

The "Spanish Century"

by Thomas Weller

The Spanish monarchy can be regarded as Europe's leading power in the 16th century. This article pursues the question to what extent Spain's predominance in Europe and overseas affected cultural transfer. After a brief review of the circumstances and preconditions for Spain's rise to world power, the transfer processes in various fields of contemporary culture and society will be explored. Finally, the extent to which the 16th century can be considered the "Spanish Century" will be discussed.

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Introduction

What would have happened if Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) (→ [Media Link #ab](#)) had caught the ear and support of Francis I of France (1494–1547) (→ [Media Link #ac](#)) with his project instead of those of the Catholic Kings Isabella I of Castile (1451–1504) (→ [Media Link #ad](#)) and Ferdinand II of Aragón (1452–1516) (→ [Media Link #ae](#))? What if instead of Charles I of Aragón and Castile (1500–1558) (→ [Media Link #af](#)), the French king would have been elected Holy Roman Emperor by the electors in 1519? The philosopher of history Oswald Spengler (1880–1936) (→ [Media Link #ag](#)) asked himself this question in his culturally pessimistic bestseller work *The Decline of the West*, which was first published in 1918, and believed he knew the answer: "The early Baroque period from the Sack of Rome to the Peace of Westphalia, which was actually Spanish in religion, intellect, art, politics and manners would have been shaped from Paris and not from Madrid."¹ However, as historical accident would have it, Spengler continued, not the French but the Spanish monarchy left its imprint on Europe during the long century between the Sack of Rome by the troops of emperor Charles V in 1527 and the Peace Treaty of Münster in 1648. This is evident in the "style of the Church", shaped by Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) (→ [Media Link #ah](#)), and the Council of Trent (1545–1563), which "he spiritually dominated", as well as in the "style of politics", shaped by Spanish "war technique, ... the [cabinet] diplomacy of Spanish cardinals and the courtly spirit of Escorial", including finding its expression in architecture, painting and ceremony.²

▲ 1

If and to what extent 16th century Spain can truly be considered the example or model for the rest of Europe and in what way the Spanish hegemony affected cultural transfer processes inside and outside Europe will be discussed in the context of the following survey. Contemporaries on both sides of the Pyrenees were not oblivious to Spain's hegemony, although they did not yet speak of a "Spanish Century".

▲ 2

A discourse idealising the recent past as the "Golden Age" began early in the Iberian peninsula – in the light of the signs of crisis in the second half of the 17th century. Since the 18th century, the term *Siglo de Oro* has become customary especially for the literary achievement of the preceding two centuries. Since then it has established itself as a period designation, particularly in literature, even though it remains unfocussed with regard to its general historical content and

precise periodisation.³

▲3

In a manner of speaking, the other side of this narrative is the image of Spain, described toward the end of the 19th century as the *leyenda negra* (→ Media Link #aj), which took shape during the 16th century in the Protestant territories of Europe and remains partially effective even in the present time.⁴ The hegemonic power Spain functioned as a negative foil against which its opponents attempted to differentiate themselves. The common background for these two contradictory assessments remains Spain's rise to the leading power of Europe during the 16th century.

▲4

The Rise of Spain to World Power, 1492–1609

When Columbus landed in the Bahamas on 12 October 1492 and took possession of the newly discovered islands for the Crown of Castile, he did so by order of a ruling couple that had been the first to unite the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula (with the exception of Portugal, which was only to be united with the Spanish monarchy in 1580 for a duration of six decades).⁵ That a permanent personal union would arise from the marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragón was not always certain, not to mention the many other territories that the successors of the Catholic Kings would unite under their crown.⁶

▲5

It is sufficient to consider a chronology of unexpected deaths to size up the role of dynastic accidents in the founding of the Spanish empire: John of Castile (1478–1497) (→ Media Link #ak) and Isabella of Castile (1470–1498) (→ Media Link #al), the two older siblings of Joan the Mad (1479–1555) (→ Media Link #am), the mother of Charles V, died in 1497 and 1498. In 1506, Philip the Handsome of Burgundy (1478–1506) (→ Media Link #an), the father of the future king and emperor, met the same fate at the early age of 28. In 1509, another son was born to Ferdinand II of Aragón, who had married again after the death of Isabella, but he survived for only a few hours. When Ferdinand died in 1516 without a direct male heir, the realms of the Crown of Aragón fell to his grandson Charles, who from that moment also exercised power in Castile on behalf of his mother Joan, who was unfit to govern (→ Media Link #ao). A year earlier, he had already received the inheritance of his father in the Netherlands. When in 1519 the electors of the Holy Roman Empire also elected Charles I of Aragón and Castile, the grandson of emperor Maximilian (1459–1519) (→ Media Link #ap), as the emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire,⁷ the nineteen-year old ruled over territories of unprecedented extension.⁸

▲6

Charles later divided his mighty realm by ceding the imperial crown during his lifetime to his younger brother Ferdinand (1503–1564) (→ Media Link #aq).⁹ However, the dynastic bond (→ Media Link #ar) between the two branches of the House of Habsburg persisted and was fortified by further dynastic marriages. But even without succeeding to the imperial crown, Charles's first-born son, Philip II of Spain (1527–1598) (→ Media Link #as), inherited a realm on which the sun never set.¹⁰ As king of Spain, he was also the ruler of the Netherlands, the Free County of Burgundy, the kingdoms of Sicily and Naples, and the Duchy of Milan.¹¹ Furthermore, the Spanish expansion overseas (→ Media Link #at) continued under his government. In the second half of the 16th century, Spanish rule not only extended over distant parts of the American continent but also reached out into the Pacific region, in 1565 the Philippines were claimed for the Spanish crown.¹²

▲7

At the start of the 16th century, this development could not be foreseen. Yet, interpreting this course of events as a purely accidental chain of favourable circumstances does not do it justice. The crowned heads of Europe always aided dynastic accidents when the opportunity arose with a purposeful marriage policy (→ Media Link #au).¹³ The Habsburgs proverbially had a particularly "fortunate" hand in this regard – the famous saying "Bella gerant alii, tu felix Austria nube (Let others wage war, but thou, O happy Austria, marry)" can already be found in the 17th century.¹⁴ This was again proven to be the case in 1580, when Philip II of Spain also became king of Portugal in personal union after the unexpected extinction of the House of Avis. Thus, the Spanish king not only united all the Iberian realms under one crown for the first time but also incorporated the sprawling Portuguese overseas possessions into his colonial empire.¹⁵ The Spanish monarchy experienced its greatest extent during the time of the personal union with Portugal, which lasted for

six decades.¹⁶

▲ 8

To keep together and govern such an enormous complex of territories, especially in a time when the modern state only began to take shape and when conditions of communication and travel were often insufficient, constituted a tremendous logistical and administrative achievement. However, the Spanish monarchy was possibly better equipped for this task than other early modern states. Although Charles V still moved back and forth among his widely scattered possessions in the tradition of the mediaeval travelling kingship, the central administrative institutions of the Spanish crown were already well developed at this time. Philip II would exclusively govern the Spanish empire from Castile. In 1561, this ruler, who was mocked by some contemporaries as the *rey papelero* (paper king) because he often worked on files late into the night, made Madrid the capital of the kingdom, established the court and the central administrative institutions there, and subsequently continued to expand the administrative apparatus.¹⁷

▲ 9

However, it had been the Catholic Kings who had laid the foundations for this remarkable progress of rationalisation and bureaucratisation. For the first time, they had established central councils (*consejos reales*) that were in part responsible for particular fields, in part for the affairs of particular realms, such as the Councils of Aragón and Castile founded by the Catholic Kings. These were later joined by the Council of the Indies (founded before 1524), the Council of Italy (1559), the Council of Portugal (1582) and the Council of Flanders (1588).¹⁸ Furthermore, the Spanish king was represented in the various subrealms of the monarchy by viceroys that functioned in a manner of speaking as the *alter ego* of the absent monarch.¹⁹ As well, a network of royal courts of appeal (*audiencias*), which also partly exercised administrative functions, made for a presence of the royal central authority even in the remote parts of the monarchy.²⁰

▲ 10

Nevertheless, the Spanish monarchy under the Habsburgs was at no time "centralistic" or even "absolutistic". Rather, the case of the Spanish kingdoms is the prime example of a composite monarchy,²¹ that is, the institutions and legal traditions of the territories united under one crown generally remained untouched. This not only applied to the incorporation of Portugal in 1580, during which the Portuguese estates obtained guarantees of far-reaching privileges for themselves.²² The countries of the Crown of Aragón also retained their own institutions after the personal union and even within Castile certain territories, such as the three Basque provinces, continued to enjoy their special rights (*fueros*) that originated in the Middle Ages and significantly limited the power of the central authority.²³

▲ 11

The only institution that stood above the regional powers was the Spanish Inquisition, which was founded in 1478. Directly subject to the monarch, the "Holy Office" was from the start not just an instrument for preserving the purity of the Faith, but also for strengthening the central power of the Crown.²⁴ To many contemporaries, the common faith appeared to be the only bond keeping together the politically, linguistically and ethnically heterogeneous territorial complex of the Spanish monarchy.²⁵ The extremely rigorous measures of the Inquisition, particularly in the early years, against religious minorities in the Iberian peninsula must be viewed against this background. Because of the massive persecution by the Inquisition, thousands of Sephardim left the Iberian peninsula toward the end of the 15th century. They were followed in 1609 by the Moriscos (Muslims who had converted to Christianity under duress), who were also expelled from the territories of the Spanish crown (→ Media Link #ay).²⁶

▲ 12

Significantly it were the proceedings of the Inquisition in the Netherlands, among other factors, which ignited the uprising that finally resulted in the separation of the northern provinces from the Spanish crown.²⁷ In other parts of the Spanish empire, centrifugal tendencies became also apparent periodically, mostly this was the case when the central authority impinged on local legal traditions, interfered excessively in local concerns or when the native elites did not feel they were sufficiently represented in the political councils. This applies to the uprisings in Castile and Valencia at the start of the reign of Charles V as well as to the later revolts in Aragón, Catalonia and Portugal.²⁸ Still, on the whole the Spanish monarchy managed to retain and consolidate its territories (with the exception of the northern Netherlands and Portugal). In the end, the power of the Crown, internally as well as externally, did not rest on efficient administration, smart governing practice and successful marriage policy alone, but also on military dominance.

▲ 13

During the entire 16th century, there was hardly an armed conflict in which Spanish troops were not involved: the Schmalkaldic War, the innumerable campaigns of Spain and France for supremacy in Italy, the military confrontations of the Spanish monarchy with the Ottomans in the Mediterranean and with the competing maritime powers of England and the Netherlands on the oceans, the French wars of religion and, last but not least, the eighty-year conflict with the northern Netherlands at the end of which the United Provinces were able to achieve their independence from the Spanish crown.²⁹ That the days of the Spanish empire's global supremacy were already numbered toward the end of the century, however, became evident with the armistice concluded for twelve years in 1609 between Spain and the Netherlands that permitted the Dutch, to expand their presence overseas at the expense of Spain.³⁰

▲ 14

The Spanish Monarchy as the Starting and Nodal Point of Cultural Transfer in the 16th Century

In the light of the military omnipresence of the Spanish monarchy and the enormous extent of its realm, it is not astonishing that Spain became to a particular degree the starting point and node of cultural transfer processes in the 16th century. Firstly, economic factors played an important role. The Spanish empire was financed by the seemingly inexhaustible inflow of precious metals from the Americas.³¹ The lucrative America trade, although officially reserved for born Spaniards, attracted merchants and entrepreneurs from all over Europe, who settled in large numbers at the central places of commerce in the Iberian peninsula and, especially, in prospering Seville.³² (→ Media Link #az) Naturally, not only gold and silver, but also a multitude of other products, animals and plants not yet known in Europe reached the old world by way of the Iberian peninsula.

▲ 15

The valuable cargo of the annual silver fleet was always mortgaged in advance to external creditors due to the Spanish crown's permanent lack of money.³³ After the fleet's arrival in Seville, its treasure was passed on to the great European financial centres – if it had not already fallen into the hands of English or Dutch privateers on its way. For a long period of time, the Republic of Genoa played a very important role in this process. Its bankers had significant influence within the Spanish monarchy and rose to some of the highest offices of state.³⁴

▲ 16

The periodically declared bankruptcies did not reduce the dependency on the Genoese and other foreign money lenders. Despite the continuously recurring financial bottlenecks, the monarchy still had enough means throughout the entire 16th century to finance its numerous foreign policy projects.³⁵ Thus, apart from capital and goods finding their way from the Iberian peninsula to other parts of Europe, materials of warfare and soldiers circulated within the widely dispersed kingdom and were shifted from one front to the next.³⁶ Looking at the lives of Spanish soldiers and officers, one easily gains an impression of the tremendous mobility of a group of persons who, like merchants and mariners, became agents and mediators of cultural transfer.³⁷

▲ 17

Along with the networks of merchants, mercenaries and officers, the Court also played an outstanding role in this regard. The marriage networks of the governing royal families that spanned all of Europe, the practice of the Grand Tour and establishing permanent embassies in the 16th century promoted both personal and cultural exchange between the individual European courts. Madrid was no exception in this regard. Despite the numerous military confrontations, there were at times very close contacts between the Spanish and French royal families – the third wife of Philip II, Elizabeth of Valois (1545–1568) (→ Media Link #b1), for example, was a descendant from the French royal family.³⁸ However, it was the link between Madrid and Vienna that was particularly significant. Two emperors, Ferdinand I and Rudolf II (1552–1612) (→ Media Link #b2) from the Austrian line of the House of Habsburg, spent their childhood and youth in Spain. Furthermore, there were a number of marriages between the two lines, with the respective "foreign" spouses bringing their retinue to the new country. Vienna was also an important intersection of cultural exchange between Spain and Central Europe, along with Brussels, the seat of the Spanish governor of the Netherlands, and Antwerp as the commercial and financial centre in the Northwest (to 1585).³⁹

▲ 18

If one queries the objects and contents of cultural transfer, one must not just think of capital or merchandise that found its way over the Iberian peninsula to other regions of Europe but especially of the intangible goods that belong to a culture in the narrower or wider sense. As a central medium and at the same time an object of such transfers, language comes first to mind.

▲ 19

Castilian replaced Latin as the administrative and written language earlier than other vernaculars and was the first vernacular to have a written grammar. The humanist Antonio de Nebrija (1444–1522) (→ Media Link #b3) published his *Gramática de la lengua castellana* in 1492, the same year that Columbus landed in America and that the kingdom of Granada, the last Islamic realm in the Iberian peninsula, was conquered. In the foreword, he explicitly calls language the "companion of empire" and recommends to the Catholic Kings taking the Spanish language together with their laws to the "barbarian" peoples whom they and their successors would subjugate in future.⁴⁰ Even though Nebrija could not have had the overseas conquests of the Spanish crown in mind – his grammar was published before Columbus even embarked on his first trip – history seems to have proven him right in retrospect.⁴¹ Today, Spanish (to be precise: Castilian) is one of the four most-spoken languages in the world with 500 million speakers, trailing only behind Mandarin, Hindi and English. In the beginning, only a small part of the indigenous population of South and Central America learned the language of the conquerors, but in the long term Spanish, especially because of its importance as the language of writing and administration, almost completely replaced the languages spoken before the arrival of the conquistadors in many regions. On the other hand, especially missionaries made great efforts to study indigenous languages, some of which they fixed in writing for the first time and, thus, preserved from disappearing.⁴²

▲ 20

In Europe as well, Spanish gained in prestige with the growth in power of the Spanish monarchy. This development is also evident in the person of the monarch himself: When starting his reign, Charles V had to promise the Castilian estates to learn the language of the country as soon as possible, but about twenty years later he used it with great self-assurance even outside of Spain and in the presence of foreign delegates. When the emperor harshly attacked the French king in Spanish in 1536 in a speech held before Pope Paul III (1468–1549) (→ Media Link #b4) and the curia, the French ambassador, the bishop of Mâcon, complained because he allegedly did not understand what was said. Charles replied with the following words:

▲ 21

Señor obispo, entiéndame si quiere; y no espere de mí otras palabras que de mi lengua española, la cual es tan noble que merece ser sabida y entendida de toda la gente cristiana.⁴³

The Spanish humanist Juan de Valdés (1490–1541) (→ Media Link #b5) already afforded Castilian a significance extending beyond the Iberian peninsula as a language of communication in courtly and noble circles in his *Diálogo de las lenguas*, which was written around 1535 in Naples.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, in the long term, Spanish merely remained one European vernacular among others and never achieved the significance of a common European court language, unlike French in the 17th and 18th centuries. In politics and diplomacy, Latin continued to predominate for the time being, while Italian was considered the gallant language of conversation among European courtiers – although Spanish was occasionally spoken at the Viennese court.⁴⁵

▲ 22

The greater prestige of Italian is reflected in Spanish Renaissance poetry, which at first endeavoured to imitate Italian models. But soon critics, who rejected the Italian influence, also made their voices heard.⁴⁶ At the turn of the 16th to the 17th century, authors such as Lope de Vega (1562–1635) (→ Media Link #b6), Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616) (→ Media Link #b7) and Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681) (→ Media Link #b8) created literary master pieces that were equal to the works of William Shakespeare (1564–1616) (→ Media Link #b9) and Molière (1622–1673) (→ Media Link #ba) in their influence on other European literatures. The latter particularly applies to the perhaps most famous work of Spanish literature, Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, which soon after its publication created a furore outside the Iberian peninsula, was translated into numerous European languages during the 17th century and, in literary studies today, is viewed as the first modern novel.⁴⁷ Also, the Spanish picaresque and chivalric novels such as the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* or *Amadís de Gaula*, to which Cervantes makes ironic reference in his *Quijote*, spread beyond the confines of the Iberian peninsula.⁴⁸

Religion and Science

However, it was not just the literary creations of Spanish authors that were read by the rest of Europe but also texts that can be classified as religious treatises and devotional literature. Works such as the *Guía de los pecadores* by the Dominican priest Luis de Granada (1504–1588) (→ Media Link #bb) became bestsellers in Catholic Europe and were found in every French monastic library of the 17th century.⁴⁹ Spanish theologians played a major role in the Catholic Reformation and Counter-Reformation. One only needs to think of the Jesuit Order founded in 1534 by Ignatius of Loyola, which began its victory march through Europe and other parts of the world in the 16th century.⁵⁰

▲ 24

At the same time, the Inquisition and the censorship of books it practiced imposed narrow limits on cultural transfers in the field of religion and the sciences. The Index of the Spanish Inquisition not only included the work of the reformers but also the writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469–1536) (→ Media Link #bc) and other humanists.⁵¹ But also the witch-hunting manuals, which were widespread in Central Europe, such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* of the Dominican Heinrich Kramer (Henricus Institoris, 1430–1505) (→ Media Link #bd), were prohibited in Spain. As a result, the ideas about witches propagated in these manuals, though universal in Central Europe, never really took root in the Iberian peninsula and Spain was almost completely spared the witch hunts that raged in Central and Northern Europe.⁵²

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Though from a modern perspective this may appear as a positive side effect of censorship, there can be no doubt that the intellectual exchange between Spain and the rest of Europe was significantly encumbered until the 18th century by the activities of the Inquisition. It is all the more remarkable that the so-called *leyenda negra* was also fed from Spanish sources. In this context, the report of the Dominican priest and former conquistador Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566) (→ Media Link #be) on the crimes committed against the inhabitants of the overseas territories conquered by the Spanish, first published in 1552, takes pride of place.⁵³ (→ Media Link #bf) The publication of this work was preceded by a public disputation between las Casas and the humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573) (→ Media Link #bg) on the rights of the indigenous population in the Americas.⁵⁴

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However, it was not just the polemic writings of las Casas, but also the learned treatises of Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) (→ Media Link #bh), Domingo de Soto (1494–1560) (→ Media Link #bi), Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) (→ Media Link #bj) and other representatives of the school of Salamanca that encountered a broad resonance outside of Spain and that heavily influenced the contemporary theological and legal discourse on international law and human rights.⁵⁵ During the 16th century, Spanish authors also contributed to a considerable expansion of European knowledge in completely different fields of study such as botany, medicine, nautical science and geography. Between 1565 and 1574, the doctor Nicolás Monardes (1512–1588) (→ Media Link #bk), who lived in Seville, published a three-volume work on medicinal plants from overseas, the medicinal uses of which he tested over many years of experimentation.⁵⁶ Among nautical writings, the works *El Arte de navegar y regimiento de navegación* (1545) by Pedro de Medina (1493–1567) (→ Media Link #bl) and *Breve compendio de la sphaera y de la arte de navegar* (1551) by Martín Cortés (1510–1582) (→ Media Link #bm), which were distributed and translated all over Europe, must be named.⁵⁷ The geographical descriptions of the newly discovered territories and their inhabitants, such as Juan López de Velasco's (died 1598) (→ Media Link #bn) *Geografía y Descripción Universal de las Indias*, published in 1574, were equally in demand.⁵⁸

▲ 27

Court Culture, Art and Architecture

At least as many myths and legends as have been woven around the Spanish Inquisition are attached to the "Spanish court ceremonial", which removed and sacrally elevated the person of the monarch to a previously unknown degree. In its rigid corset, the members of the court, including the king himself, appear as prisoners. This view, to be found in a particularly pointed manner in Ludwig Pfandl (1881–1942) (→ Media Link #bo) and Michael de Ferdinandy

(1912–1993) (→ Media Link #bp),⁵⁹ perpetuates an image of the Spanish court that can already be seen to exist in travel reports of the 17th century.⁶⁰ However, recent research has somewhat revised this image.⁶¹ Thus, comparative studies (→ Media Link #bq), emphasise (despite all differences) the similarity of key elements and the functional equivalency of various European court ceremonials.⁶²

▲ 28

Still, the Spanish court ceremonial, which has with some justice been credited with a model function in European court culture, is of considerable interest to the question of the significance of Spain as the starting point in cultural transfers during the 16th century. However, when taking a closer look, it is evident that cultural transfer processes rarely are one-way streets; source and target cultures are involved in a continuous process of exchange and often cannot be clearly separated from each other. Even the term "Spanish" court ceremonial is actually misleading since it derived from the introduction of the Burgundian ceremonial to the court of Charles V in 1548, which as a kind of re-import from Spain then reached the Viennese court of Ferdinand I. It is obvious that we are dealing with complex appropriation and adaptation processes that left their mark on the transferred objects. However, historians are confronted with the problem that these processes are almost impossible to reconstruct since systematic ceremonial orders and rules of etiquette that allow a deeper insight into the ceremonial practice both at the Spanish and the Viennese imperial courts are only preserved from the middle of the 17th century.⁶³

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Nevertheless, the term "Spanish court ceremonial" suggests where contemporaries suspected its origins lay and is testimony to the perception of a cultural gradient between Spain and the rest of Europe. This phenomenon is even more evident in the field of fashion (→ Media Link #br) because the Spanish court undeniably had a model character in this regard during the 16th and 17th centuries: The so-called "Spanish style" (→ Media Link #bs) established itself with regional variants as the upper class fashion in all of Europe.⁶⁴ (→ Media Link #bt)

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The court, but also the prospering commercial towns, and above all Seville, which was one of the largest cities in the world with almost 130,000 inhabitants in the 16th century, also played key roles as clients for artists and architects, whose work had an influence that reached far beyond the Spanish crown's sphere of power.⁶⁵ Many were foreigners themselves, some of whom settled permanently in Spain, among them the Greek Dominikos Theotokopoulos (1541–1614), better known as El Greco (→ Media Link #bu). Others, among them Titian (1477–1576) (→ Media Link #bv), Anthonis Mor (1517– ca. 1577) (→ Media Link #bw) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) (→ Media Link #bx), only came when commissioned.⁶⁶ Even the native Spaniards among the leading artists and architects of their time, such as Alonso Sánchez Coello (1515–1590) (→ Media Link #by), Diego de Velázquez (1599–1660) (→ Media Link #bz), Pedro Machuca (1490–1550) (→ Media Link #c0) and Juan Bautista de Toledo (died 1567) (→ Media Link #c1), were open to influences from other European regions, especially from Italy and the Netherlands, or were trained there. The art historian Jonathan Brown took a step further when he pronounced: "Spain dominated the politics of Europe, only to be dominated itself by the cultures of Italy and Flanders".⁶⁷ Sponsored by the lavish patronage of the court, the rural and urban nobility and the Church, Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries became a melting pot of art styles of varying provenance, from which it also developed its own art forms that, in turn, had an influence on the rest of Europe, such as the Hispanic Baroque (→ Media Link #c2) on both sides of the Atlantic.⁶⁸

▲ 31

This applies to both the visual arts and architecture. Thus, influences of the Italian Renaissance mingled with Gothic-Moorish traditions in the Spanish architecture of the 16th century.⁶⁹ (→ Media Link #c3) By contrast, the monumental monastic palace *El Escorial*, built under Philip II between 1563 and 1584, appears unique and in a manner of speaking detached from the development of art and building styles on the Iberian peninsula. With its strict symmetry and its huge size it appears even today like an abstract idea made real in stone. (→ Media Link #c4) Although the Escorial palace was already marvelled at as the Eighth Wonder of the World by contemporaries, it never had as huge an effect on European palatial architecture as did Versailles, which was built about a century later.⁷⁰ And even the Escorial is by no means a uniquely Spanish creation: The original plans were created by Juan Bautista de Toledo (died 1567), who was trained in Rome and Naples. Philip exclusively hired Italian artists for certain parts of the interior design, such as the grave monuments (→ Media Link #c6) of the royal family in the basilica and the paintings in the library.⁷¹ (→ Media Link #c7) Likewise, the pleasure palace of Aranjuez, built under Charles V, was inspired by an Italian palace, the residence of the Dukes of Mantua in Marmirolo. Italian models also gave birth to the Buen Retiro palace in Madrid, which was built

A "Spanish Century"?

The question if and in what measure the 16th century should be considered the "Spanish century" will be answered differently for various fields of contemporary society and culture. Although the Spanish language began its global victory march in the 16th century, it never became a *lingua franca* in Europe – as opposed to Latin before and French after. The ceremonial customs and clothing at the Spanish court, however, seem to have had a style-forming effect in other parts of Europe. In the fields of visual arts, architecture and, in part, literature, Spain initially adopted influences from other regions of Europe. However, to some extent, the traces of this cultural transfer have faded today and can no longer be recognised as such. For example, the influence of the Dutch military reform on European warfare in the 17th and 18th centuries is undisputed, but without the confrontation with overmighty Spain it would probably never have come about in this way. In part, the Dutch developed Spanish models further in the process.⁷³ The same applies to the influence of the school of Salamanca on the thought of Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) (→ Media Link #c9), who is generally considered the founder of modern international law.

▲ 33

Further examples could easily be added, but the question of Spanish influence on European culture of the 16th century is misleading in the end. On a closer look, much of what is described as Spanish is revealed to be a *métissage*. The centuries of the *convivencia* between Islam, Christianity and Judaism on the Iberian peninsula, the cultural exchange between different parts of the Spanish world empire in the 16th century, the dynastic networks of the House of Habsburg, the activities of cosmopolitan trade networks – all these favoured a cultural synthesis that never was limited to the boundaries of the Spanish monarchy. Perhaps – despite all contrary tendencies – in this sense the Spanish century is best considered a century of accelerating cultural exchange within Europe and beyond the limits of the continent.

▲ 34

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Appendix

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

Notes

- ¹ Spengler, *The Decline of the West* 1926, vol. 1, p. 164.
- ² *ibidem*, p. 164.
- ³ Schalk, *Goldenes Zeitalter* 1962; Barrassar, *Siècle d'or* 1982, pp. 13–22; Simson, *Siglo de Oro* 2001, pp. 7f., Duchhardt / Strosetzki, *Siglo de Oro* 1996.
- ⁴ The term was introduced to the scientific debate by Juderías, *Leyenda negra* 1914; regarding genesis and function, cf. also Arnoldson, *Leyenda negra* 1960; Pollmann, *Feindschaft* 1992; Gómez-Centurión Jiménez, *Signo* 1995; Reinhard, *Nation* 2001; Schmidt, *Universalmonarchie* 2001; Greer / Mignolo / Quilligan, *Black Legend* 2007, Edelmayer, *Leyenda negra* 2010.
- ⁵ Cf. Pérez, *Ferdinand und Isabella* 1989; Ladero Quesada, *Katholische Könige* 1992.

6. ^ Cf. on the following the surveys by Edelmayer, *Monarchie* 2007; Bernecker / Pietschmann, *Geschichte* 2005, pp. 13–146; Lynch, *Nation State* 1992; Belenguer Cebriá, *Imperio* 1995.
7. ^ On the background of the election cf. Laubach, *Wahlpropaganda* 1971.
8. ^ Cf. Kohler / Haider / Ottner, *Karl V.* 2002; Belenguer Cebriá, *Imperio* 2002; Kohler, *Karl V.* 1999; Castellano / Sánchez Montes, *Carlos V* 2001.
9. ^ Neuhaus, *Herrschaftsübergang* 1996.
10. ^ Cf. Edelmayer, *Philipp II.* 2009; Parker, *Philipp II* 2002; Kamen, *Philipp of Spain* 2001; Williams, *Philipp II* 2001; Fernández Álvarez, *Felipe II* 1998.
11. ^ Cf. the map "Haus Habsburg - Territorien in Europa 1555" in the Digital Atlas on the History of Europe [09/11 /2010].
12. ^ Cf. Reinhard, *Expansion* 1985, vol. 2, pp. 32–68; Elliott, *Empires* 2006; Parker, *World* 2001.
13. ^ Cf. Duchhardt, *Dynastische Heirat* 2010.
14. ^ Kohler, *Felix Austria* 1994.
15. ^ Cf. Valladares Ramírez, *Portugal* 2000; Bouza Álvarez, *Portugal* 1987.
16. ^ Valladares Ramírez, *Castilla* 2001.
17. ^ Cf. Brendecke, *Imperium* 2009; idem, *Papierfluten* 2006; Escudero, *Felipe II* 2002.
18. ^ Cf. Walsler / Wohlfeil, *Staatsrat* 1959; Fernández Conti, *Consejos* 1998; Edelmayer, *Monarchie* 2007, pp. 150f.
19. ^ There were viceroys in Valencia, Catalonia, Aragón, Mallorca, Sardinia, Sicily and Naples, New Spain (Mexico and Central America) and Peru. In the Netherlands, the Free County of Burgundy and the Duchy of Milan, the Spanish crown was represented by governors, cf. Edelmayer, *Monarchie* 2007, p. 154; Pietschmann, *Staatliche Organisation* 1980, pp. 119–128; Büschges, *Konsens* 2001.
20. ^ The chronology of the foundations of royal courts overseas traces the spatial expansion of the Spanish empire and the Crown's endeavours for territorial penetration of the new dominions. Reales Audiencias were founded in Santo Domingo (1511), México (1527), Panamá (1535), Lima (1542), Guatemala (1542), Guadalajara (New Spain, today México) (1548), Santa Fe de Bogotá (1548), La Plata de los Charcas (today: Sucre, Peru) (1559), San Francisco de Quito (1563), the Philippines (1583) and Chile (1606). At the same time, the network of courts of appeal was also expanded in Europe with the creation of the Audiencias of Galicia (1563), Seville (1566), the Canary Islands (1568) and Mallorca (1571), cf. Edelmayer, *Monarchie* 2007, pp. 155f; Brendecke, *Imperium* 2009, pp. 159–176; Reinhard, *Expansion* 1985, vol. 2, pp. 69–87; Pietschmann, *Staatliche Organisation* 1980, pp. 116–119.
21. ^ Reinhard, *Geschichte* 1999, pp. 66–69; Koenigsberger, *Monarchies* 1986; Elliott, *Europe* 1992; Reinhard, *Geschichte* 1999, pp. 66–69; a summery on the debate on the concept of Absolutism in: Duchhardt, *Absolutismus* 1994; Asch / Duchhardt, *Absolutismus* 1996.
22. ^ Philip II had to promise to preserve Portuguese institutions on this and the other side of the Atlantic. All important offices at the Portuguese court and the trade with India and Africa were to be reserved for Portuguese subjects and even the language of the files and official events remained Portuguese, cf. Edelmayer, *Philipp II.* 2009, p. 245; Valladares Ramírez, *Portugal* 2000, pp. 14–35.
23. ^ Cf. Morales Arrizabalaga, *Fueros* 2007; Belenguer Cebriá, *Corona* 2001; Kasper, *Geschichte* 2008, pp. 51–59.
24. ^ Cf. Kamen, *Inquisition* 1967, especially pp. 264–276; Monter, *Frontiers* 1990; Barrassar, *L' Inquisition* 1979.
25. ^ Cf. Gil Pujol, *Un rey* 2004.
26. ^ Cf. Windler, *Minderheiten* 2007.
27. ^ Cf. Parker, *Aufstand* 1979, p. 70.
28. ^ Cf. Pelizaeus, *Dynamik* 2007; Pérez, *Révolution* 1970; Álar Ezquera, *Akzeptanz* 2002; Vallés Borrás, *Germanía* 2000; Gracia Rivas, *Invasión* 1992; Elliott, *Revolt* 1984; Valladares, *Rebelión* 1998.
29. ^ Cf. Sánchez Montes, *Franceses* 1995; Parker, *Grand Strategy* 1998; Schilling, *Deus vixit* 1998; Reinbold, *Konfession* 2005; Vázquez de Prada, *Felipe II* 2004; Vargas-Hidalgo, *Guerra* 2002; Gómez-Centurión Jiménez, *Felipe II* 1988; Fernández Armesto, *Armada* 1989; Parker, *Spanish Road* 1972; Parker, *Aufstand* 1979.
30. ^ Cf. Israel, *Dutch Republic* 1982; idem, *Dutch Primacy* 1989, especially pp. 80–120; idem, *Spain* 1990; Emmer, *Dutch* 1998; Weindl, *Welt* 2007, pp. 87–111.
31. ^ Cf. Hamilton, *American Treasure* 1934, which is in this respect still the classical study; Pieper, *Preisrevolution* 1985; critical and including the latest research is Yun Casalilla, *Precio* 2004.
32. ^ Cf. Chaunu / Chaunu, *Seville 1555–1960*; Kellenbenz, *Kaufleute* 1970.
33. ^ Cf. Carande, *Carlos V* 1949.
34. ^ Cf. Ruiz Martín, *Hombres* 1970; Otte, *Imperio* 1991; Canosa, *Banchieri* 1998; Herrero Sánchez, *Génova* 2004.
35. ^ Cf. Thompson, *War* 1976; Yun Casalilla, *Precio* 2004, pp. 326–335. Apart from the mercenary armies that had to be equipped, provisioned and paid for their services, Philip II also maintained a widespread network of "pensioners", who received regular money payments for their services and loyalty to the Spanish crown, cf. Edelmayer, *Söldner* 2002.
36. ^ Cf. Parker, *Spanish Road* 1972.

37. ^ Cf. Cossío, *Autobiografías* 1956; Edelmayer, *Söldner* 2002, especially pp. 177–186.
38. ^ Cf. González de Amezúa, *Isabel de Valois* 1949; Edouard, *Corps* 2009; Reinbold, *Konfession* 2005.
39. ^ Cf. Schmidt, *Infans* 2004; Laferl, *Kultur* 1997; Edelmayer, *Hispania-Austria II* 1999; Kohler / Edelmayer, *Hispania-Austria* 1993; Kohler, *Begegnung* 1989; Mecenseffy, *Habsburger* 1955.
40. ^ Nebrija, *Gramática* 1992, p. 99, 108f.; cf. in this respect Braselmann, *Sprache* 1993; Büschges, *Sprachen* 2007.
41. ^ Cf. Geppert, *Sprachkonzept* 1986; Guzmán Betancourt, *Lengua* 1993; Büschges, *Sprachen* 2007, pp. 28–31.
42. ^ Cf. Noll, *Spanisch* 2001; Schulte-Herbrüggen, *Cuestión* 1999; Gonzales Ollé, *Instalación* 1997.
43. ^ "Lord Bishop, understand me if you wish but do not expect words from me other than in my Spanish language which is so noble that it merits to be mastered and understood by all Christians", quoted according to Alvar, *Carlos V* 1997, p. 177 (transl. by M.O.); cf. also Alvar Ezquerro, *Akzeptanz* 2002, p. 112; Weller, *Spanische Servitut* 2007, p. 186.
44. ^ "... porque, como veis, ya en Italia assi entre damas como entre cavalleros se tiene por gentileza y galania saber hablar castellano ..." ("... nevertheless, as you see, in Italy it is considered equally courteous and gallant among women and men to be able to speak Spanish..." – transl. by M.O.), Valdés, *Diálogo* 1983, p. 41.
45. ^ Laferl, *Kultur* 1997, p. 149.
46. ^ Cf., for example, Castillejo, *Repreñión* 1969.
47. ^ Ertler, *400 Jahre* 2007; Navarro Domínguez / Vega Cernuda, *España* 2007; Pano Alamán / Vercher García, *Avatares* 2010.
48. ^ Thus, copies of the late mediaeval *Amadis* romance are found in the libraries of 16th century Austrian nobles, Laferl, *Kultur* 1997, p. 118. Regarding the influence of the Spanish picaresque novel on German literature, cf. Rötzer, *Spuren* 1996.
49. ^ Bennassar / Vincent, *Spanien* 1999, p. 255.
50. ^ Cf. Falkner / Imhof, *Ignatius* 1990; Plazaola, *Ignacio* 1992; Hartmann, *Jesuiten* 2001; Schilling, *Luther* 1994.
51. ^ Kamen, *Inquisition* 1967, pp. 83–121.
52. ^ Cf. Martínez-Pereda, *Magia* 1991, p. 129; Levack, *Hexenjagd* 1995, p. 210; Henningsen, *Witches' Advocate* 1980, pp. 22f.
53. ^ *Las Casas, Relación* 1999. The first German translation was published barely fifty years later: *Las Casas, Neue Welt* 1597.
54. ^ Cf. Gewecke, *Neue Welt* 1986, pp. 198ff.; Delgado, *Hunger* 2001; idem, *Disputation* 1994.
55. ^ Cf. Köck, *Beitrag* 1987; Mate, *Beitrag* 1994; Horst, *Presence* 2004; Fernández-Santamaría, *Natural Law* 2005, pp. 15–268.
56. ^ Monardes, *Historia* 1988; Pardo Tomás, *Tesoro* 2002; Boxer, *Two Pioneers* 1963.
57. ^ Cf. Brendecke, *Imperium* 2009, pp. 109–158.
58. ^ López de Velasco, *Geografía* 1971.
59. ^ Pfandl, *Philipp II.* 1948, pp. 120ff.; Ferdinandy, *Bedeutung* 1965.
60. ^ Brüggemann, *Spanienberichte* 1956, p. 4; Weller, *Länder* 2007.
61. ^ Cf. Hofmann-Randall, *Hofzeremoniell* 1985; Jorzick, *Herrschaftssymbolik* 1998.
62. ^ Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles* 2003, pp. 181–219; idem, *Burgundian-Spanish Legacy* 2006; Paravicini, *Court* 1991.
63. ^ Cf. del Río Barredo, *Ritual* 2003, p. 23; Hofmann-Randall, *Hofzeremoniell* 1985, pp. 75–82.
64. ^ Thiel, *Geschichte* 2010, pp. 189–208.
65. ^ On Philip II's importance as art dealer and patron cf. Checa Cremades, *Felipe II* 1992.
66. ^ Cf. Brown, *El Greco* 1982; Checa Cremades, *Tiziano* 1994; Rose, *Antonio Moro* 2007; Vosters, *Rubens* 1990.
67. ^ Brown, *Golden Age* 1991, p. 1.
68. ^ Cf. Sebastián, *Barroco* 1990; Nieto Alcaide / Cámara Muñoz, *Arte colonial* 1989; Bérchez Gómez / López Guzmán, *Kolonialkunst* 1997; Triadó, *Barock* 1997.
69. ^ Cf. Nieto Alcaide / Morales Martínez / Checa Cremades, *Arquitectura* 1989.
70. ^ Saénz de Miera, *Obra* 2001; Bustamante, *Octava maravilla* 1994.
71. ^ Mulcahy, *Decoration* 1994.
72. ^ Martín González, *Palacio* 1962; Brown / Elliott, *Palacio* 1981, p. 71.
73. ^ Cf. Parker, *Revolution* 1990, pp. 39–44; Adams, *Tactics* 1995.

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
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Cristo en la cruz, ca. 1580





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- Anthonis Mor (1517– ca. 1577) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/59880206>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118784749>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118784749.html>)




Link #bx

- Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/56647196>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/11860354X>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd11860354X.html>)

Link #by

- Alonso Sánchez Coello (1515–1590) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/32268700>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/119349485>)

Link #bz

- Diego de Velázquez (1599–1660) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/76324831>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118626426>)

Link #c0

- Pedro Machuca (1490–1550) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/95881748>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/123206545>)

Link #c1

- Juan Bautista de Toledo (died 1567) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/10639308>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/11864288X>)

Link #c2



- (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/san-ignacio-de-loyola-1610-en?mediainfo=1&width=900&height=500>)
San Ignacio de Loyola 1610

Link #c3



- (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/casa-de-pilatos-seville?mediainfo=1&width=900&height=500>)
Casa de Pilatos, Seville

Link #c4



- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/real-sitio-de-san-lorenzo-de-el-escorial-overall-view?mediainfo=1&width=900&height=500>
Real Sitio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Overall View



- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/real-sitio-de-san-lorenzo-de-el-escorial-south-facade?mediainfo=1&width=900&height=500>
Real Sitio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, South Facade

Link #c6




- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/philipp-ii.-152720131598-and-his-family-tomb?mediainfo=1&width=900&height=500>
Philipp II. and his Family (Tomb)

Link #c7







- <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/real-sitio-de-san-lorenzo-de-el-escorial-library?mediainfo=1&width=900&height=500>
Real Sitio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Library

Link #c8

- Philip IV of Spain (1605–1665) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/100259661>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118593870>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118593870.html>)

Link #c9

- Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/32005141>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118542702>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118542702.html>)