

*The Shadow of Medieval Castile*

THE ROYAL HOUSE OF BARCELONA HAD HELD ITS throne from the middle of the ninth century until the beginning of the fifteenth, first as Counts of Barcelona and later as Kings of Aragon—an uninterrupted succession of kings of whom, allowing for personal characteristics and different abilities, we may say with Chaytor<sup>1</sup> that they were 'a succession of competent and energetic rulers, for the most part equal to the difficult times in which they had to govern'. On the last day of March 1410, King Martí I died without direct succession and without leaving in his last will any provision for the nomination of the new king. His own son, King Martí of Sicily, had died the year before, leaving only an illegitimate son, Frederic. King Martí tried to obtain the legitimation of his grandson from the Aragonese Pope Benedict XIII, but died while awaiting this solution of the problem of his succession. The difficulties caused by this sudden death decided the Catalan democratic government to summon an assembly of the parliaments of the Catalan-Aragonese Confederation, in order to seek an agreement on the most rightful claimant to the throne. Of the six aspirants who came forward, it was soon realized that only two stood any chance of election. One of these was Count Jaume of Urgell, great-grandson by the male line of King Jaume II. The other was Ferdinand of Trastamara, also called 'of Antequera' from a victory he had won over the Moslems in southern Spain. He was a Castilian prince, and at the time, during the minority of his nephew King Juan II, was acting as regent of

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Castile. His mother, however, was Eleanor, daughter of the Catalan King Pere IV. Thus the claims of both were adequately justified. At the beginning of the contest the Count of Urgell's position seemed more favourable than Ferdinand's: first, he was the heir by the male line, and this was thought to be almost decisive in a country where, only fifteen years earlier, King Martí had succeeded to the throne at the death of his brother Joan I, who had left as direct heir only a daughter, Princess Violant. The other advantage the Count of Urgell had was the fact of being a Catalan, born in Catalonia, and well versed in her traditions and language, and aware of the nature and the limitations of royalty among Catalans.

But here came into play extraneous interests, which changed the course of history. The Great Schism which then divided the Catholic Church interfered with the normal course of the election. The pope of Avignon, Benedict XIII, a native of Aragon, felt his position to be growing less and less stable. Charles VI of France had withdrawn his submission from Benedict, whose only important support now lay in the Kings of Aragon and Castile. Benedict was therefore bound to favour Ferdinand, who was already regent of Castile, in his claims to the throne. If the Count of Urgell were to be elected, Benedict might lose the support of the disappointed Castilian regent as well, and his position would then become utterly untenable. From the first, therefore, Benedict put all his power at the disposal of the Castilian claimant, and by his personal agents—especially churchmen—Ferdinand's candidature was advanced and propagated throughout the country. The most energetic, skilful and influential of these was Vicenç Ferrer, the Dominican from Valencia, who at that time was the private confessor of Pope Benedict.

In the assembly summoned in Caspe, the town of the Knights of St. John, where nine delegates from the confederated countries met as electors, the Count of Urgell

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was finally defeated in spite of all his presumed rights and advantages. The delegates themselves had been appointed somewhat irregularly: only men committed to Ferdinand —and therefore to Benedict XIII—had been chosen, except two delegates who were admitted as *opposition*. The election of Ferdinand was accepted with sorrow in many quarters, but also with resignation and without any desire to contest the result. The old law-abiding democratic tradition was too deeply rooted to allow the Count of Urgell to find any support among the popular authorities; and when after some time he rose in rebellion, he was upheld only by his own people of the county of Urgell, by the Duke of Clarence, the son of King Henry IV of England, and by a few Provençal nobles. The death of Henry IV forced the Duke of Clarence to return to England, making further help impossible; and the Count of Urgell was decisively defeated by Ferdinand's troops and imprisoned for the remaining twenty years of his life. He died in Xàtiva prison in 1433.

Ferdinand was an able and energetic ruler who, as regent of Castile during the minority of King Juan II, had relied on his personal judgement as the main source of law and justice. It therefore came as a surprise to him to discover that the highest authority among the Catalans was vested in Parliament. At his first assembly of *Corts*, held in the town of Montblanc, Ferdinand appointed two Castilian knights, Don Pedro de Velasco and Don Juan G. de Azevedo, as his notaries, a decision which resulted in considerable unrest among his new people who regarded all Castilians as foreigners. The *Corts* of Montblanc were dissolved without any satisfactory issue of the fundamental question. Ferdinand could not understand what might be the authority of a king in a country in which all important decisions had to be agreed on by the people's representatives—nobles, churchmen, townsmen, villagers. Not long after his

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arrival in Barcelona new difficulties arose, this time with the municipal authorities, through the King's refusal to pay the regular meat-tax, which he considered an infringement of his royal prerogative. After suffering various setbacks he at length gave way and submitted to the local tradition, but he immediately decided to return to his native land of Castile, where he had been recognized as ruler without any such irritating limitations on sovereignty. On his way to Castile, Ferdinand died in the town of Igualada on 2 April 1416.

Meanwhile, the Great Schism of the Church had come to a crisis. The Emperor Sigismund decided to settle the problem once for all, and during the great Council in Constance he met Ferdinand and Pope Benedict XIII in Perpignan, in 1414. When Benedict refused to abdicate his rights, Ferdinand too proclaimed that he should be disregarded by his subjects and not be referred to as Pope any longer. Vicenç Ferrer, the great supporter of Benedict, also abandoned him; and Benedict thereafter voluntarily confined himself to the small castle of Penyíscola on the coast of Valencia. Thus, only four years after the election of Ferdinand to the throne of Aragon, the Pope who had been largely responsible for the event disappeared; but the royal dynasty which had thus, for reasons of Church policy, been enthroned persisted—at least as long as, according to tradition, Pope Benedict had predicted.<sup>2</sup>

In this troubled period we meet the first great Catalan thinker who lived and died in exile. For the first time in the history of Catalonia, a notable thinker, born in the country where European freedom had been outlined, was to bestow his creative powers on a foreign land to the detriment of his own people. He was Ramon de Sibiude, better known as Sabonde, and was destined to play a prominent part in shaping the mentality of modern France.

Sibiude was born in Barcelona in the last third of the fourteenth century. Nothing is known of his youth or of his family. Nor can we tell whether he went into exile for having taken part in the controversies over Ferdinand's election, or for some other reason. The only facts which have been clearly recorded are that he taught philosophy and medicine in the University of Toulouse, and that he was elected rector of that University in 1424 and retained the post until he died in 1436. Sibiude wrote one of the most famous books of his time, the *Theologia Naturalis sive Liber Creaturarum*, in which he tried to harmonize, as Lull did before him, reason with faith. Actually Sibiude went farther than Lull in that he placed man as the link between Divinity and Nature: 'Man is the limited reproduction of the Creator and thus a scientific knowledge of man may bring us, by successive steps, to the knowledge of God'. In these words we hear the voice of the dawning Renaissance. In other lines of thought Sibiude appears to be, more than a man of the pre-Renaissance period, our own contemporary. A few quotations will make this clear: 'God has provided us with two books: Nature the one, and the Bible the other. It is the book of Nature which never can be falsified nor banished.' 'The real likeness between men is their free will.' 'Free will everywhere accompanies human intelligence, and the one cannot exist without the other.' Sibiude's realism has been acclaimed as the highest quality of his work. If he is to be considered a true follower of Lull's philosophy, it is a Lull of the fifteenth century, with less mystical emotions and more psychological knowledge. Not the least interest which Sibiude's works have for us to-day arises from the decisive role they played in the education of Montaigne. Montaigne translated into French the *Theologia Naturalis* and dedi-

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cated to Sibiude the longest and most elaborate of his *Essais*.<sup>3</sup> The great French thinker tells us in the preface to his translation that while he was still young his father had asked him to translate and publish Sibiude's work. Here are Montaigne's words, showing how much he appreciated the rational philosophy of the Catalan.<sup>4</sup> 'Je trouvoy belles les imaginations de cet aucteur, la contexture de son ouvrage bien suyvie, et son desseing plain de pieté. Parce que beaucoup de gent s'amusent á le lire, et notamment les dames, a qui nous debvons plus de service, ie me suis trouvé souvent á mesme de les secourir, pour descharger leur livre de deux principales obiections qu'on luy faict. Sa fin est hardie et courageuse; car il entreprend, par raisons humaines et naturelles, d'establir et verifíer contre atheistes tous les articles de la religion chrestienne; en quoy, á diré la vérité ie le treuve si ferme et si heureux que ie ne pense point quil soit possible de mieulx faire en cet argument là; et crois que nul ne l'a égalé. Cet ouvrage me semblant trop riche et trop beau pour un aucteur duquel le nom soit si peu cogneu et duquel tout ce que nous scavons, c'est qu'il estoit Espagnol, faisant profession de medicine á Toulouse, il y a environ deux cents ans.'<sup>6</sup> Montaigne wrote these words in the second half of the sixteenth century, a time when the existence of Catalan thought was unknown outside Spain—and probably inside as well. But if the man was unknown and his country ignored, the work of Sibiude remained as documentary evidence characteristic of the permanent properties of the Catalan mind. The spring of clear water which flowed from Catalonia by the mediation of Sibiude developed into a large river through the addition of Montaigne's thought, and under the influence of his followers it fertilized the French mentality of modern times.<sup>6</sup> The beneficial influence of Sibiude's book was like-

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wise felt by the Bohemian pedagogue Johan Amos Comenius in the seventeenth century. Greatly admiring the *Theologia Naturalis* but finding its style too compressed and heavy for lay readers, he wrote a modernized version of the book, following exactly the chapters of the original; to this adaptation Comenius gave the title *Oculus Fidei*. In his transcription he deplored that 'pearls so beautiful are joined together by a style of very poor quality'. In fact there is every reason to criticize Sibiude's Latin style. It seems that he wrote in an individual language of his own, made of Catalan words with Latinized endings, and called it Latin.<sup>7</sup>

The last words of Sibiude's work give some idea of the character of the man who wrote them: 'Close your eyes to ancient science and question nature only.' For him the science of '*the Creatures*' was the science of Nature, in short, the knowledge of man. With great simplicity, he buried the old Thomistic philosophy and opened the way for modern thinkers, from the empiricism of Bacon to the psychology of Descartes.<sup>8</sup> When Sibiude says that the only means whereby man may know himself is by *inhabiting* his own self, we feel that we are reading *Le discours de la méthode*. But in some respects he differs from Descartes: he does not divide man into two parts, but considers him in his natural state, as the 'commonsense school' has done in more recent years.

In the great intellectual struggle which arose with the collapse of mediaeval restrictions, Sibiude served as the banner of the anti-scholastic school. He was thus a forerunner, by exactly one century, of Lluís Vives. The eminent Spanish scholar Sr. Menéndez Pelayo says of Sibiude:<sup>9</sup> 'In the latest and most corrupt period of scholasticism, when its direction was disputed between the mystics and the nominalists, a professor from Barcelona appeared in Toulouse, who, without being part of any of these groups or employing the method and the

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form generally adopted by scholasticism, tried to reform both method and teaching, as though he were speaking with the voice of the Renaissance. ... A book founded on observation and experience, above all on the inner experience of one's own self. Thus he wrote the *Theologia Naturalis*, in which reason finds itself proved.'

The *Theologia Naturalis* was printed for the first time in Deventer in 1480 and ran to six further editions before 1500. The complete original has never been published in Spain. In 1614 a Spanish translation of a concise Latin compendium of the work was published in Madrid. The natural philosophy of Sibiude did not influence Spanish thought in later days owing to the action of the Inquisition. The prologue to the book was condemned by the Council of Trent, where the Catalan theologian Canon Joan Vileta most ably defended the rational method of Sibiude. Vileta succeeded in saving the book from being banned, but he was unable to save the prologue from the passionate attacks of Spanish scholastic theologians.<sup>10</sup> That is why editions published after 1564 lack the introduction.

We shall see later how much Vives is indebted to Sibiude for his rational and logical philosophy; or rather, perhaps, how profoundly both writers concur in their approach to problems both ephemeral and eternal. In Spain, the intolerant dogmatic attitude which for so long dominated intellectual life forbade, until recent years, the diffusion of Sibiude's ideas. In the eighteenth century, even the liberal-minded Father Feyjóo could write that the book of Sibiude could not be as good as someone had said, since it had been condemned by the Inquisition of Spain.<sup>11</sup> A century later, Cardinal Zeferino González wrote that Sibiude's conceptions and theories were inspired by the scholastic doctrine of St. Thomas<sup>12</sup>—which proves only that the Cardinal misunderstood or perhaps had never read the book.<sup>13</sup>

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Opposing this view some modern Spaniards, as Sr. Menéndez Pelayo, have accorded to Sibiude the place in which he was already ranked by Montaigne and Comenius and sixteenth-century France, and, by their influence, throughout the civilized world. Sibiude's main belief was one that is common to all of us now: 'By natural inclination man is continuously engaged in the pursuit of truth'; and also: 'The visible world is the natural book of man.' Modern science was born when these ideas were fully understood. Another great loss which Catalonia suffered about the same time had a most beneficial effect for Europe by bringing nearer the period of great discoveries: it was the expatriation of the geographer, Jacme or Jaume Ribes, a native of Majorca, who, some time between 1412 and 1418, was engaged by the Portuguese Prince Henry the Navigator to direct the newly-established nautical school of Sagres, which helped to build the foundations of the great Portuguese Empire.<sup>14</sup> Ribes was an expert in the construction of compasses and the designing of maritime charts, and it was mainly he who initiated the Portuguese in the secrets of scientific navigation. He is supposed to have informed them of the existence of the Azores, which were engraved upon the Catalan map of 1373,<sup>15</sup> and, even more important, he is said to have told Prince Henry of Jaume Ferrer's navigation in 1346, beyond the *Sea of Darkness*. Jaume Ribes' teaching of the Portuguese helped to place them, within a few years, among the world's best sailor-explorers.<sup>18</sup> Expatriations such as these—which probably were voluntary—of two great Catalans of constructive intellect, were to be repeated; infrequently, as yet, during the fifteenth century, but increasingly as Catalonia lost her national individuality and independence, until finally no more achievements or ideas worth mentioning originated in Catalonia.

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The fifteenth century was also a period of splendour for Catalan poetry, by then grown completely independent of the primitive versification of the troubadours. As already mentioned (see p. 23), the Catalans contributed to the common development of Provençal poetry. When history cut the Provençal-Catalan country in two, their political and social destinies were separated. But the soul of the people was still undivided and sought to express itself in similar ways on both sides of the Pyrenees. In 1323 Toulouse tried to revive the by then decadent troubadour poetry by organizing the *Consistori de la Gaya Sciencia*, a poetical competition inspired by the memory of the old and almost legendary *Corts d'Amor* of the great period of the troubadours;<sup>17</sup> and in 1388 the *Jocs Florals* (Floral Games) were organized in Barcelona, in imitation of the Toulousan poetical contests. One of the moving spirits in Barcelona was Jaume March. It is possible that these contests contributed to the increase in numbers, and the improvement in quality, of poets; it is certainly a fact that from now on their poetry was purely Catalan. To the remarkable progress of the language which we see in Catalonia, there is no counterpart in Provence. On the contrary, the Provençals were at this time already undergoing a process of *provincialization*, modelling themselves on Northern French.

The best of these fifteenth-century poets, and probably the best Catalan poet of the whole classical period, was Auziàs March, a nephew of Jaume March. Auziàs was born in the town of Gandia in 1397; at a youthful age he joined the Catalan armies in their Sardinian expedition of 1420, in which two other great Catalan poets, Jordi de San Jordi and Andreu Febrer, also took part. He became an intimate friend of the Prince of Viana, the ill-fated heir of the Aragonese crown (see below, p. 94). He was a philosopher who expressed himself in verse, producing more than a hundred poems on subjects ranging from

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love to moral and religious problems. His poetry is much nearer to Dante's than to Petrarch's. His works were translated into Latin and into Spanish, and seven editions were published in these languages during the sixteenth century.

Jordi de Sant Jordi and Andreu Febrer, have left a less copious production. Only eighteen of Jordi's poems remain; Febrer's most important work is the translation into Catalan of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, which he completed in 1428. The last of the poets of this period was Jaume Roig, of Valencia, whose fame is based on his *Spill* or *Llibre de les Dones*, a work of 12,000 lines, which satirizes many aspects of life, and women in particular. His laconic form of expression is full of vigour and energy and has been compared to Boccaccio's. It is valuable to us because of the insight it gives us into the civilization of his age.<sup>18</sup>

At the close of this period, Catalan prose was enriched by one of its finest works, *Tirant lo Blanch* by Joanot Martorell. This novel was inspired by Muntaner's famous *Chronicle*, it also owed much to Bernat Metge; and some influence of the Englishman Guy of Warwick is noticeable as well. Another story of the same romantic trend is *Curial i Güelfa*, a product of Italian influence and inferior to *Tirant lo Blanch*.

In 1474, the *Jocs Florals* had taken place in the town of Valencia; the resulting poetical works were printed under the title of *Obres e trabes, les quals tracten de lahors de la sacratissima Verge Maria*, and this book was generally regarded as the first to be printed in the Spanish peninsula, until a book printed in Barcelona in 1468 was found.<sup>19</sup> A very large number of manuscripts clamoured for printing, for so far the creative capacity of the Catalans had met with no obstacle since the days of the troubadours.

At the moment a sudden deterioration of political and

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social conditions drove the Catalans to the verge of total collapse. The Castilian King of Aragon, Ferdinand I, had died in 1416 (see p. 85) only four years after his coronation. His eldest son, Alfons, inherited the crown. Alfons was an intelligent and ambitious young man who, like his father, was born in Castile and whose native language was Castilian. He felt himself a foreigner in Catalonia, and the limitations by which the royal power was hedged in among the Catalans determined his course of action. Naples and Corsica were at that time among the countries united under the crown of Aragon. Alfons elected to take up residence in the town of Naples, which for the rest of his life became the *de facto* centre of the Confederation. As Naples had been conquered by force of arms and by diplomacy and the consent of its people was of no account, it was a more congenial place for Alfons to live in than Catalonia—to which for twenty-six years he did not pay even a single visit. During this long absence, his abandoned wife, Queen Maria, a Princess of the Castilian royal family, who was a wise and prudent woman, governed the country in collaboration with its democratic institutions, to the full satisfaction of the Catalans. None the less, the continuous absence of the King not only displaced the centre of the Confederation from Catalonia but also prevented the Catalans from conducting the policy of their Mediterranean possessions. The first attempt to place the direction of Catalan interests in Castilian hands thus dates from Alfons' time.<sup>20</sup>

In 1435, about the middle of Alfons' reign, the Catalan navy suffered its first defeat in two hundred years. In the battle of Ponza (a small island near Naples) the Genoese navy vanquished the fleet in which King Alfons and many Castilian nobles, together with almost the whole of Alfons' court, were enjoying their first maritime experience. The great poets, Auziàs March, Jordi de Sant

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Jordi, Andreu Febrer and Jaume Roig, as well as the King and most of the other nobleman were taken prisoners by the Genoese. In 1458 Alfons of Aragon died without direct legitimate issue; his brother Joan, already King Consort of Navarre by his marriage to Blanca, Queen of Navarre, was proclaimed King of Aragon. A son, Prince Charles of Viana, was born from this marriage before the death of Alfons. Born in the Basque country and educated in Barcelona, he was regarded by the common people as destined to be a representative of the old type of kings they had known for the past four centuries; that is to say, as their king. Joan II, his father, was born and educated in Castile, as his predecessors had been, but unlike theirs his character was questionable and certainly unscrupulous. When his wife Blanca died, Joan usurped the regency of Navarre, thus infringing the Prince of Viana's title to the crown. Joan then married the Castilian Juana Enríquez, daughter of the Admiral of Castile and a Jewess. A son was born from this second marriage; he was christened Ferdinand. The Prince of Viana was now the rightful heir of the entire Confederation (Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia, the Balearic Isles, Sicily, Sardinia, Naples, Corsica, and Malta) and of the Kingdom of Navarre. But his stepmother, Juana Enríquez was consumed with ambition to secure that eminence for her own son; and using her personal influence with King Joan and taking full advantage of his cruel and despotic nature, she caused the Prince of Viana to be cast into prison. But Catalonia rose in the Prince's favour, at the head of the whole Confederation, and the King was forced to set him free.

Charles entered Barcelona in triumph. Less than three months later, he died there, probably of tuberculosis. The population, however, accused Juana Enríquez of having poisoned her stepson, and this, added to the

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repeated restrictions which the King had attempted to fasten on the democratic liberties of their country, caused a general uprising of the Catalans against their King

It was indeed a misfortune that just at this moment the Catalan peasantry started a rebellion known as the *guerra dels remences* against the onerous conditions of land-tenure under which they laboured. The Catalan Government or *Generalitat* was trying to solve the problem by a mutual agreement between landlords and peasants, and the basis of the agreement had already been accepted by large numbers on both sides, when the intrigues of the King prevented the conclusion of social peace.<sup>21</sup> This happened in 1462. Not until twenty-four years later, when an exhausted Catalonia was bleeding to death, did Joan's successor invoke this same settlement of the democratic Catalan government to put an end for ever to the problem of the serfs (see below, p. 104). Meanwhile, after ten years of fighting between King and people—a thing that had never been seen in Catalonia before—peace was signed in 1472 and the son of King Joan and Queen Juana, Prince Ferdinand, was recognized by the Catalans as heir to the throne.

Young Prince Ferdinand's first contact with the Catalans during the war was a very terrifying experience. Born outside the Catalan country (in the Castilian-Aragonese town of Sos), he was only a boy of ten when, while with his mother in the town of Girona, it was besieged by the Catalan army under the command of Count Hug Roger de Pallars. A French army coming to the aid of the Queen arrived when the town had already been taken and the Queen and the Prince were sheltering in the castle. It is important to remember such anxieties of Ferdinand's childhood, as they had a lasting effect on his character and so were a decisive cause of his behaviour towards Catalonia in later days when he had become King.

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In the lifetime of his father, Ferdinand had already been made King of Sicily and, in 1469, he married Isabel of Castile—who had just been proclaimed heiress to the throne of Castile. In 1475 the Castilians recognized him as King Consort, on condition of his residing in Castile only, and appointing only Castilians to govern his new kingdom. Then, in 1479, he inherited the crown of Aragon. From that date, two of the four Peninsular peoples had their kings in common, but in all other respects they still remained independent of each other. Thirty-five years later, the kingdom of Navarre passed into the hands of Ferdinand and only Portugal remained apart, until it too was added to the rest by Philip II in 1580.

In Ferdinand's person the Castilian house of Trastamara returned to its country of origin; but it took away with it the fruit of eight centuries' persistent and patient constructive work by the Catalans. Under Ferdinand, the tendency grew apace to hand over the administration of the Catalan-Aragonese Confederation to Castilians,<sup>22</sup> the language spoken at court was Castilian, and by the creation of the Council of Aragon whose members followed Ferdinand's moves, he transplanted to Castile the government of the Catalan interests. He himself and his advisers and friends failed to understand the value of trade and craftsmanship for the economic prosperity of Spain; for us it is easy to see retrospectively that this lack of insight marked the beginning of Spanish decadence, as early as in Ferdinand and Isabel's time; otherwise, it would be difficult to advance a reason why in Spain decadence set in even before Spain itself was formed. Altogether, most of the Catholic Kings' measures and dispositions amaze us by their deficiency in economic foresight.<sup>23</sup> Among the Catalans, the economic consequences of the reign of the Catholic Kings were the gravest of all. The energies of the country were exhausted

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in both civil and external wars, and the latter brought no profit to the people even when they ended in victory.

Ferdinand's hatred for the free-minded Catalans and their institutions and his desire to suppress them were not thwarted for lack of opportunity. Not for nothing did Machiavelli see in Ferdinand the perfect model for his *Prince*. He undertook the elimination of the Catalans as a free people with all his unflinching energy and fine diplomatic ability. First of all he knighted the twenty-seven plebeians who had helped him when he was besieged in Girona as a boy; his second step was to re-start the peasant war which had been brought to settlement in his father's time. Ferdinand gave his support to the peasants or at least drove them on, until a fratricidal struggle caused a new decline in the prosperity and wealth of the Catalan nation. His main intention was to weaken the power of the democratic institutions which opposed his aspiration to absolute rulership, a very common attitude among the kings of his time—we find it as well in England, in France and in the Italian Principalities. But the Catalans' great tragedy was that the building-up of their own nationality was not furthered by this establishment of absolute monarchy; in their case—as opposed to other parts of Europe—the new régime forced upon them was a completely foreign one, overriding at many points their personal and national principles and mode of life. The fact that Castile and Catalonia differed in origin, language, mentality, customs and historical experience, was therefore a source of suffering and destruction to Catalonia at the very time when other nations were being given, by the monarchist absolutism of the Renaissance, the basis of their existence. These abnormal conditions were to make the fate of Catalonia one of the most notable wrongs in history. As a people, the Catalans were at the height of their creative power, marching in the van of human progress owing to

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their achievements in law, art, trade, industry and social development. And this people, which had never yet been subdued by foreign power, never been invaded or physically destroyed, had not even suffered down the centuries any material suppression of its traditional institutions—this people was now to disappear from among the nations, vanishing into a vague unit known by the name of Spain, in which practically nothing was to survive of the experience they had gathered when they were a nation in themselves. For the new State of Spain was not to spring from the fusion of Catalans, Castilians and Basques, but merely from the amplification of Castile and the progressive abolition of the old Catalan and Basque life in all its manifestations.

Examining Ferdinand's measures against the Catalans more closely, we find that another important field of his activities was the religious one. He forced the Catalans to accept the new Castilian Inquisition—known as the 'Spanish Inquisition'—as a substitute for that ancient institution which Ramon de Penyafort set up among the Catalans in the thirteenth century (see p. 38). From now on, the Inquisition was to be a political instrument whereby the Castilians<sup>24</sup> and their Kings might control the intellectual activities of the nation. It was a weapon with which anyone could be crushed who dared to oppose their royal will. In 1480, only one year after Ferdinand had been crowned King of Aragon, he and Isabel introduced the royal element into the Inquisition; that is to say, they obtained the Pope's consent to their nomination of Inquisitors. Until then the methods of the Inquisition among the Catalans had been laid down by law; in Castile they had been the business of the bishops and depended on their decisions. But from now on the old juridical processes were abolished, and the most primitive forms of pseudo-juridical barbarism took their place.<sup>25</sup> In 1481 the Inquisition was introduced in Seville, where

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it met at first with some resistance. Many people took refuge on the estates of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, but being forced to return to their houses they were made to feel the weight of the new persecution, and the Inquisition encountered no further resistance in Castilian Spain.<sup>26</sup> In 1483 it was extended to the Catalan dominion of Sicily. In a letter to Queen Isabel, Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) had complained of the obstacles placed in the way of the Inquisition by the authorities of the island, and asked for the Queen's support in introducing the new system; it is curious to note that the Pope's letter was directed to the Queen and not to the King, who was the actual sovereign of Sicily.<sup>27</sup> In 1484, Fr. Thomas de Torquemada was appointed Head of the Inquisition, both of Castile and Aragon; and he immediately established new dogmatic courts in all the important towns of the Kingdom of Castile, without encountering further opposition. Encouraged by this success, King Ferdinand summoned an unconstitutional assembly of General *Corts* of the Confederation outside Catalonia, in the town of Tarazona, to which Catalonia did not send any representatives. There a personal imposition of the King was adopted that the Inquisition should be introduced in Aragon. Torquemada was entrusted with this project. He appointed the Dominicans Fr. Gaspar Yuglar and Fr. Pedro Arbues de Èpila as his mandataries in Aragon. But Aragon reacted with energy when once the procedure of the new Inquisition became known and Ferdinand was compelled to ask for the support of the royal representatives in the kingdom. This seems to have been a mistake, for the opposition to the new irresponsible tribunal increased even more in intensity. The permanent body of the Aragonese government, composed of representatives of the four estates (high and low nobility, clergy, and towns and villages), sent special ambassadors to the King and to Rome, firmly repudiating the rights of

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the new judges and contesting the way in which they confiscated money and property—a measure, they said, which had no precedent in their old local Inquisition.<sup>28</sup> This cannot be admitted as an undisputed fact, for since the establishment of the original Inquisition in Catalonia by Gregory IX in 1242, one of the penalties imposed upon the condemned had been the confiscation of wealth. It is more probable that the opposition of the Aragonese was due to the fact that the money confiscated was now flowing out of their own country. The lands known as the Kingdom of Aragon were then still wealthy and prosperous, thanks to several centuries of patient work and of constructive and moderate policy, while Castile was still being shaken as in the past by a succession of civil wars, a tragic fate which prevented her great men from building up a stable national life. But with the new Spanish Inquisition, a constant stream of wealth was being transfused from Aragon to Castile. A part of this wealth was used for the prosecution of the war against the Moors of Granada, the last relic of the ancient Arabian domination in the Peninsula. In later years it was employed for the great imperial enterprise in the New World, but from neither of these great achievements were the nationals of Aragon to benefit, nor were they allowed to take any part in the exploitation of empire.

In 1485 the Inquisition was introduced in Valencia; from the nobles of highest rank to the members of the Guilds everyone opposed the arbitrary tribunal. Ferdinand thereupon repeated the procedure he had previously tried in Aragon, and after three months of resistance the Inquisition was established.<sup>29</sup> The Catholic Kings now held the time ripe for the introduction of the Dominican-Castilian tribunal in the Principality of Catalonia, and Lleida was the town chosen, as being the most distant from Barcelona. But the Kings had miscalculated the amount of energy that could still be mobilized by the

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free spirit of the Catalans. Lleida rose in revolt on the arrival of the first Inquisitors, and Ferdinand was compelled to postpone his plans, mainly because the whole of Catalonia supported the first town to be persecuted.

Taking example by the Catalan attitude, the Aragonese increased their resistance to the Spanish Inquisitors. At that very moment, in 1485, the mandatory Inquisitor in Aragon, Fr. Pedro Arbués de Epila, was assassinated. A number of people were imprisoned and later executed as being implicated in the crime. This assassination caused a general disturbance: the mob ran riot against Jews and recently-converted Christians, and with the quenching of these tumults the Inquisition was established in Aragon and all resistance came to an end. The murder of Arbués calls to mind the assassination of the legate Castellnou in Languedoc during the phase of passive resistance against the precursor of the original Inquisition, at the time of the Albigensian war. The deed of the murderers, if it was meant to prevent the establishment of the Inquisition, had achieved exactly the opposite result.<sup>30</sup> New men were appointed to replace Arbués and opposition to the Inquisition was henceforward regarded as a synonym of heresy. Among the people burnt at the stake for the murder of Arbués we find a canon of Barbastro Cathedral.<sup>31</sup> Queen Isabel ordered a magnificent sepulchre to be built in Saragossa in memory of the Inquisitor.

Among the first victims of the new tribunal, the Vicar General of Saragossa, Micer Pere Montfort, deserves mention for his vigorous opposition to its establishment; he escaped, but was burned in effigy. Six people were persecuted for having eaten meat on a Friday.

In 1486 Lleida was forced to surrender to the will of the Catholic Kings; and only Barcelona and Majorca still firmly refused to admit the Spanish Inquisitors. Previously, in 1484, Torquemada had dismissed the

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Catalan head of the local Inquisition, Fr. Joan Comes, and put one of his own men in his place. This was a certain Juan Franco who, as soon as he arrived, began to persecute people not only for their religious beliefs but for other reasons as well.<sup>32</sup> The Barcelona authorities firmly denied Franco's right to impose his will on them, and the reaction against Franco rose to such heights that hopes of delaying if not of preventing the establishment of the foreign persecutors were felt among the common people, the priests, and the nobility. But just at this point, the old peasant problem caused a new civil war; the leader of the peasants, Joan Sala, published a document purporting to express royal sympathy for the peasants—or such at least was the peasants' interpretation of it. And all the time Inquisitor Franco was sending his so-called *Falanges de Torquemada*—a special inquisitorial police—from place to place, seeking to impose themselves by terror. The peasants' army attacked the town of Granollers, near Barcelona, with which it shared a common administration. This attack was clearly aimed at the authorities of Barcelona, who accepted the challenge. The citizen bands of the capital completely defeated the forces of Joan Sala. It was then that a powerful army under Count Hugh Roger de Pallars rose against King Ferdinand, who apparently considered it prudent not to attempt just then to counter the desperation of the Catalans and allowed conditions to return to their former normal appearance. Normality, however, lasted only a short time; owing, perhaps, to the intemperance of Franco, who tried to imprison one of the members of the Bardaxí family, a civil servant in the Kings' administration—regent of the Royal Chancellery—and to confiscate his considerable fortune. The victim escaped to France, and the whole town again reacted with such determination that Ferdinand was compelled to recommend the supersession of Franco by someone

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else. In 1487 Alfonso Espina, prior of Santo Domingo de Huete, was made the new Inquisitor by Torquemada. Espina tried to exact from the Barcelona authorities a special oath of obedience, which they refused to swear. Again the Councillors had to protest against the persecution to which many wealthy families of the town were subjected by Espina's men, not on account of their religion, for many of them were 'old Christians', but merely for their wealth. But their voices went unheard. And in the end the army of Spanish inquisitors triumphantly established themselves in the town in which, by the will of its people and the consent of its King, modern democracy had first seen the light.<sup>33</sup>

Only Majorca remained. There the local Inquisition was still being exercised by the Catalan Joan Remon according to the recognized legal procedure, without protest from anyone. Torquemada charged Pedro Pérez de Munebraga and Sancho Marín with the implantation of the new system; the islanders opposed the newcomers, as in all the other Catalan lands; but they now stood alone against the full power of Spain and soon had to give up the struggle. Besides these inquisitors, we find hard at work in the once free and prosperous lands which formed the Realm of Aragon the following representatives of the new Spain: in Valencia, Pedro Sánchez, canon of Placencia, and Juan López, canon of Cuenca; in Saragossa, Alonso de Alarcón, canon of Palencia, Fr. Juan de Colmenares, prior of San Norberto de Aguilar, and Fr. Juan Colvera a Dominican; in Barcelona, Fr. Alfonso de Espina and Martín García.

In 1488, new statutes had been given to the Inquisition; among their clauses, the thirteenth laid down that no money confiscated from heretics should be handed over to the King before the servants and employees of the Inquisition had made good their salaries. From this we may deduce that a new profession and perhaps—to judge

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by their numbers—a new social class had been created among Spaniards; it was called *El Santo Oficio*, and the money they collected was extorted from working people of every type, from merchants and sailors to doctors and jurists. In clause ten, we are informed that the existing number of prisons was insufficient for the number of condemned and that therefore special private houses must be adapted 'to allow the number of imprisonments to keep pace with the activities of the Holy Tribunal'.<sup>34</sup>

When the new Inquisition had established a firm footing in the country, the peasants' revolt was rapidly brought to an end by the King's arbitration signed in Guadalupe in 1486; the King's settlement was in its main points that proposed twenty-four years earlier by the Catalan Generalitat, which had been turned down by the peasants at the instigation of King Joan II. But now it was not so favourable to the peasants: they had to pay taxes not only to the original proprietors but to the King as well, who apparently had had nothing to do with the dispute. All parties in Catalonia had been the losers in this fight: the whole of the community had been impoverished, and the armed contest among Catalans had served merely to facilitate the introduction of a foreign rule and a despotic authority, along with an alien language and unknown customs and ideals. As a Catalan historian puts it with reference to the new juridical procedure introduced at this time: 'The secret procedure which allowed for no public witness, and despoiled the accused of all right of self-defence, could not command acceptance in a country where the *Juí de Prohoms* was almost equal to the modern jury. The Inquisition, moreover, was soon seen to be working with even more partiality than cruelty; it stands accused of having been interested even more in the wealth of its victims than in their religious views.'<sup>35</sup>

In 1486, the year in which Columbus reached Spain,

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the Catalans were expelled from the *Casa de Contratación*, the commercial centre of Seville, which some years later was to have the exclusive right of trading with America. One might have supposed that Ferdinand had sufficiently avenged the anxieties he suffered from the Catalans during his youth: and that the incident at Seville was but one of many deliberate injustices, but this was not the case. Under pretext of supposed administrative irregularities, and after a series of royal *démarches* whose ability one cannot but admire, the municipal democracy of Barcelona, which was almost as old as the Catalan nation itself, was, by the King's will, suppressed. What happened is this. The municipal council of Barcelona had made some provision towards redressing the fortunes of an almost exhausted and depopulated town; for the next ten years, the salaries of municipal clerks and other civil servants were reduced, and the taxation of the monastic orders was increased. In a letter written to his representatives in Rome, King Ferdinand has left testimony of the wise energy of the Barcelona authorities and of his own esteem of them as administrators.<sup>36</sup> But in 1490, on account of alleged administrative immorality, the municipal elections were suppressed, and men nominated personally by the King took the place of democratically-elected representatives. The complete absence of any popular reaction to this municipal *coup d'état* shows the extent of the decline suffered by the town during Ferdinand's reign. The order suspending the elections was given from Cordova, and the newly-appointed administrators, all obedient servants of the King, have left the most honourable evidence of the patriotism of their predecessors in a document preserved in the Municipal Archives of Barcelona,<sup>37</sup> in which they recognize the well-planned dispositions and the tireless energy of the deposed native municipal council. It seems that the newly-appointed

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Councillors were conscious of the role they were being forced to play, since the King was accusing the Barcelonians of being responsible for the decline of the town, though they knew that the only person responsible was the King himself. A second Municipal Council consisting of other servants of the King was appointed by him on 30 November 1492. Only after a third, and last, direct appointment of Councillors did the King give back to the citizens the right to elect their representatives. In 1494 was introduced a system called *insaculation*, or appointment by ballot, out of a small selection of men chosen by the corporation of the town.

What made Ferdinand abandon his desire for direct control of the Barcelona authorities? We cannot tell for certain; but we may surmise that the reasons were not unrelated to the great event which took place between 1492 and 1493 and changed the future not only of Spain but of humanity as a whole: the discovery of America. Men from the old Kingdom of Aragon had contributed both technically and materially to the discovery of the new continent, and were even then helping as settlers and colonizers across the ocean. At the back of the great discoveries were not only the ideas of Lull on the sphericity of the earth, the charts of the Catalan cartographers, the use of the magnetic needle and the astrolabe, and the outstanding achievements of the Catalans as shipbuilders and sailors, but also the fact that Columbus's actual venture had been made possible by the support given to him by Coloma, Cabrero, and Santàngel, all three of them natives of the Catalan-Aragonese Confederation. Lluís de Santàngel, in particular, assisted Columbus' expedition by a loan of the money he had collected in the town of Valencia in his position as minister of finance, *escribà de ració*; it was a sum of 1,140,000 maravedis. The Valencian Pope Alexander VI was responsible for the Bull of 1493 by which the

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newly-discovered lands were divided between Castile and Portugal; the actual line of partition was traced by one of the best geographers of the time, Jaume Ferrer de Blanes, also a Catalan and perhaps the man best acquainted in the Peninsula with the immense potentialities of the discovery. In the treaty of Tordesillas in June 1494, by which this border line was laid down, the names of Castile and Aragon were used instead of the name of Spain. It was at Barcelona that the Catholic Kings received Columbus on his return from his first voyage, and the letter containing his first report, which was to astonish the world, was sent by Columbus from Lisbon to Barcelona, to Santàngel and Gabriel Sánchez, and was first printed in Barcelona—probably in Catalan.<sup>38</sup> The second expedition was largely run by Catalans. The money for the voyage was collected by a loan made among the Barcelonians Ferrer, Serra, Carles, Girona, and by contribution from Jaume Ferrer and Joan de Coloma.<sup>39</sup> The military leader of this expedition was En Pere Marguerit, a Catalan; and a Catalan, Father Bernat Boyl, was also responsible for the religious mission. In spite of this substantial contribution, the Catalans, by a codicil to Isabel's will in 1504, were not only excluded from enjoying the benefits of the great discoveries, but were even forbidden to settle in or trade with the new lands. It was not until 1778 that this prohibition was relaxed—less than fifty years before the American colonies (with the exception of Cuba) were lost to Spain.

When considering the whole of Ferdinand's policy from his accession to the thrones of Sicily, Castile, and later Aragon, one is impressed by the power of his will and the unlimited energy he devoted to the building-up of Castile—a 'Greater Castile'—as the Spain of to-day. From the introduction of the Spanish Inquisition in Catalonia, from the suppression of Catalan liberties and

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democratic institutions,<sup>40</sup> to the elimination of the Catalans from the *Casa de Contratación* in Seville in 1486 shortly before Seville was awarded exclusive rights in the American trade, one constant purpose would appear to have been his guide: the destruction of Catalonia. The exclusion of the Catalans from the profits of the American adventure was thus a consistent further step.<sup>41</sup> And we may view in the same light the disintegration of the hierarchic unity of the Catalans, by which Pope Innocent VIII collaborated in Ferdinand's policy. After the recovery of Valencia from the Moors by King Jaume I in 1238, this new bishopric had been subordinated to the Archbishopric of Tarragona, as were all other bishoprics of the Aragonese kingdom. But by the new Papal Bull of 9 July 1492, Valencia was raised to an Archbishopric, and the Balearic Isles were removed from the sphere of Tarragona and put under the jurisdiction of Valencia. By the time this long struggle ended, the fate of the Catalan lands had been decided. The great industrial and commercial towns of Valencia, Palma, Perpignan, Tortosa, Lleida, and Barcelona, already declining before, were now completely ruined. As an example, it may be noted that the port of Barcelona, which had harboured an average of no less than 1100 ships a year during many years of the fourteenth century, only sheltered five ships in 1505.<sup>42</sup> The shipyards of Barcelona—rebuilt by King Pere IV in 1378 and where most of the ships of the Catalan fleets had been built—had in Ferdinand's time only one employee: the porter.<sup>43</sup> The feelings of the Catalans are on record. One Francesc Garret of Barcelona said in public of Queen Isabel that she was 'a woman of vile condition, who tried to turn the Catalans into a people of exiles'. Garret, with nine other persons who had listened to his invective, was fortunate in escaping with a sentence of imprisonment for life. Joan de Canyamas, a simple peasant, made an attempt

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against the King's life; he was cut to pieces limb by limb on 8 December 1492.<sup>44</sup> It seems that the conscience of the Spanish court then in Barcelona was not free on this occasion from a sense of responsibility and guilt, for the fear of a popular rising made the Spanish nobles run for safety to the ships they had in the harbour. But the fear was ill-founded: close on a hundred years of continuous struggles against an alien mentality, alien customs and aspirations, and against hostile Kings and their courts had destroyed Catalonia as a nation framed in its own State.

King Ferdinand attempted to achieve the unification of the Castilian and Catalan people—and of the Basques as well—by measures not dissimilar to those used three hundred years before by King Philippe Auguste of France, when he blended the Franks and the Provençals into the French nation. But whereas in the confines of ancient Gaul the Franks of the North and the Provençals of the South adapted themselves sufficiently to give birth to modern France, the attempt at unification failed completely in the Iberian Peninsula. The reason is perhaps that in France in the beginning of the thirteenth century, the culture of the South was crushed before its national consciousness had developed; whereas in Catalonia the attempt was only made in the beginning of the modern age, when nations had grown to be organic bodies. Another factor may have been the disproportion in size between the areas of the Peninsula inhabited by Catalans and those in which Castilians had settled. The considerable preponderance of the latter made it more difficult for the Catalans to infiltrate their way of life into Castile than it had been for the Provençals to perpetuate their characteristics in the modern Frenchman. On the other hand, their more advanced social structure protected the Catalans against the attempt of the Castilians to assimilate them. Perhaps the exclusion of the Cata-

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lans from the early trade with America in fact nullified the most obvious opportunity for the shaping of a composite Spaniard, or Iberian, who might have inherited the mixed characteristics of Castilians, Catalans, and Basques, to whom the Portuguese might have been added.

Unfortunately, however, the union with Castile brought to the Catalans nothing but misery and sorrow. Their finest attributes were undermined or destroyed, their mercantile, naval, and industrial efficiency, their sense of proportion, their dignified reserve, without their being enabled to adopt in compensation the Castilian characteristics; an unlimited readiness for sacrifice, an adherence to abstract ideas, a crusading spirit, and disdain for economic advantages and for the limitations of the *via media* as they arise from the commercial habit of compromise. After so many centuries have gone by, the basic elements of the Catalans and many Castilians of to-day are—with the favourable changes produced by the age in which we live—the same as in the days when Ferdinand's attempt failed. In fact, Ferdinand himself was so conscious of his failure that he intended the son of his second marriage (to a Provençal Princess, Germana de Foix, concluded almost immediately after the death of Queen Isabel) to be the heir of the Kingdom of Aragon, while the Kingdom of Castile was reserved to Isabel's daughter, Princess Juana—a sister of Queen Catherine of England. Much to his father's sorrow, this son died soon after his birth, and the crown of Aragon was joined to the patrimony of Princess Juana, who later, by her marriage to the son of the Hapsburg Emperor Maximilian, was the mother of Charles V—the heir of both Spain and the Empire.

The day before he died Ferdinand stated in writing that he had offended God on many occasions, 'also in the government and guidance of the Kingdoms and Prin-

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cialties he entrusted to us, administering law without rightful justice and diligence; appointing, giving order to, and tolerating officers and ministers who did not apply themselves to the service of Our Lord and to the welfare of our subjects'. Ferdinand's testament has perpetuated his tardy repentance for all the suffering he imposed on the Catalan people. It is probable that the Catalans have forgiven him; but it is out of the question that they should have forgotten.