

Castile conquers Navarre

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Navarre fought more than 400 years against the hostilities of Spain (Aragon and Castile) and France. In 1512, in the pinnacle of its political, economic, and military power, Castile finally buried its teeth in the throats of the Navarrese and imposed its inquisitorial system to annihilate the resistance. The Church needed no prompting to provide a halo for the conquest of Navarre. Pope Julius II excommunicated the Navarrese, stripped Navarre's monarchs of their kingdom, and ordained Castile as proprietor and master of Navarre.

For Spain it was an era of "reconquest": it had covered Granada from the Moors and yet Navarre was a bastion of resistance within the empire. But Navarre too was the gate to France. The pass of Orreaga which leads from Navarre to France gave the region great strategic importance throughout the ages. The Basques had defended themselves successfully against the Visigoths and the Franks invaders.

The expansion of the kingdom of Castile, financed with the wealth usurped from Latin America, extended God's reign over the earth while the Crown made deceptive fortunes for a Spanish nobility living in a belated Middle Age. Spain fought to achieve unity as a nation wielding swords with the Sign of the Cross on its hilts.

Those thankless Navarrese for all the good Spain has done to them, were killed and their homes razed to the ground. They were hunted and penned down so that they might not disturb the organized advance of latifundia.

Exiled in their own land, condemned to an eternal exodus, many Navarrese families sought refuge in Garazi in northern Navarre, which was not occupied by Castile. The occupation of northern Navarre was costly and the prolific silver mines of Potosi, in what is now Bolivia, and of Zacatecas and Guanajuato in Mexico, had not yet been discovered by the Spaniards. The army of Carlos V retreated from northern Navarre in 1530.

During the process of military conquest, which extended through the following ten years or more after the invasion in 1512, the Navarrese of the north tried to liberate the Basque state. A group of nobles took over the Amaiur castle but unable to overcome the attacks by the Castilian army, they surrendered a year later.

The metals of Latin America provided a means for Spain to fight against the nascent forces of the modern economy. Carlos V had already defeated the Castilian bourgeoisie in the uprisings of the *Comuneros*, which had become a social revolution against the nobility, its property and privileges. The uprisings were crushed following the betrayal of Burgos. In 1521, taking advantage of the revolt of the *Comuneros*, Henri d'Albret King of Navarre tried to recover Navarre from Spain. Northern Navarre and the Roncal valley united their armies led by Andre de Foix, seigneur d'Asparros. Pamplone went up in revolt against the Castilians who quickly surrendered. Most of the Navarrese territory was recovered, but having defeated the *Comuneros*, the Castilian troops returned to Navarre. Thousands of Navarrese died in the battle of Noain where the troops of Andre de Foix were defeated by the army of Carlos V.

Spain conquered Navarre and transformed it from a sovereign state into a viceroyalty. The Basque state, however, retained its own independent Constitution, court and laws until 1841 when it was transformed from a viceroyalty into another Spanish province.