

THE SPANISH RESURGENCE,

1713-1748



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THE SPANISH
RESURGENCE,
1713 - 1748



Christopher Storrs

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For all Catz men and women

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NOTE ON MONEY



General

1 *real* = 34 *maravedís* (the *maravedí* being the lowest denomination in circulation),

10 *reales* = 340 *maravedís* = 1 *escudo* (coin of account) or crown = just over 1 German florin

11 *reales* = 1 *ducado*,

15 *reales* = 1 *peso*, and

60 *reales* = 1 *doblón*

1 *pistole* = 6 *escudos*

1 florin (= 20 stivers) = 6.66 *vellón reales* (because 9 florins = *doblón* [1725])

1 *piastre* = 27 *maravedís*

1 *peso fuerte* = silver 8-real piece = *piastre* (increasingly known as *dollar*)

Sources: Henry Kamen, *The War of Succession in Spain 1700–1715* (London: Weidenfeld, 1969), 168–69, 398; Eugenio Larruga, *Memorias políticas y*

económicas sobre los frutos, comercio, fábricas y minas de España, 45 vols. (Madrid, 1787–1800), 1:73; José I. Aparicio, *Norte fijo y promptuario seguro para la más clara y breve inteligencia del valor de todas las monedas usuales y corrientes del continente de España* (Madrid, 1741); Gerónimo de Uztáriz, *Theory and Practice of Commerce and Maritime Affairs*, translated by John Kippax, 2 vols. (London, 1752), 1:88, 164; John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600–1775, A Handbook* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); *Diplomacia Secreta y Paz: La correspondencia de los embajadores españoles en Viena Juan Guillermo Ripperda y Luis Ripperda (1724–1727) / Geheimdiplomatie und Friede; Die Korrespondenz der spanischen Botschafter in Wien Johan Willem Ripperda und Ludolf Ripperda (1724–1727)*, edited by Ana Mur Raurell, 2 vols. (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, 2011) 1:161, 2:333, 367; Antonio M. Bernal, *España, proyecto inacabado* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2005), 297; José de Santiago Fernández, *Política Monetaria en Castilla durante el Siglo XVII* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2000), 249–61.

Examples

1722: 2,101,255,529 maravedís (net value of the Castilian *rentas provinciales*) = 6,180,163 crowns (escudos)¹

1724: 1,200 pistoles = 7,200 escudos de vellón²

1732: 6 million reales = 100,000 pistoles³

1737: the Castilian revenues put 209,671,221 reales (vellón) = about 13,978,081 piastres [pesos], or 28 million florins, and just over 21/2 millions sterling⁴

THE SPANISH RESURGENCE,

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INTRODUCTION



The war, we have with Spain, seems more likely to be determined in Italy,
than in America.

—*Viscount Bolingbroke, September 1743*

The first half of the eighteenth century was a momentous period in the history of Spain and its global empire, or Monarchy. The last Spanish Habsburg, Charles II, died in 1700 and was succeeded by the first Spanish Bourbon, Louis XIV's grandson Philip V.¹ Thereafter a war of succession engulfed Spain in a way not seen for more than two hundred years. Philip won that struggle but lost territories in Flanders and in Italy that Spain had held for two centuries and more in some cases, with major implications for Spain's domestic history. The Spanish presence in north Africa also shrank, with the loss of Oran and Mazalquivir in 1708. Besides this imperial contraction, which to many later commentators was simply the culmination of a long Spanish decline, the war meant major internal changes.² The Aragonese territories (Aragon, Catalonia, Majorca, and Valencia), which had acknowledged Philip's rival, the Austrian Habsburg "Charles III"—the future Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI—suffered the loss of the quasi autonomy they had enjoyed

largely unaltered since the unification of “Spain” by the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella, at the end of the fifteenth century.

Not surprisingly, the War of the Spanish Succession has attracted a great deal of attention from historians. So, too, has Philip V himself, or the more bizarre aspects of his behaviour—his mood swings and his marked uxoriousness. Unfortunately, such studies help ensure that other developments during Philip’s long reign (1700–46) have been largely ignored, such that despite a considerable volume of work published on the period in recent decades, Henry Kamen’s observation, made more than a generation ago, that the years 1665 to 1746 represent a “dark ages” in modern Spanish historiography still has some force.³ Among the many aspects of Philip’s reign which have not been properly explored is the impressive revival of Spanish power after 1713, above all in north Africa and Italy, where in the 1730s and 1740s Philip’s forces appeared to be resurrecting the extensive dominion carved out there by Ferdinand and Isabella and Charles V.

Successful aggression in the Mediterranean was part of a wide-ranging Spanish resurgence, or *risorgimento*, as it was so aptly described in 1725 in his end-of-mission report, or *relazione*, by a Venetian diplomat, a resurgence that was evident also in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. Philip V detested the Utrecht settlement of 1713, which he had been obliged to accept in order to end the succession struggle with Britain and with all of the allies except the emperor, a conflict which formally ended only with the conclusion of the peace (treaties) of Vienna in 1725. Utrecht had ratified the dismemberment of the Spanish Monarchy in Europe, confirmed British possession of Gibraltar and Menorca, and given the British privileged access to Spain’s American empire in the form of the infamous *asiento*, or contract to supply African slaves to Spanish America, of the South Sea Company. Philip wished to reverse all of these concessions, and in focusing, as this study does, on the Mediterranean we should not lose sight of the Atlantic or of Philip’s determination to erode British penetration of the Spanish Indies. This policy culminated in the War of Jenkins’ Ear from October 1739, a conflict subsumed from 1741 onwards in the War of the Austrian Succession, whose conclusion triggered the winding up at last of the *asiento*.⁴

Nevertheless, the preoccupation of historians with the early modern Atlantic world in recent decades and an accompanying neglect of the Mediterranean world should not obscure the fact that Philip’s efforts to

reverse the 1713 settlement across the Atlantic cannot be compared in type, scale, or impact with those made in the Mediterranean. In addition, once war broke out, Spain's American empire was largely invulnerable: witness the British failure to have any impact there after the initial success at Portobello in 1739, a failure which facilitated focusing on Italy thereafter. Spanish America was valued by the Spanish court primarily for the resources it supplied for the pursuit of ambitions in the Mediterranean, where the Spanish revival had its greatest success. As Steve Pincus has observed of a different polity, England, in an earlier period, the 1690s, we need to be wary of focusing exclusively on the Atlantic.⁵

Philip V made surprisingly little attempt to restore the old Spanish Monarchy in northern Europe by recovering Flanders. He had not himself visited Flanders, which had been effectively handed over to Max Emanuel of Bavaria early in the War of the Spanish Succession and been conquered by the allies from 1706 onwards. Philip had by no means abandoned all hope of recovering some or all of Flanders after 1713 (see chapter 5), but Italy—above all the territories which had been part of the old Monarchy—was Philip's priority, and well before his second marriage. More will be said about Philip (see chapter 4), but it must be made clear at the start that policy was his and not that of his second wife, Isabel (Elisabeth) Farnese. Philip's marriage to Isabel largely confirmed and only to a degree modified his Italian ambitions, which also included the restoration of his allies, the dukes of Guastalla and of Mirandola. The first Bourbon already had two sons, Luis and Ferdinand, by his first marriage, to Marie Louise of Savoy, and thus it was highly unlikely that any of Isabel's sons, Don Carlos, Felipe, or Luis, would succeed in Spain. Since in Spain the Infantes did not, unlike the princes of the blood in France, receive substantial endowments, or *appanages*, she sought to place them in the Italian states on which she had dynastic claims: the Farnese duchy of Parma (and Piacenza) and the Medici grand duchy of Tuscany. As the niece of the reigning duke of Parma, Francesco (1694–1727), who had no sons and only an elderly, unmarried brother, Isabel had a strong claim to that duchy. In Tuscany the grand duke, Cosimo III (1670–1723), had a son, Giangastone (1723–37), but the latter had no male heirs. Isabel, a descendant of the sister of Grand Duke Ferdinand II, was one of a number of female claimants, including Cosimo's daughter, the Electress Palatine.⁶

As for north Africa, historians of early modern Spain too often ignore Spanish concern with that region, a concern which underpinned Charles V's expeditions against Tunis (1535) and Algiers (1541) and the interventions there of Philip II and Philip III. This preoccupation, shared by Philip V, was a blend of secular, strategic, and religious anxieties. Twentieth-century historians tended to doubt the extent to which the foreign policies of most sovereigns were influenced by religious considerations after 1648. This rather simplistic view is now being challenged, a revisionist approach which is particularly appropriate in the case of Philip, for whom the title of Catholic King seems quite appropriate, as he was personally very devout (see chapter 5), while his triumph in the succession struggle had owed much to his being depicted as a religious warrior, combatting Muslims as well as the Protestant Christian allies of his Austrian Habsburg rival. Philip sometimes clashed with Rome, while he frequently deployed religious arguments in pursuit of essentially secular policies. But we cannot ignore a religious, even crusading, element in Spanish policy in north Africa, where it might be difficult, even misleading, to try to distinguish the religious from the secular. Philip's African inheritance—a number of fortified posts, or *presidios*, strung out along the north African coast—had been depleted during the succession conflict. At the same time, Philip was unable to devote the necessary forces to the relief of Ceuta, which had been under siege since 1694 and which on inheriting the throne he had declared to be his first priority but which was still beleaguered in 1714. The following year, in response to a remarkable circular from Philip to all Spanish bishops inviting suggestions on how to relieve Spain of its difficulties by appeasing an angry divinity, Cardinal Luis Antonio de Moncada y Belluga, the bishop of Cartagena and one of Philip's leading clerical supporters in the succession struggle, urged the king to prioritise the recovery of Oran and intervention in Africa rather than in Italy.⁷

Besides pointing out the religious benefits of such a policy, Belluga, whose diocese was among those most threatened by the north African corsairs, argued that it would end that danger; he also argued that conquests in Africa would be a source of timber for the king's fleets and of grain, thus making good the loss of Sicily. Indeed, to Belluga, expansion in Africa would compensate for the loss of Flanders and Italy, which had

anyway been a burden. Last but by no means least, expansion in north Africa would in part be funded by the church. A few years later, in 1717, another ecclesiastic, Philip's chief minister, Cardinal Giulio Alberoni, urged an expedition to north Africa rather than the invasion of Naples being pressed by the Neapolitan duke of Popoli: Alberoni claimed it would be easier to mount, would fulfil promises made by the king to the pope, would be in Spain's interests, and would be a source of honour or glory to the king.⁸

Philip's subsequent conduct suggests he was not insensitive to the arguments of Belluga and Alberoni, who were making a strong case for a strategy which was neither Atlantic nor Italian. Within Christian Europe the Catholic King was less obviously a champion of the faith after 1713. This was evident in his continuing quarrel with the emperor, which he did not set aside to allow Charles VI to harry the Ottomans in the Balkans. Nevertheless, the religious impulse continued to draw Philip, like his Habsburg predecessors, to Africa. So did more secular concerns, such as the powerful Moorish presence just across the strait (which the Moors might cross and again overrun Spain, as in the eighth century) and the possibility that an advance in north Africa might facilitate an attack on, or at least counter and to a degree isolate, the British garrison in Gibraltar, which was often supplied from north Africa. Philip may also, like Ferdinand of Aragon before him, have seen Africa as a basis for intervention in Italy. Finally, Philip may not have had much choice: there is a marked contrast between his policy in north Africa, where in some respects Spain was on the defensive against an Islamic jihad which had begun circa 1680, and that in Italy, where it was far more clearly on the offensive.⁹

Whatever the inspiration, these various preoccupations underpinned a striking resurgence of Spanish activity in the Mediterranean. Following Philip V's recovery of Aragon, Valencia, and Catalonia between 1707 and 1714, his forces reconquered the islands of Majorca and Ibiza, and in 1716, at the request of the pope, he sent a flotilla of 5 warships and 5 galleys to the defence of Corfu against the Turks. In 1717 a Spanish expeditionary force comprising 9,000 troops aboard some 100 transports and escorted by 12 warships of various types invaded the island of Sardinia and, to widespread astonishment, conquered it in little more than two

months. In 1718 a much larger force, an armada of 439 ships including at least 276 transports and carrying 36,000 men, began the conquest of the larger, neighbouring island of Sicily. Fear that the Spanish court would overturn the Utrecht settlement in the South prompted a concerted response by some of the other powers in the guise of the Quadruple Alliance. The war which followed (1718–20) saw the almost complete destruction of the Spanish fleet in Sicily, stranding Philip's forces in Sardinia and Sicily, while British and French forces invaded northern Spain. Philip reluctantly joined the Quadruple Alliance in January 1720, evacuating Sicily and Sardinia. He then turned his attention to north Africa: 16,000 men were convoyed to Ceuta, ending the siege begun there more than twenty years before.¹⁰

Philip hoped not just to build on the success at Ceuta but also that his troops might occupy Tetuan and Tangier. Unfortunately for these African ambitions, the commander of the Ceuta expedition, the marqués de Lede (who had also led the invasions of Sardinia and Sicily), believed this was beyond his forces. Indeed, the Spanish court was curiously quiescent in the 1720s, although the diplomatic revolution represented by the peace and alliance with the court of Vienna in 1725 triggered a cold war—as well as a real, if brief, one with England, during which Philip's forces besieged Gibraltar in 1727. Peace with Britain and the treaty of Seville which followed (1729) facilitated renewed intervention in Italy. In October 1731, in accordance with that treaty, an Anglo–Spanish expeditionary force, including 23 Spanish warships plus 7 galleys and 48 transports carried almost 7,500 Spanish troops to Italy to install the Infante, Don Carlos, in the central duchies.¹¹

Having reestablished a Spanish presence in central Italy, Philip switched his efforts once again to north Africa, where he was being drawn into the regional power struggles. In 1731 a Moroccan prince sought Philip's support in his quarrel with the king of Morocco, promising, if successful, to restore Oran. For his part, Philip's disgraced former chief minister, the Dutch baron Jan Willem van Ripperda, was urging on the king of Morocco against Philip. Whatever Philip's motives, in June 1732 an expeditionary force of more than 600 vessels—warships and galleys escorting hundreds of transports with almost 27,000 men aboard—left Alicante, reconquering Oran and then Mazalquivir. Like so many of

Spain's foreign adventures in this period, this one attracted widespread foreign interest.¹²

Spain's north African presidios continued to preoccupy Philip V and his ministers: in 1740, for example, following the outbreak of war against Britain, it was feared the British might incite an Algerian attack on Oran. But 1732 saw Philip's last major expedition across the straits: henceforth Spanish efforts in the Mediterranean focused almost exclusively on Italy. In the autumn of 1733, in alliance with the French court (the first Family Compact), Philip intervened in the War of the Polish Succession, sending a convoy of 16 warships and 150 transports carrying almost 36,000 troops to Italy, with more following. José Patiño's claim, in January 1735, that Philip had 56,000 troops in Italy no doubt exaggerated, but there were nearly 50,000 troops in Philip's pay in Italy at the end of 1735. By then they had conquered Naples, Sicily (another ambitious amphibian operation involving the shipping of about 18,000 troops in more than 200 transports escorted by warships and galleys), and the component fortresses, namely, Piombino, Orbitello, Porto Ercole, Santo Stephano, and Tellemone, of the Tuscan presidios, which had formed part of Spanish Italy. After 1713 Philip ceded these conquests, along with Porto Longone, the only part of the presidios complex he retained and his only foothold in mainland Italy, to Don Carlos, who was crowned king of the Two Sicilies in Palermo in July 1735.¹³

Victorious in southern and central Italy, Spanish troops headed for Lombardy to complete the expulsion from Italy of the Austrian Habsburgs. However, disagreement over Mantua, which the Spanish court intended should form part of a Milanese state destined for another of Isabel Farnese's sons, the Infante Felipe, and fears at the court of Turin of Spanish domination of Italy divided the allies. The French court therefore negotiated separately with the emperor a settlement which ruled out further Spanish gains in Italy and which was imposed on Louis XV's allies. The peace of Vienna (1738) which ended the conflict confirmed Don Carlos's possession of Naples, Sicily, and the Tuscan presidios but obliged him to surrender Parma, Piacenza, and Tuscany to the Austrian Habsburgs, who also retained Mantua and Milan.¹⁴

Despite these successes the Spanish court was not at all satisfied in Italy. After the death of Philip's former rival, Emperor Charles VI, in October

1740, its ambitions there were crucial in extending to Italy the War of the Austrian Succession. Already at war with Britain since October 1739, between November 1741 and March 1742 about 40,000 Spanish troops headed for Italy in three expeditions, the first two convoyed by Philip's fleet to central Italy to join about 10,000 men offered by Don Carlos, the third marching overland through France under the Infante Felipe. This intervention in Italy, in alliance with the kings of France (the second Family Compact, 1743) and the Two Sicilies, the duke of Modena, and later the republic of Genoa, enjoyed remarkable success. It also helped ensure that the war against Britain in the Caribbean, which largely fizzled out after the British failure at Cartagena in 1741, was soon eclipsed by that in Europe, and not least by the struggle in Italy. By the end of 1745 the Bourbon forces had secured Parma, Piacenza, and, at last, Milan, which the Infante Felipe entered in triumph in December 1745. They had also occupied Nice and the duchy of Savoy, thereby alarming Protestant Switzerland, and much of Piedmont. At the start of 1746, when Philip may have had as many as 56,000 men in Italy, he had almost entirely restored the Spanish Italy which he had inherited in 1700, overturning the Utrecht settlement of 1713.¹⁵

But the winter of 1745–46 was the peak of Spanish fortunes in Italy, which collapsed thereafter, as María Theresa temporarily abandoned her efforts in central Europe to recover Silesia from Frederick the Great of Prussia in order to give priority to the reconquest of Italy, sending 30,000 men there at the end of 1745. This reinforcement had its effect. The Spanish forces were expelled from Milan and Parma, and they and their French allies suffered a crushing defeat at Piacenza on 2 July 1746, one that may have contributed to the death of Philip V in July 1746.¹⁶ The Spanish and French forces escaped complete disaster only by fighting their way to the Riviera and making their way along the coast into France, abandoning their ally, the republic of Genoa, to its fate. Only Savoy was still occupied by Philip's forces, while a triumphant María Theresa had hopes of recovering Naples and Sicily. The accession in the summer of 1746 of Ferdinand VI, who was far less committed to his father's policy in Italy and determined to end a war so damaging to his Spanish subjects, might have further threatened Bourbon prospects there except that Ferdinand wished to settle the Infante Felipe in Italy in

order to remove him from Spain. Thus Spain fought on, and the peace treaty ending the conflict, which was concluded at Aix, in October 1748, confirmed Don Carlos's possession of Naples and gave Parma and Piacenza to the Infante Felipe. Four years later the Austrian Habsburgs and Spanish Bourbons guaranteed each other's territories in Italy in the treaty of Aranjuez, ending the generation-long cycle of Spanish military intervention in Italy and helping ensure that the latter was untroubled by war for four decades thereafter.¹⁷

For over thirty years, then, in decades when Europe is generally thought to have been tranquil, the peace was either broken or menaced by a resurgent Spain. During this time it mounted operations which merit comparison with other seaborne expeditions, such as William of Orange's invasion of England in 1688 and the abortive British assault on Cartagena in 1741, "the most formidable force ever assembled in the Caribbean." The other courts of Europe were almost constantly alarmed by fears of new Spanish adventures and aggression in a period in which the Spanish court was the single greatest threat to peace in Europe. The neglect of this remarkable resurgence—and more specifically of Philip V's African and Italian adventures—by recent historians of international relations and, more narrowly, of Spain is understandable. For one thing, the diplomacy of the period has become a byword for complex, indulgent, and at times almost pointless negotiation, although in large part it simply represented the efforts of other powers to respond to the court of Madrid's revanchism. For another, there is a sense that the rise of Prussia and Russia in north, central, and eastern Europe was regarded, both at the time and later, as being of far greater importance than other developments, including a Spanish revival in the south which was only partly successful. There is a widespread belief, too, inside and outside Spain, that a more important development in modern Spanish history was the collapse of the *antiguo régimen* in the early nineteenth century and that the key to this lies in the immediately preceding era, that is, the later eighteenth century, and in the failure of Charles III, the former Don Carlos of Naples, to save the Bourbon monarchy in a bout of "Enlightened Despotism."¹⁸

This is not to deny the importance attached by historians to Philip's reign as a period which saw the first steps towards the necessary creation, after a sustained seventeenth-century crisis and decline, of a modern,

centralised, unitary, and national Spain, with Philip V playing the part of “patriot king.” The supposed centralised, national unity was in large part a consequence of the succession struggle and the suppression of Aragonese particularism, a development which has spawned a largely negative “Aragonese” historiography (see above). Among the weaknesses of that historiography is a failure to see that Philip’s recovery of the Aragonese realms must also be understood as part of a rather different historical conjuncture, the Spanish resurgence in the western Mediterranean. Seen from a narrowly Spanish perspective, Philip’s Italian and African adventures have been criticised as a distraction from and irrelevant to the supposedly more important creation of a modern Spanish state and have been largely attributed to the selfish ambitions of Philip’s second wife, in Thomas Carlyle’s lapidary phrase the “termagant of Spain.” And as we have seen, although they enjoyed some success and impressed contemporaries, those adventures were not completely successful. Certainly the promise of 1735, when the Spanish Bourbons seemed unstoppable in Italy, and that of 1745 were not sustained. In consequence, Spain emerged in 1748 with less than had earlier seemed possible. Perhaps not entirely surprisingly, after 1748 Spanish ministers turned their backs on the Mediterranean and instead focused upon what some Spaniards thought was a proper national concern, Spain’s American empire and a more effective exploitation of its resources by and for Spain.¹⁹

Yet this is to underrate the Spanish success in the Mediterranean after 1713. Philip V had recovered lost ground and reasserted himself in north Africa, something which is unduly neglected in the historiography. As for Italy, by 1748 one Spanish Bourbon dynasty was entrenched in southern Italy and would remain so until Giuseppe Garibaldi’s expedition to Sicily in 1860 and the creation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. The same was true of the other Spanish Bourbon dynasty, which had been installed in Parma and Piacenza. Italy, whose future in 1713 had seemed to lie with the Austrian Habsburgs and the House of Savoy, was now once again predominantly Spanish. Indicative of the shift were enduring Savoyard fears after 1720. The new distribution of power in Italy in 1748 was one factor in the decision of King Charles Emanuel III of Sardinia to marry his son and heir, the future king Victor Amadeus III, to a Spanish Infanta. The military successes which created this new situation, particularly those

in the War of the Polish Succession, represented a reversal of military fortune abroad for Spain after decades of apparent failure in the later seventeenth century and echoed the achievement of both Ferdinand and Isabella and Charles V (see above). The British presence at Gibraltar and Menorca was certainly a fly in the ointment, but a stronger Spanish presence on the opposite shore of the straits represented some sort of a counterweight to Gibraltar and might even be exchanged for it.²⁰

These developments have major implications with regard to our understanding not only of Italy but also of international relations in the generation after the War of the Spanish Succession, when Spanish revisionism was one of the most powerful forces driving European diplomacy. The period between 1713 and 1739 was one in which the two great rivals of the eighteenth century, Britain and France, were relatively weak because of domestic difficulties, including dynastic and financial ones. These problems and a desire not to offend the Spanish court, which might visit its displeasure on those of their subjects trading, whether directly or indirectly, with Spanish America, reinforced a reluctance to go to war so soon after the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession and even brought the two states together, as allies. The Spanish court exploited that reluctance with some success by threatening and at times waging war and was sometimes appeased, as in the treaty of Seville (1729) and the Anglo-Spanish expedition to Italy of 1731. When France and Britain drifted apart in the thirties and forties Spain benefitted by securing the invaluable military and naval support of France. Whatever its basis, Philip V and Isabel Farnese clearly went some way towards achieving their objectives: in 1735, following the conquest of Naples, Philip's representative in London, the conde de Montijo, declared, with justifiable hyperbole, that the Utrecht settlement was dead.²¹

International relations in this period have not been entirely neglected, Alfred Baudrillart's multivolume study of Philip V and the French court being, despite its age, perhaps the most striking evidence to the contrary. Nevertheless, Spanish ambitions and policies and their impact have not attracted the attention they merit, especially in recent decades. Thus, despite the work of Guido Quazza and others, the War of the Polish Succession, in which the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy came close to collapse and in consequence of which Italy was restructured, has been

largely neglected, as has the Italian theatre in the War of the Austrian Succession. Spanish preoccupation with the Mediterranean and the response of other powers to Spain's ambitions there ought also to call into question the commonplace that the Mediterranean was an international backwater. On the contrary. Spanish ambitions in Italy could have serious knock-on effects elsewhere: in 1745 some of Philip's ministers anticipated that the Spanish military presence in north Italy might influence the imperial election at Frankfurt. Until the Spanish resurgence in the western Mediterranean is restored to its true place in the history of international affairs in Europe, relations between the European powers in that generation will not be properly understood.²²

While acknowledging the relevance of what might be termed non-Spanish factors in explaining the revival of Spain, we cannot ignore the contribution of Spain's own resources to its recovery, exemplified in Philip V's Mediterranean adventures, which impacted upon the king's subjects far more in this period than did the defence of the Americas. This book therefore largely ignores the Americas, which are the main interest of Anglophone historians preoccupied primarily with the origins of the War of Jenkins' Ear, except insofar as their wealth funded operations in the Mediterranean. These decades saw critical changes within Spain, changes which cannot be separated from the demands of the forward policy in Africa and Italy. The near-constant state of alert in peninsular Spain, above all in the 1730s and 1740s, is crucial to explaining the transformation of early eighteenth-century Spain in the direction of what has been termed the "fiscal-military state," one in which the demands of war shaped the state, not least in its distinctive fiscal policies. Philip's frequent wars and preparations for war mean that in some respects his Spain fits the bill better than that of his son Charles III.²³

Unfortunately, the historiography has not always properly acknowledged these things. For one thing, as I have already noted, historians have tended to take the view that these Italian ambitions had nothing to do with Spain or Spanish interests and that they represented little more than the appropriation of Spanish resources by Philip V's second wife in order to secure thrones in Italy for sons with few prospects in Spain itself. Associated with this is the view that the expeditions represented little more than adventurism. But criticisms of Philip's Mediterranean policy

also reflect another historiographical strand, one which sees the new Bourbon dynasty as synonymous with enlightenment, reform, and the modernisation of Spanish and Spanish American state and society. It is almost a cliché that Philip's reign was characterised by innovation and that Philip was a moderniser, although historians debate the sources of and inspiration for his innovations, whether they were of native, Spanish origin or, as many argue, a foreign, French import, such that the arrival of Philip V marked the first real wave of *afrancesamiento* experienced by Spain.²⁴

Criticisms of Spanish Mediterranean policy in this period reflect the view held by some historians that empire had been a burden which Spain was well rid of in 1713. In fact, it is arguable that Philip V's Italian policy had more support within Spain than has been acknowledged. Perhaps the most positive Spanish assessment of the Spanish court's Mediterranean policy is that of Bethencourt Massieu, for whom the architect of success in Italy was Patiño. To Bethencourt, Patiño was pursuing a national policy, one which was certainly more in the interest of the country at large than is generally allowed and which was also much broader in conception than has been recognised. Bethencourt's insight is salutary, not least because of the persistence of the older, negative view, in the work of Antonio Domínguez Ortiz and Didier Ozanam, and because his appreciation of Patiño has rescued from obscurity an unjustly neglected contemporary of Robert Walpole and André-Hercule de Fleury. Exactly what constituted a national policy and Spanishness is also an issue which, although highly contentious in contemporary Spain, has hardly been addressed apart from Philip V's suppression of the distinctive institutions of the crown of Aragon. While the possibility that Spain might constitute a plurality of nationalities rather than a single nation well into the eighteenth and even the nineteenth century has long been recognised, the possibility that there might be a lingering supranational sense of identification of Philip's Spanish subjects with Italy, inherited from the Habsburg era, rooted in and inseparable from an identification with the ruling dynasty, has hardly been acknowledged.²⁵

However, while Bethencourt does see things more positively and while there may well have existed a domestic constituency for a forward policy in Africa and Italy, he does not sufficiently explore all aspects of the

domestic mobilisation of resources implied or necessitated by this policy. Equally neglected is a proper assessment of the impact on Philip's Spain: mobilisation may have created more stresses and tensions within Spanish society than has been recognised. Indeed, we need to consider the extent to which intervention in Italy, especially in the 1740s, triggered on the one hand some resistance and in part, by way of response, an assertion of royal authority which might be thought of as an archetypal expression of royal absolutism. The episode was not serious enough to undermine the "construction of loyalty" achieved by Philip in the War of the Spanish Succession, but it triggered, or rather confirmed, a reaction against the monarch's Italian ambitions such that 1748 was more of a watershed in ending a deep-rooted Spanish interest in and commitment to Italy than was the peace of 1713. The challenges of the 1740s suggest that historians have not sufficiently acknowledged the extent to which the War of the Austrian Succession—as much as the War of the Spanish Succession which preceded it and the Seven Years' War which followed—tested the participants.²⁶

As for modernisation and reform, here, too, we must be cautious. For one thing, we need to understand both of these concepts in eighteenth-century terms rather than in nineteenth-century ones. In this guise, *modernise* might mean the introduction of what were regarded as the most up-to-date and effective institutions and practices, their effectiveness demonstrated, for example, by the success of contemporary states, allies and enemies, on the battlefield. More important perhaps, we need also to bear in mind that Philip V's essential objective, namely, the preservation or reconstruction or both of Spanish north Africa and Italy, was essentially conservative, even backward looking. This implies important elements of continuity across 1700 rather than the sense of fracture which informs most writing on the change of dynasty. Early Bourbon Spain was emphatically a dynastic, patrimonial state, one in which inherited claims, not mercantilist aspirations, largely determined policy; but it arguably also had more affinities with its predecessor than has been acknowledged or recognised by historians who tend to be scholars either of Habsburg Spain or of Bourbon Spain and rarely of both. Philip V not only sought to resurrect the Spanish Habsburg Monarchy in Africa and Italy but also made much greater use of its institutions and practices than has been

admitted, as my book will show. As for the social impact of this remarkable effort, Spain remained a society of orders or estates: Philip, rather than rewarding a bourgeoisie which had backed him, as some have claimed, reinforced this older structure by advancing in rather traditional ways those who served him.²⁷

The following chapters seek to explain the significant revival of Spanish fortunes and power in the generation following the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession and to identify its impact on Spain. They further explore the essential paradox of Philip V's reign: that in seeking to rebuild the composite Monarchy in Africa and Italy he created a much more obviously Spanish state. The source materials for an exploration of Spain's revival and its consequences are extensive. They include the records of the new central administrative agencies which emerged in this period. Some of the materials generated by these Secretariats of War, Navy, and Indies and Finance perished in the fire which consumed the old Habsburg royal palace, or *alcázar*, in Madrid in 1734.²⁸ Nevertheless, abundant documentation relating to the army, the navy, and the finances survive in the Archivo General at Simancas and in the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid. In addition to these records are those of the municipal authorities, who were called on to supply men and money for Philip's Mediterranean adventures. Furthermore, within Spain there are the papers of noble and other families and private correspondence, although these are the most problematic, not least because they are scarce and often difficult to access. Official publications such as the *Gaceta de Madrid* are also of some use. Last but by no means least, there is the correspondence in non-Spanish archives of the many foreign diplomats in Madrid and, between 1729 and 1733, in Seville, whose presence made the Spanish court again one of the great centres of diplomatic activity and whose job it was to find out and report on Spanish policy and resources to sovereigns frequently alarmed by Spain's warlike preparations and aggression. Highly valuable in this respect are the reports of successive representatives of the dukes of Savoy, later the kings of Sicily (1713–20) and Sardinia (from 1720), Victor Amadeus II (d. 1730) and Charles Emanuel III. Not only was the court of Turin among the most obvious victims of Spanish revanchism in the Mediterranean but Victor Amadeus was the grandfather (and Charles Emanuel the uncle) of the future Ferdinand VI, while

the house of Savoy had a reversionary interest in the Spanish succession should Philip V's line die out, a claim enshrined in the Utrecht settlement. Savoyard diplomats therefore took a very close interest in developments in Spain these decades, as, of course, did the representatives of most other states, large and small.

Chapter 1 discusses Philip V's army, chapter 2 his navy. Chapter 3 examines the funding of Philip's foreign adventures, while chapter 4 explores the administrative challenge they posed and how they affected Spanish political life. Finally, chapter 5 focuses on the way in which one of the most central developments in Spain after 1707, that is, the greater integration of Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia into the Spanish state, was affected by the interventions in Africa and Italy, and on the nature of relations with the recovered Italian territories and Italians. It also hints at a connection between the two, bridged by the presence in what had been Spanish Italy of so-called Austrian exiles from the Aragonese territories, and addresses the issue of identity. In this way the chapter seeks to relate Philip's Mediterranean revanchism to recent debates in Spain about patriotism and national identity in the country during the eighteenth century.²⁹

CHAPTER ONE

THE ARMY



It is incredible the joy of this Court . . . at the recent success in Puglia . . . [T]he entire nation has not failed to demonstrate its pleasure at recognising in this action the old valour of the Spanish troops.

—*Papal nuncio, Madrid, June 1734*

In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries Spain was Europe's foremost military power. By the later seventeenth century, however, it had lost that primacy. The War of the Spanish Succession represented a nadir of Spain's military fortunes as war engulfed the peninsula and the Monarchy lost the territories which had hitherto housed two of its three main, permanent fighting forces, the Army of Flanders and the Army of Lombardy, the third being the Army of Catalonia. Indeed, Philip V's triumph in the succession struggle owed much to the military support of his grandfather, Louis XIV.¹ After the conclusion of that conflict, however, Philip's Spain reemerged as a significant independent military power.

Spain's military revival after 1713 owed much to the fact that Philip's opponents in Europe, notably the Austrian Habsburgs, both were weak and prioritised other theatres of war. Those successes also owed something in the 1730s and 1740s to the support of allies, above all, France, who not only diverted Philip's opponents in those other theatres, the Rhine and

Flanders, but also collaborated with his forces in Italy. Yet Philip could not always find allies, fighting alone between 1717 and 1720, while allies had their own priorities, Louis XV ending the War of the Polish Succession before the Spanish court had achieved all of its objectives in Italy. Philip therefore needed an independent military capability rooted in Spain. He had gone some way towards achieving this in the succession struggle, during which Spain's Habsburg military inheritance was transformed. The multifaceted overhaul included the replacement of the distinctive *tercios* by regiments; the introduction of a new hierarchy of ranks and the assertion of greater royal control over appointments; the adoption of new weaponry; the establishment of new corps, including that of engineers; the elaboration of a structure of royal commissaries; and last but by no means least, a marked expansion of the army, which by 1713 was not only larger than that which Philip had inherited but also a standing force stationed in Spain rather than in Flanders and Lombardy.²

Unfortunately, however, while much attention has rightly been paid to these initial reforms, Philip V's army *after* the War of the Spanish Succession is in many respects terra incognita. Spanish historians have enhanced our understanding of that army in recent decades. But other historiographical trends, including the prevalence of prosopographical studies, mean that they have largely ignored it as the fighting instrument abroad which so impressed contemporaries. They also neglect the sheer extent of the military effort represented by major operations in Africa and Italy and the impact of that effort not only on the army itself, in terms of additional reform and the way this contributed in turn to further progress in the direction of modernisation and state formation, but also on Philip's subjects.³

I address these issues in this chapter, drawing primarily on the abundant surviving documentation in the series generated by the newly created Secretariat of War in the Archivo General de Simancas and the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid. I exploit as well other sources, including rare military memoirs, in order to clarify the extent of Spain's remarkable military activity in the decades between the end of the War of the Spanish Succession and the conclusion of that of the Austrian Succession, the ways in which the challenge of activity on this scale was met, and the extent to which the demands of war and the military establishment shaped the state. How far was Philip building on as well as overhauling

the legacy of the Spanish Habsburg state? Just how he and his ministers responded to the logistical challenge of major operations and how far they innovated in preferring public, state administration over the private sector *asiento* favoured by the Habsburgs offer one area of comparison. For many later commentators Philip's Spain was not only a fiscal-military state but also a nation-state, but it is not at all clear that the composition of his army fully justifies the claim. As for the impact of Philip's military adventures on his subjects, some have suggested that early Bourbon Spain, echoing developments elsewhere, was militarised, but this too is questionable.⁴

Commitments and Numbers

Philip V oversaw a substantial increase in the size of his army in Spain in the course of the War of the Spanish Succession, during which large numbers of his subjects were mobilised, to a total of 100,000 men in 1714. He continued to maintain large, permanent forces thereafter. As is true in the case of all armies in early modern Europe, it is not easy to be precise about the size of those forces. It is not always clear whether the figures given in contemporary sources or those used by later historians are complete: there was frequently a difference, for example, between a unit's establishment, that is, the number of men when it was complete, and the number of effectives. This helps explain the widely varying figures sometimes given for the same forces.⁵ Nevertheless, as long as we recognise that the official figures, often derived from the periodic musters or reviews, do not always represent the true picture, they remain a useful indicator.

Philip V had lost Flanders and Italy by 1713, but his defence commitments thereafter continued to span the Atlantic. Before the reign of Charles III there was no permanent Army of America. Instead, apart from scattered garrisons in key fortresses there, men were despatched to the Indies as and when required. In 1726 troops were sent to Havana as Anglo-Spanish relations deteriorated between the alliances of Vienna and Hanover and following the departure of an English squadron to the Caribbean, while the outbreak of the War of Jenkins' Ear in 1739 triggered the departure of more units to Spanish America. Within a few years, however, the war in Europe—in Italy—was once again centre stage: