions. The entire Aztec culture was destroyed as the city of Mexico – what had been Tenochtitlan – was rebuilt in the image of a European city. Cortés claimed the regions for Spain and bypassing the governor of Cuba wrote directly to Charles V to announce the conquest for Spain, calling the region 'New Spain'.

KEY TERM

Conquistador
A military leader who led in the Spanish and Portuguese conquests of America, Mexico and Peru

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SOURCE 4 Mexico Lienzo de Tlaxcala Codex which shows an Aztec representation of Moctezuma's ambassadors bringing gifts to Cortés. The codex forms one section of a larger report which was commissioned by Philip II to record all aspects of life in the conquered territories which came to be known as New Spain. The textual element was written between 1581 and 1585 but it is harder to date the codex which may not have been produced at the same time. This report represents the social, political, military, religious and cultural history of the Province of Tlaxcala.



SOURCE 5 *Just War in the Indies*, written in 1547 by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, was one part of the scholarly debate that was taking place in Christendom about the morality of the conquest of the Americas. On the one hand there was an argument propounded by Bartolomé de Las Casas that the people of the conquered lands should be treated differently from non-Christians such as Muslims and Jews, as they were innocents who simply needed to be educated into the Christian faith. Sepúlveda argued that the natural order meant that just as man rules over woman and adult over child, the most powerful would rule over the weakest – this was essentially the ideology of the Spanish colonialists.

And in order not to dwell too long on this, in order to know what kind of men these are, it is enough to know the sole example of the Mexicans [Aztecs] who were considered the most prudent, cultured, and powerful of all. Their king was Moctezuma whose empire extended far and wide throughout those regions and who inhabited the city of Mexico [Tenochtitlan]... He heard of the arrival of Hernán Cortés and of his victories and of his intention to come to Mexico to meet with him... and, full of terror, he received [Cortés] in his city along with a small number of Spaniards, not more than 300. Cortés having occupied the city in this way, felt such disdain for the cowardice, inertia, and crudeness of these men that he not only terrorised and forced the king and the princes who were subject to him to accept the yoke and the lordship of the kings of Spain, but out of suspicions that in a certain province [Moctezuma] had plotted the death of some Spaniards, he put him in jail, filling the citizens with terror and shock, but they did not take up arms to free their king... Can there be any greater or more convincing testimony of how some men exceed others in intelligence, strength of spirit, and courage, and that some men are slaves by nature?

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Pizarro's conquest of the Incas 1532

Exploration deep into South and Central America continued in the reign of Charles and as it did the Council of the Indies, which was responsible for religion, administration and judicial matters in the colonies, faced a difficult task in enforcing royal authority over the settlers. Foods exported back to Spain often bypassed royal taxes despite the Sevillian monopoly which ensured that all trade with the New World passed through its port.

Exploration was driven largely by the opportunities it afforded for fortune and glory to be made. The early discoveries fed the legend of an El Dorado, the source of the gold and silver which the conquistadors had seen and which had begun to filter back to Europe as they conquered the lands of the Aztecs.

KEY TERM

Hidalgo
A gentleman or nobleman, without a hereditary title.

While Cortés had belonged to the **hidalgo** class of lower nobility, Francisco Pizarro came from lower stock; even so, he had a grandmother in common with Cortés. He was illegitimate and of humble origins but the opportunities afforded by emigration to Hispaniola meant that by 1519 he had formed part of the expedition headed by Vasco Núñez de Balboa, who was credited with the discovery of the Pacific, and he had become magistrate and mayor of Panama – a rise in fortune which would have been unattainable for someone of his status in Spain.

It was as a relatively old man that Pizarro set off on an expedition down the west coast of South America in 1524. There had been expeditions searching unsuccessfully for a strait which connected the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans and as a consequence, modern-day Nicaragua and Honduras were conquered and fell under the control of the conquistadors. Forays south towards Peru had brought back tales of a wealthy empire similar in power to that of the Aztecs. The expeditions were perilous and even less well provisioned than that of Cortés. The initial expedition failed and they were forced to return to Panama. Support for a further expedition was set up along the same lines as that of Cortés with a charter which apportioned half of any finds to their sponsor, the governor of Panama, Pedarias, and the other split three ways between the three leaders, Pizarro, Almagro and Luque. A second expedition set off in 1526 with only two ships and fewer than than 200 men. By 1527 Pizarro was down to 80 men and he was ordered back to Panama. While some of his men returned to Panama, 13 men decided to continue with Pizarro.

As the expedition moved deeper into the Inca Empire – modern-day Colombia, Peru and northern Chile – a peaceful and developed civilisation was found and the explorers were welcomed, though the Spaniards were not taken too seriously when they announced that they were claiming the territory for the Spanish king Charles V. Pizarro may have seen the rich technology, canals, roads, irrigation and medicine which abounded but he was focused solely on the gold and huge amounts of silver he found there. A rejection of the 'true faith' proved enough of a pretext to violently seize control over the empire, even though the Spaniards had come across no hostility from its king or inhabitants. Atahualpa, the Inca god-king, was invited to a banquet in Cajamarca and effectively kidnapped until he agreed to accept the Christian religion and the suzerainty of Charles V. As he and his attendant servants and nobleman were gathered in the main square the Dominican friar Vincente de Valverde stepped out before them with a crucifix and a bible and exhorted them to convert to Christianity. Atahualpa threw down the Bible in rejection and this became the signal for a wholesale massacre of the Incas. Atahualpa was kept prisoner and tried to offer a ransom. He would fill the room he was held in to the ceiling in gold and silver in return for his freedom. The agreement was made and the room filled but, although he had recognised one of the main motivations of the invaders, he underestimated the nationalism which was wrapped up in the Spaniards' brand of aggressive Christianity. The forced conversion of the Indians and complete surrender to the powers of their Christian king, the Holy Roman Emperor, was non-negotiable and the Inca emperor was burned as a heretic.

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SOURCE 6

The execution of the last sovereign Inca emperor, Atahualpa, by the Spanish in 1533. Atahualpa had negotiated his survival by offering Pizarro a huge bribe in silver and gold, but he began to be seen as a liability – a figurehead for those Incas yet to be subdued by the Spanish. He was sentenced to burning as a heretic and for the murder of his brother. By converting to Catholicism his sentence was commuted to death by beheading. The illustration is part of a long treatise addressed to Philip II and produced over a number of years in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Its author, an Andean man keen to alert Philip II to the abuse of the indigenous people under Spanish colonial rule, includes nearly 400 illustrations documenting life before and after the Spanish conquest of Peru.



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The impact of the conquest of the Americas

To the native population of the Indies and Central and South America the arrival of the conquistadors was catastrophic. Historians have estimated that the population of central Mexico fell from around 25.2 million in 1518 to just over 1 million in 1605. In Peru, the pre-conquest population of around 9 million shrank to around 600,000 by 1620. A combination of the devastation of smallpox to which the native inhabitants had never been exposed, brutal repression and enslavement meant that the settlers' estates themselves became unviable without a large enough native labour force to enable them to function. Replacing the early system of **encomiendas**, a system known as **repartimento** was set up which enabled a system of leased labour for limited periods. The traffic of Bahamian slaves was also established as in some areas the Indian population became extinct. Increasingly as the Indian population shrank a transatlantic slave trade developed – eventually on a huge scale – transplanting black slaves from the west coast of Africa such that by the 1560s there were more African slaves than settlers across all the Spanish colonies.

For the Spanish the import back to Spain of new crops such as potatoes, tomatoes and maize altered the diet of the home population. While the journey to the New World was highly dangerous, nonetheless it offered to many an opportunity for social mobility and the possibility of riches. It opened up intellectual debate and study of new worlds to better understand the condition of man. Rather than looking back at the philosophers of the ancient world scholars were now looking at the new in a debate on the nature of the rights of man.

Arguably of greatest impact were the discoveries of the silver and gold mines in South America which changed the economy of Spain and Europe, as a whole bringing both huge wealth but also a fragile, overheated economy (which will be explored in Chapter 5).

KEY TERMS

Encomienda
The system by which Spanish colonists in the New World were allocated land along with the people living there, who were obliged to work for them.

Repartimento
A system of forced labour in which the local population supplied their labour as a form of tribute. While it was not enslavement as such it was a form of slave labour.

ACTIVITY
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

The expansion of the Spanish Empire in the Americas

1 Using the section above, identify and explain the differences between the conquests of Cortes and Pizarro.

2 Read the definition of the term 'conquistador'. How far can Columbus be defined as a conquistador?

3 Explain the significance of each of the following in expanding Spain's territories in the Americas:

a) Ferdinand and Isabella

b) Pope Alexander IV

c) Charles V.

The significance of northern Europe

Philip II's marriage to Mary Tudor 1554 and her death 1558

England had been an emerging power under Henry VII but its strategic importance was reflected in the alliances it would make with the two dominant European power blocks of France and Spain. The marriage of Catherine of Aragón to Arthur and then to his younger brother Henry sealed an alliance between Spain and England which recognised the need of both countries to limit the power of France. After the divorce of Catherine and the establishment of the Church of England with Henry VIII at its head, England had thawed its relations with France and looked to Protestant Flanders and Germany rather than to Charles V. After the death of Edward VI, who did more to establish the Reformation in England than his father had done, the directive of Henry's will – which Edward had tried to overturn in order to ensure a Protestant legacy – was that his Catholic daughter Mary would inherit and if she died without heirs her Protestant sister Elizabeth would follow her on the throne of England. The problem was that Henry had declared both his daughters illegitimate and Edward did nothing to change this. Indeed, Edward's will firmly stated that as his sisters were illegitimate his cousin, Jane Grey, should inherit on his death.

For Spain and France there was much to gain with an alliance with England despite the moving sands of English politics and religion. If Spain were to ally with England it would complete its encirclement of France. But if France were to extend the alliance it already had with Scotland in supporting the rights of Mary Queen of Scots, who was betrothed to the French dauphin and being brought up at

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the French court, and who as a niece of Henry VIII herself was close in the line of succession, then Spain could lose access via the Channel to its ports in Flanders.

The marriage negotiations begun by Charles V and his ministers in Brussels were concluded in 1554 with the marriage of Philip II and Mary Tudor, now queen of England. Charles had hoped to leave the totality of his empire to Philip. This would have made him ruler of the Habsburg lands from Flanders to Austria, Holy Roman Emperor, ruler of Spain, Naples and Sicily and the colonies in the Americas. Charles was himself exhausted and ill and was facing opposition from his brother Ferdinand, who wanted to succeed Charles to the Habsburg lands and as Holy Roman Emperor. By bringing England into his sphere Charles hoped to achieve two things:

- to aid the restoration of the Catholic faith in England and bring it firmly under the orbit of the counter-Reformation
- to gain England's help in the Habsburg–Valois wars and in suppressing the Protestant Dutch rebels and preserving the Netherlands for his son rather than his brother.

KEY TERM

Guise family
A powerful Catholic family in France whose importance was reflected by the marriage of Marie de Guise to James V of Scotland. Their daughter, Mary, was brought up in France and married the heir to the French throne, Francis, who was to reign for only a year and a half. On his death Mary to returned to Scotland to rule in person.

Although Philip was not consulted about the marriage he understood its value as a counter to the influence of the French through its alliance with Scotland and in particular the **Guise family**, who were powerful in both Scotland and France. He hoped that England would come to the support of his war with France in the Habsburg–Valois struggle for control over north-east France.

Philip's marriage was held at Winchester Cathedral followed by a wedding breakfast at the Bishop's Palace. It was not a grand public affair and somewhat reflected the deep unease which accompanied the Spanish marriage in England. Mary had said she should have her way in the choice of a husband or it would kill her, and her councillors had reluctantly acceded to her wish. For Mary, her concerns were deeply religious in her plans to restore Catholicism to England and ensure a Tudor, Catholic succession. She was also drawn to Philip by family ties. Rejected by her father and humiliated by his pronouncements of her illegitimacy and his harsh treatment of her mother, Mary naturally looked to her mother's family for support. Charles V was her cousin, to whom she was once betrothed, and she and Philip were granddaughter and great-grandson of the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella.

Philip did his best to ingratiate himself with the English nobles but he was already facing opposition even before his arrival. A rebellion close to London and led by Thomas Wyatt had as part of its grievances the Spanish marriage. Many English were unhappy about coming under the orbit of a Spanish king who would have his own priorities rather than those of England at heart. In this they were not wrong and it took some persuasion for Philip and Mary to get the council to approve war with France in 1557. On the face of it England gained little from the alliance. Charles and Philip ignored English requests to limit the mercantile privileges of the **Hanseatic League** in England and the strategic port of Calais, the last territory on French soil still in English hands, was lost in 1558. Even worse, the power of the Spanish Inquisition was seen to take hold as Mary resorted to harsher measures in restoring the Catholic faith by force. For their part the Spanish found the English lukewarm in their support of Spanish foreign policy and blamed the English for the loss of Calais due to their lack of military support.

KEY TERM

Hanseatic League
An organisation of north German towns to form a trading block and to protect their shipments and caravans from attack. By this means they were able to dominate trade in the Baltic and beyond.

Philip and Mary were not to produce an heir. Mary, already 37 and sickly by the time of her marriage, believed she was pregnant but when it became clear that it was not going to happen, Philip spent more and more time away seeing to his own territories. Of the four years they were married, Philip spent 15 months in England. At her death in 1558, Spanish hopes of a firm alliance with England were gone. An attempt by the Duke of Feria, the Spanish ambassador, to preserve the alliance by brokering a marriage with Mary's successor, Elizabeth, was unsuccessful when she turned Philip down – to his relief. He had likened his position on his formal offer of marriage to Elizabeth as 'a man under sentence of death'.

In the event, the conclusion of the French wars with the Treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis resulted in Philip's marriage to Elisabeth of Valois, the French king's daughter, with whom he had a happy marriage. Spain's influence in England, such as it was, was short lived and provided no lasting benefits. Under Elizabeth, support for the Dutch rebels resumed and England continued to be a thorn in Spain's side in this and in its attacks on Spain's Atlantic trade routes.

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ACTIVITY
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

The English Alliance

1 What were Charles' diplomatic objectives for negotiating the marriage alliance with England?

2 Draw an arrow labelled *not successful* at one end and *very successful* at the other. Mark on the arrow how far this marriage alliance met its objectives in terms of the following factors: religion; foreign policy; dynastic. Mark each along the arrow and annotate with an explanation of your judgement.

3 Overall, which of the factors was the least successful? Why?

The revolt in the Netherlands 1572

The Netherlands had been a part of the Habsburg Empire from the reign of Philip's father Charles, Holy Roman Emperor, ruler of the Habsburg territories and king of Spain. When Philip succeeded to the Spanish throne he also inherited Flanders or the Spanish Netherlands but his relationship with it was much more complex. The Seventeen Provinces, as Charles named them, had different levels of liberties or privileges and Philip was variously duke or count of individual states within the region. With its important trading port at Antwerp, the Spanish Netherlands was probably the most developed mercantile region in Europe. The city profited from the trade with the Americas, which was funnelled through Seville and traded goods such as sugar and pepper. The region as a whole was the most urbanised in Europe and certainly in sharp contrast to Spain, which was largely rural. As in Aragón the legislative body which governed the provinces, the States-General, could only demand taxes if the representatives of the States approved them, and as in Aragón this was a forum in which grievances could be presented to the king. Whereas Charles had been careful not to push the States-General too far, Philip was determined to gain complete control. In the Netherlands the people had seen Charles, who was born in Ghent, as one of their own and therefore concerned with the issues which most closely affected them (see Chapter 4). Philip, on the other hand, was born in Spain, and it was felt that he not only had little understanding of the issues concerning the Netherlands but that his first loyalty was essentially to Castile and Spain.

Whereas Charles was criticised in Spain for his long absences to the north, Philip was resented in the Netherlands because of his infrequent visits, which his Dutch subjects saw as a signal preference for Spain. His half-sister, Margaret of Parma, ruled on his behalf as regent with Cardinal Granvelle as her chief advisor. Both were increasingly resented by the nobles who felt that Granvelle's administrators held too much power. In addition, the work of the Netherlands inquisition set up by Charles with the sanction of the pope was deeply unpopular. Although Granvelle was dismissed, Philip insisted the work of the inquisition should continue unabated. Under Charles some 2,000 Protestant heretics had been executed. Increasingly, the cosmopolitan nature of the Netherlands had promoted tolerance and many of its subjects were open to the new Lutheran ideas from Germany and Calvinist ideas from Switzerland. The Treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis with France also opened the borders between France and the Netherlands and French Huguenots began to flow in as a result of the French religious wars.

On the advice of his religious advisors, who identified that harsh implementation of religious orthodoxy would cause rebellion, Philip did make a number of concessions after the nobles resigned their offices and the lower nobility demanded religious freedoms but it was too late and rebellion broke out in 1566; churches were desecrated in many cities by a rampaging mob. Philip's response was military and the Duke of Alba, a fearsome military leader, was sent to the Netherlands to regain control of the province at the head of a force of 10,000 men. The rebellion and its leaders were suppressed and either dispersed or executed. William of Orange fled and his son was taken hostage to Spain where the nobles' intermediary in Spain was garroted in secret on the orders of Philip himself. Despite the arrest of some 12,000 rebels and the execution of more than 1,000 the province was not completely pacified. Alba's rule was harsh and he instituted changes which were counter-productive in restoring stability to the province.

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- He established new bishoprics which were not in the gift of local nobility and were to be funded from existing church revenue.
- He codified Dutch law and reformed the universities which was seen as an imposition of Spanish systems.
- He modernised the tax system, introducing new taxes such as the Hundredth Penny and the Twentieth and Tenth Pennies. This was particularly unpopular, established as it was during the economic slump and harsh winter of 1571.

KEY TERM

Sea Beggar
A Dutch rebel against Spanish rule who took to the sea as a privateer fighter and attacked and robbed ships as well as taking over towns on land.

SOURCE 7

William of Orange calls for the separation of the Low Countries from Spain, 1572. On 1 April 1572, a band of semi-piratical **Sea Beggars** captured the port of Den Briel and then a combined movement of fierce Sea Beggars and Calvinists took over one town after another in Holland and Zeeland, seizing the chance that Alba had left few troops in the two provinces. The Prince of Orange responded to the opportunity too. On 4 April he issued a call to the inhabitants of the Low Countries to rise against Alba.

We suffer with all our heart over the multitudinous and excessively cruel violences, the excessive burdens, taxes of ten, twenty, and thirty per cent, and other imposts, exactions, burdens, seizures, slayings, expulsions, confiscations, executions, and innumerable other unparalleled and intolerable inflictions, intimidations, and oppressions which the common enemy, with his Spaniards, bishops, inquisitors and other dependents, continues daily with unprecedented novelty and violence to inflict upon you, your wives, and your daughters, and your souls, bodies, and goods. After so many years, this now grows steadily worse under the name of His Royal Majesty, but without his knowledge, in violation of his oath, and contrary to the liberties and privileges of the country, although in fact at the instigation of Cardinal Granvelle and the Spanish Inquisitors, whose purpose it is to put into effect the decisions of the Council of Trent and the Inquisition of Spain.... With these, after expelling the tyrannical oppressors, together we shall see the Netherlands in their ancient freedom, governed again without any violence, with proper obedience to the King and security for your consciences, and according to the advice of the States General. To achieve this, if you will help by giving yourselves over into our hands, we wish to contribute all our strength; but if you do not do so and bring shame, violence, and grief upon yourselves, we do not want to have the fault laid upon us.

William of Orange's call to arms coincided with a deep resentment of Alba's policies. Despite a rebel army consisting largely of German mercenaries and support gained from an alliance with French Huguenot troops, William's land attacks were easily repulsed. However, the actions of the Sea Beggars were more successful. They were able to take over a number of fortified towns and forced Alba into besieging them. It took a year to recapture the towns, with Alba writing desperately to Philip's secretary for assistance.

SOURCE 8

A letter from the duke of Alba sent in February 1573. It is addressed to Philip's secretary, Gabriel Zayas, and begs Philip for material support for his campaign.

I beat my head against the wall when I when hear talk of the cost here! It is not the Turks who are troubling Christendom, but the heretics, and these are already within our gates... for the love of God, ask for the new supplies that I have detailed to His Majesty, because what is at stake is nothing less than the survival of his states.

The towns were eventually recaptured but Alba's brutal retribution further damaged relations between king and people. There were massacres of the civilians in Mechelen, Naarden, Zutphen and Haarlem. But whereas this succeeded in suppressing the population it hardened the position of William of Orange and his Calvinist rebels in Holland and Zeeland and gave little incentive for those soldiers still holding out against Alba to surrender. Brutality was not confined to Alba's forces, however, when the rebels captured nine Franciscan monks and executed them.

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Alba was replaced in the Netherlands as a consequence of his strategies against the Dutch rebels. The brutality shown by both sides resulted in a breakdown in the relations between king and vassals in the Netherlands leading to a long drawn out conflict which ultimately sapped resources from Spain and contributed to its bankruptcy of 1575. The policies of Alba's replacement, Luis de Requesens, were more moderate with Philip's wary agreement, but trust had been eroded and the limits of funding from Spain whose expenditure at this time exceeded the value of the import of bullion from the Americas meant Philip could not continue a military campaign in Flanders. The mutinies of the Spanish army, which had gone unpaid, culminated in the 'Spanish Fury', the sack of Antwerp in 1576, and contributed to the continuing unrest.

At the heart of the problems in the Netherlands was a conflation in the eyes of Philip of the issue of the heretic rebels and the genuine grievances of his Dutch subjects, who much like his Aragonese subjects were fiercely protective of their liberties and traditional rights. By 1650, the bishop Juan de Palafox would point out 'Nobody doubts that the wars in Flanders have been the ruin of this monarchy'.

ACTIVITY
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Philip in the Netherlands

1 Use the section on the revolt in the Netherlands to list the problems Philip faced there.

2 Why was Philip unsuccessful in imposing his complete control over the Netherlands?

3 In your opinion, how far was Alba responsible for the revolt in 1572?

A Level Exam-style Question Section C

How far do you agree that throughout the period 1474–1575 Spain maintained control over its territories largely by force? (20 marks)

Tip

Although the question does not specify analysis of change, you must compare the different methods used by each monarch in ruling a growing empire. You should also consider the context which might account for the reasons why different regions were dealt with differently at different times.

The conquest of Portugal 1580

By the end of the 1570s, Philip's reign had been through a period of considerable difficulty. There had been rebellions in Spain itself among the Moriscos of Granada in 1562 and a series of revolts in the Netherlands. Philip had launched a naval war with the Turks and the French wars of religion had threatened his policies of religious orthodoxy in his empire as Protestants were driven out of France and spread their ideas across Europe. All this had put a massive drain on his financial resources and his reign presided over three bankruptcies. The Dutch revolts themselves cost some 80 million ducats to attempt to suppress. The expensive wars with France were only concluded with the Treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis in 1559. For the first two decades of his reign Philip was on the defensive and was financially stretched to the extent that the funds the royal coffers received through trade from the New World were insufficient to meet Spain's military commitments. The historian J.H. Elliot argues that the opportunities which arose in Portugal were just at a time when Philip's financial woes were beginning to improve. New methods used in refining Peruvian silver resulted in an improvement in yield and provided Philip with an income that allowed him, for a period of time, to pursue a proactive rather than a defensive foreign policy.

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The conquest of Portugal was a bloodless one and had more to do with family connections and political manoeuvring than the use of military dominance. The annexation of Portugal offered huge advantages for Spain. It would bring with it an Atlantic seaboard, an experienced fleet and an overseas empire that stretched west from the Azores to Brazil and east to India and the Far East. However, as the 16th century progressed, Portugal depended increasingly on the supply of silver bullion for its trade with the Far East and the port of Lisbon relied increasingly on that of Seville where the imports of silver bullion from Castile's silver mines in the New World were funnelled.

Philip was not the first of the Spanish monarchs to look for a united Iberian peninsula under the control of the Spanish monarchy. His opportunity came when the king of Portugal, Sebastian I, disappeared along with a large section of his nobility in a crusade against the Turks in 1578. His uncle, Henry, succeeded him but at 66 years old and sick he died soon after without an heir. The short period of his reign was a period of political instability as the succession was contested. Neither Sebastian nor Henry had children to succeed them. Philip was in a strong position: he was another uncle of Sebastian and a son of the Portuguese royal family through his mother, Isabella of Portugal. In addition, there had been long-standing familial links between the Castilian and Portuguese Trastámara royal families for over a hundred years.

The claimants to the throne were Catalina of Braganza, a member of one of the ancient royal houses of Portugal, and the more serious contender, Dom Antonio, the prior of Crato, an illegitimate son of another of Sebastian's uncles. He had widespread support from the commons despite a questionable reputation. Philip's claim was strong but the likelihood of a Castilian takeover of Portugal was resented by many of the population. Philip first sent an emissary, Don Cristobal de Moura, to smooth the way to his succession during the reign of Henry to persuade him to name his successor. Moura, with the help of Spanish silver and the promise of ransoms to be paid to release Portuguese noblemen from the Turks, was able to gain lukewarm, but inconclusive, support from Henry initially, and later the noblemen and clerics who made up the Regency Council on Henry's death. However, the bulk of the population supported the claims of Crato, and the lower gentry those of Catalina. It became clear that a show of arms would be necessary to swing the indecision of the Cortes to support Philip. The Duke of Alba, who had retired in disgrace after his brutal repression of the Dutch rebels, was recalled to head a Spanish army which was positioned at the border. On Henry's death in January 1580, Crato was proclaimed king of Portugal by the people of Lisbon but as indecision continued Philip was able to persuade Catalina to withdraw her claim by gifting estates and the title of Constable to her father, the Duke of Braganza. In June Philip gave the signal to Alba to invade Portugal. Alba's successful siege of Lisbon resolved the issue and Philip was able to process into Lisbon by December 1580, as the king uniting the crowns of Portugal and Spain for the next 60 years. Philip had gained the support of the ruling classes and was careful to protect the **liberties** of Portugal, as he had done in Aragón and failed to do in Flanders. In this he was continuing his monarchy in the image of that established by Isabella and later Charles V – that is, a collection of disparate territories with their own systems but unified under his personal monarchy and under the Roman Catholic Church.

KEY TERM

Liberty
In this context, a right or privilege enjoyed by a region that is laid down by law and may be different from the liberties of other territories under the same ruler or monarch. For Portugal, these liberties included, for example, the right to considerable autonomy over its territories and for official posts to be filled by Portuguese rather than Spaniards.

The combined empires of Portugal and Spain marked the greatest extent of Philip's imperial territory. The phrase adopted by those describing the British empire at its height was first applied to Philip's empire, on which 'the sun never sets'.

The combined force of both countries was formidable. The union of the empires of both countries put Philip at the head of a massive global empire across three continents. With the negotiated peace with the Turks and France embroiled in civil war, a united Spain and Portugal were able to focus their combined fleets on the establishment and dominance of their trade routes across the Atlantic and the Far East. This marked the high point of the 'Golden Age' of Spain when it was at its wealthiest and most powerful.

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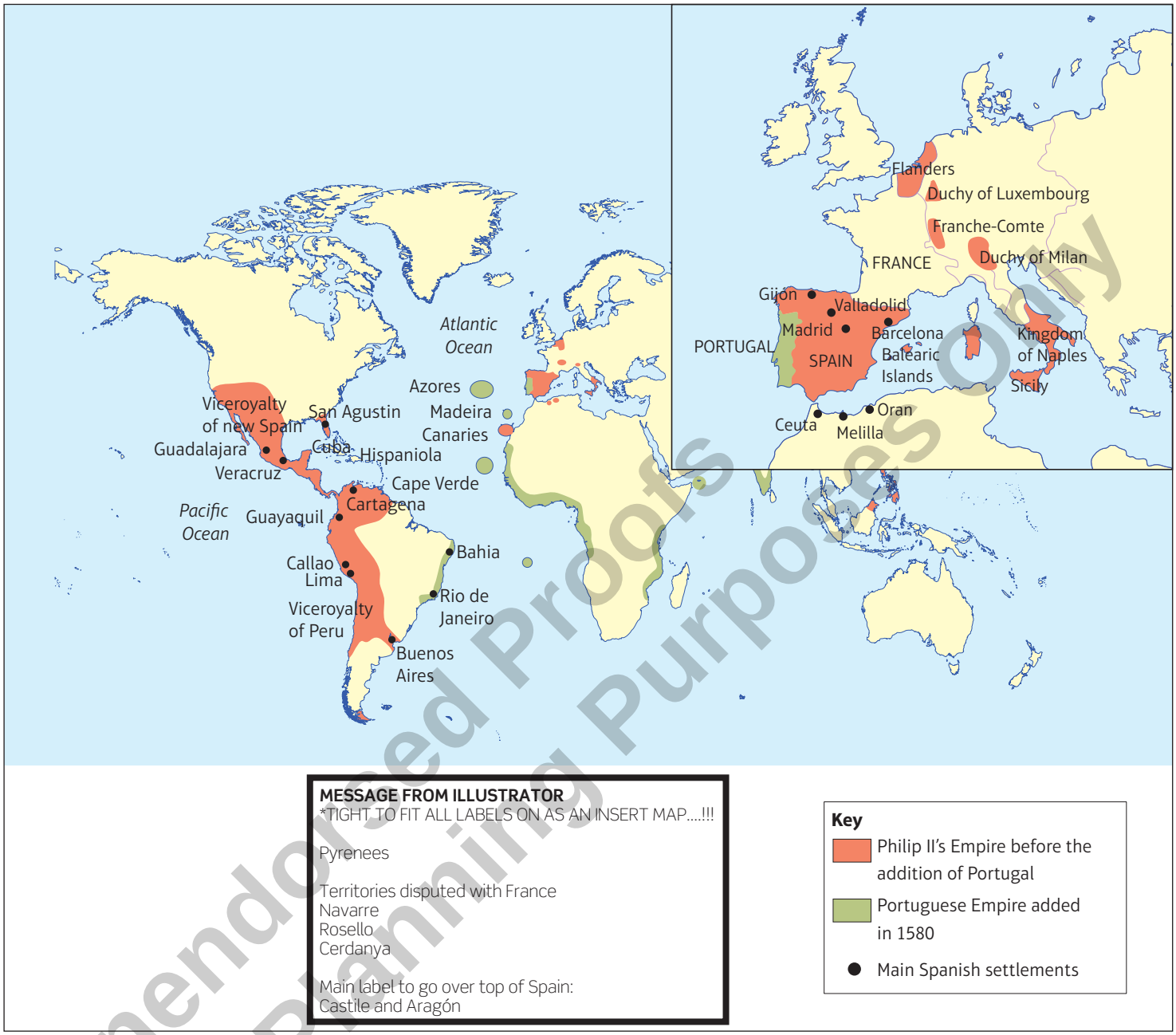


Figure 1.6 The united empire in the reign of Philip II. While the reach of the Spanish Empire reached its height under Charles V, it remained a formidable power block under Philip.

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THINKING HISTORICALLY Change (7a)

Convergence and divergence

Changes in Spain's foreign policy, 1474–1598

1494–1559 The Italian Wars	**1525** Defeat of the French king at the Battle of Pavia	**1527** Sack of Rome	**1571** The Battle of Lepanto	**1570s** The Duke of Alba's repression of the Dutch rebels

Change in Spain's religious policies, 1474–1598

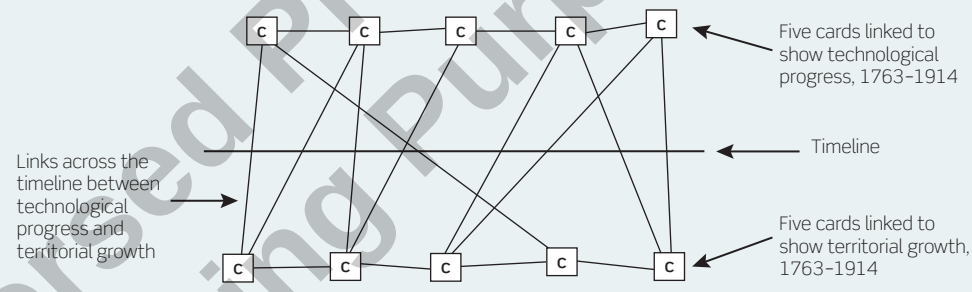
1492 The defeat of Granada	**1519** Charles elected Holy Roman Emperor	**1547** Charles' campaign for orthodoxy and the discovery of Lutheran cells	**1554** Marriage of Mary Tudor to Philip II	**1560s** Philip's policies against the Morisco population in Garan

1 Draw a timeline across the middle of a landscape piece of A3 paper. Cut out ten small rectangular cards and write the above changes on them. Then place them on the timeline with political events above the line and religious events below. Make sure there is a lot of space between the changes and the line.

2 Draw a line and write a link between each change within each strand, so that you have four links that join up the changes in the political part of the timeline and four that join the religious changes. You will then have two strands of change: political and religious.

3 Now make as many links as possible across the timeline between political change and religious change. Think about how they are affected by one another and think about how things can link across long periods of time.

You should end up with something like this:



Answer the following:

4 How far do different strands of history interact with one another? Illustrate your answer with two well-explained examples.

5 At what point do the two strands of development converge (i.e. when do the changes have the biggest impact on one another)?

6 How useful are the strands in understanding how the seeds of the decline of royal power during the 17th century were sown in the 16th century?

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A Level Exam-style Question Section C

To what extent can it be argued that the reach of Spanish power by the end of the 16th century was largely the result of alliances made during the 15th century? (20 marks)

Tip

This is an 'iceberg' question which gives you one factor for the extending reach of Spanish power within the question – alliances. If the factor of alliances is above the waterline, which other factors could you consider in your answer below the waterline?

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Spain's geographical reach

1 a) Draw a mind map. Place Spain in the centre and include strands for:

- France
- Italy
- the Ottoman Empire
- England.

b) Identify the key events that connect them to Spain in the 15th century.

c) Identify connections between each strand and annotate them to explain the links.

d) Repeat the exercise for Spain in the 16th century.

e) Write a paragraph to explain aspects that show change or continuity in the extent of Spanish power between 1474 and 1598.

2 a) Draw a diagram that shows Spanish conquests in the New World. Identify those territories taken by conquest and colonisation and those that came to Spain from the annexation of Portugal, and label with dates and key figures.

b) Write a paragraph that explains how the conquests in the Americas changed the status of Spain in Europe.

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