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THE COAT OF ARMS OF SPAIN

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Introduction

This paper follows the creation and evolution of the coat of arms of Spain consequent upon firstly the dynastic changes of the Spanish crown and secondly the many political changes in the government of the nation, in particular the period of reform and the revolutions between 1808 and 1981. The key events in this later period have been the occupation of the throne by Joseph Bonaparte (1808–1813), the reign of Isabella II (1813–1868), the provisional government (1868–1870), the kingdom without a king, the reign of Amadeo of Savoy (1871–1873), the first republic (1873–1874), the reign of Alfonso XII (1874–1931), the second republic (1931–1936), the regime of General Franco (1936–1975) and finally the reigns of Juan Carlos I (1975–2014) and Felipe VI (2014–present).

The medieval origin of the heraldic emblems that make up the coat of arms of Spain

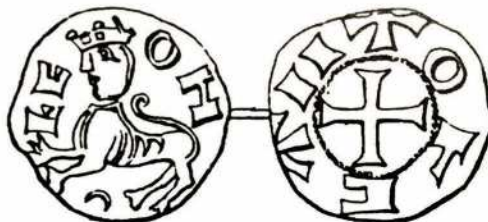
The lineage of the coat of arms of the Spanish nation can be traced back over nine centuries to the origins of heraldry around the middle of the twelfth century, when a widespread use of emblems of a personal nature began in western Europe, which soon led to the birth of the heraldic system. Of relevance to this story are the coats of arms of the kings of the different kingdoms of Spain that arose in the Middle Ages, the different dynastic links, the conflicts in the succession to the throne, and historical vicissitudes from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, when the current coat of arms was established.

The Kingdom of León

Heraldic emblems are, first and foremost, personal emblems which, being transmissible by inheritance, can represent membership of a lineage as well as the possession of a hereditary dignity or jurisdiction. The king's seal is a personal sign, but, through his person, it is a sign of the identity of the kingdom.

The lion can be considered the first heraldic emblem, and it occurs on the coins of Alfonso VII, who was born in 1105 and died in 1157. He was King of Galicia (1111), King of Castile and León (1126) and Emperor of the Spains (1135). The lion is also found on the royal signum (**Figure 1**) of his son Ferdinand II, who reigned between 1157 and 1188 as Imperator Hispania and Rex Hispaniarum. This usage might be regarded as pre-heraldic; it was not depicted with a crown until the reign of Sancho IV, King of Castile and León (ruled 1284–1295).

The oldest artistic depictions of the lion of León are found in paintings of kings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Thus, in the chartulary known as *Tumba A* of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela we see vignettes painted around 1130, showing two lions seated at the feet of Alfonso V (999–1028). A red lion with an undoubtedly emblematic character appears in the lower part of the image of Vermudo III (1028–1037,



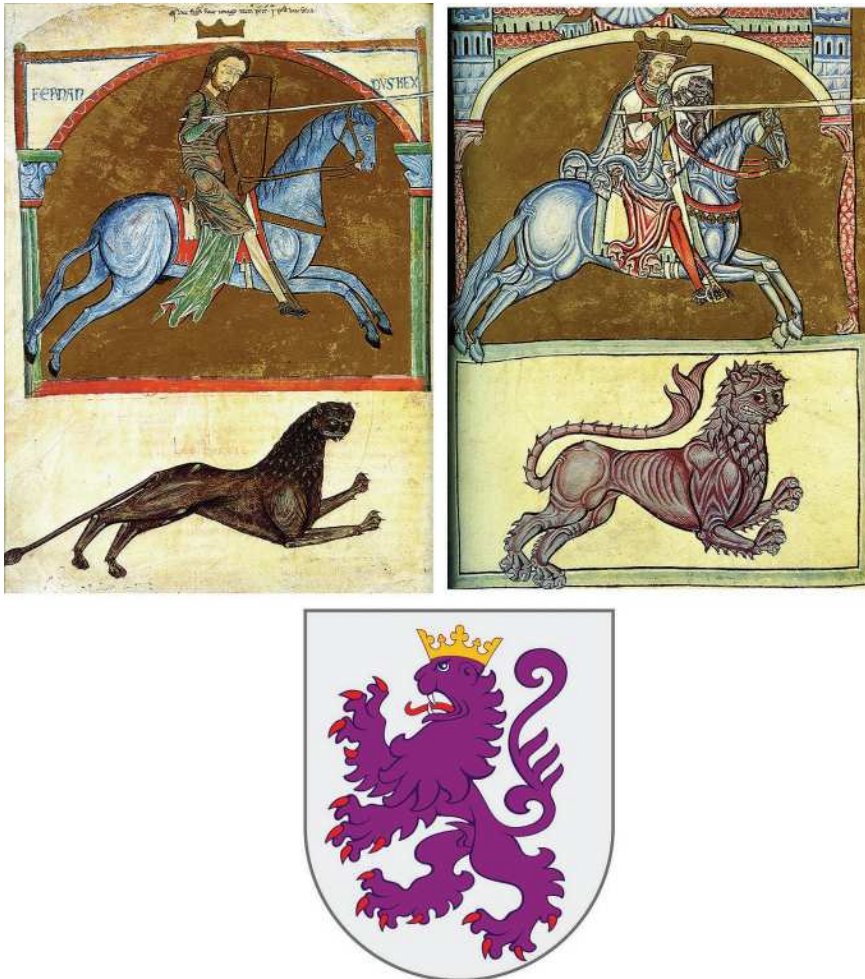
Lions of León. Top left, *Figure 1*: signum of Ferdinand II; Top right: *Figure 2*: King Vermudo III from *Tumba A* of the chartulary of Santiago da Compostella; bottom left, *Figure 3*: King Alfonso VII; centre right, *Figure 4*: King Sancho I, with his lion sceptre, this and the last both from *Tumba A*; bottom right: *Figure 5*: human headed lion on coin of Alfonso VII.

Figure 2) and in the vignettes of Fruela II (924–925), Ordoño III (951–956), Sancho I (956–958 and 960–966), Ferdinand I (1037–1065) and Alfonso VII (1126–1157). In some paintings, the sceptres of the monarchs are surmounted by lion heads (**Figure 4**). Against this background, by the time of Alfonso VII the lion had become a heraldic

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symbol, but without a fixed position or design. It was depicted in some instances with a human head (**Figure 5**). The lion was first represented in purple, the imperial colour par excellence, during the reign of Ferdinand II. In the equestrian representation of Ferdinand II in *Tumba A* of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, made around 1180, a lion appears at the bottom of the painting (**Figure 6**). The king carries a golden shield on which is outlined, uncoloured, a lion in a rampant position.

The vignette of Alfonso IX in the aforementioned manuscript, dated around 1210, shows an emblem that already has the characteristics of armorial bearings, i.e. a white shield on which a purple lion is painted in a rampant position and adapted to the shape of the shield (**Figure 7**). This is the oldest known representation of the arms of the King of

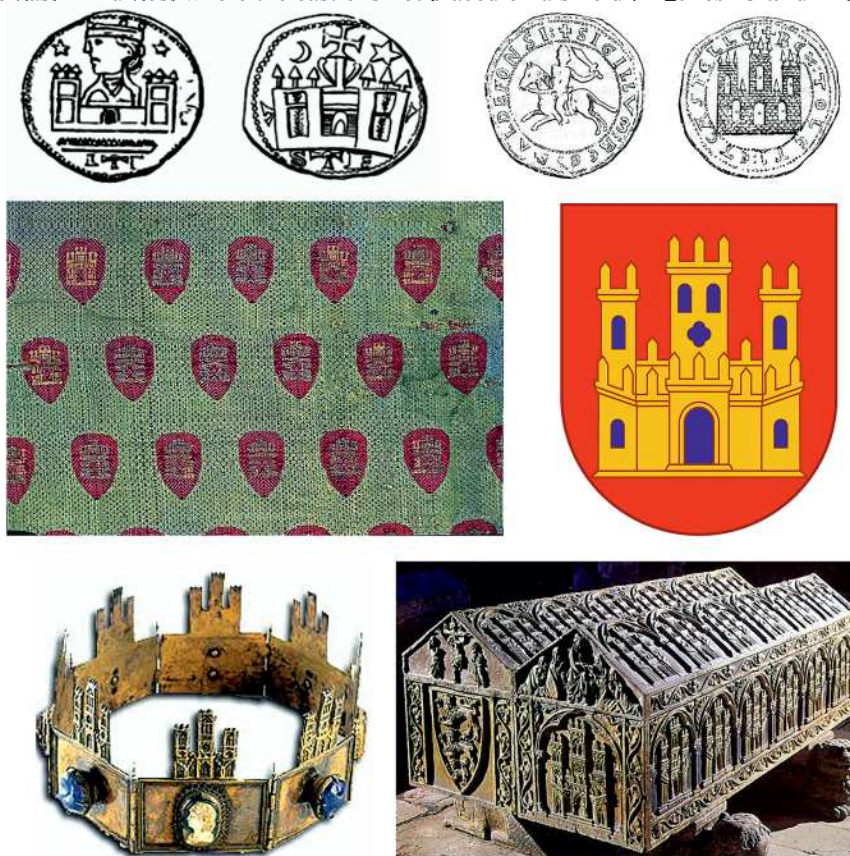


Lions of León part 2. Top Left, *Figure 6*: Ferdinand II from *Tumba A*; top right, *Figure 7*: purple heraldic lion of Alfonso IX from *Tumba A*; bottom, *Figure 8*: the arms of the kingdom of León.

León in these colours. We consider that, with this brief description, the medieval origin of the lion in the coat of arms of Spain (**Figure 8**) is sufficiently clarified.

The Kingdom of Castile

The emblem of Castile was created about a century following the establishment of the Kingdom of León. It is considered to date to late in the reign of Alfonso VIII (1158–1214). During this reign, the castle is first noted on the coinage and on the reverse of the royal seal (Figures 9 and 10), and thereafter was borne on the shield carried by the king, as can be seen on a piece of green brocade found within the king's tomb, which shows the castle on multiple shields (Figure 11). The castle is a simple canting device based on the name of Castile. The arms are blazoned *Gules a triple-towered castle or*, the gate and windows usually represented in azure (Figure 12). Other artefacts which preserve the crown of Castile from the reign of Alfonso VIII include the royal crown, and the joint tomb of the king with his wife Queen Eleanor Plantagenet, in the monastery of Las Huelgas, in Burgos, where the castle is not placed on a shield (Figures 13 and 14). We



The castle of Castile. Top left, *Figure 9*: coin of Alfonso VIII; top right, *Figure 10*: seal and counter-seal of Alfonso VIII c. 1175; centre left, *Figure 11*: fabric from the tomb of Alfonso VIII; centre right, *Figure 12*: arms of Castile; bottom left, *Figure 13*: crown of Alfonso VIII; bottom right, *Figure 14*: tomb of Alfonso VIII and Queen Eleanor.

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can see the difference between the use of the castle to stand for the kingdom, not placed on a shield, and separately in true heraldic fashion representing the royal family.

The Kingdom of Castile and León

Ferdinand III of León inherited the throne of Castile as his mother's inheritance, becoming King of Castile in 1217. On the reverse of his seal dating to 1224 (at which date he was king of Castile only, **Figure 15**) is the emblem of the kingdom, the castle, accompanied by the lions which are the arms of his lineage, as secondary elements. On ascending to the throne of León in 1230, Ferdinand III adopted new arms, which are the quartered coat of arms of Castile and León (**Figure 16**). These are not arms of lineage, but of dignity,



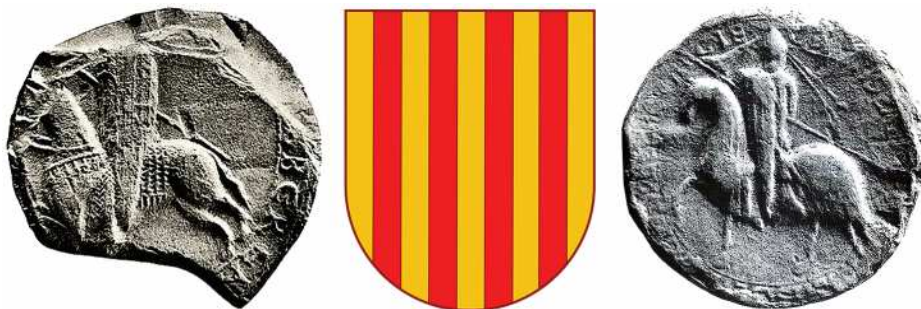
Castile and León. Top left, *Figure 15*: seal of Ferdinand III as King of Castile 1224; Bottom left, *Figure 16*: seal of Ferdinand III as King of Castile and León; right, *Figure 17*: arms of Castile and León.

with a territorial significance. This quartered coat of arms (**Figure 17**) has subsequently persisted (for the most part) in the coats of arms of the kings of Spain, as we shall see.

The Royal House of Aragon

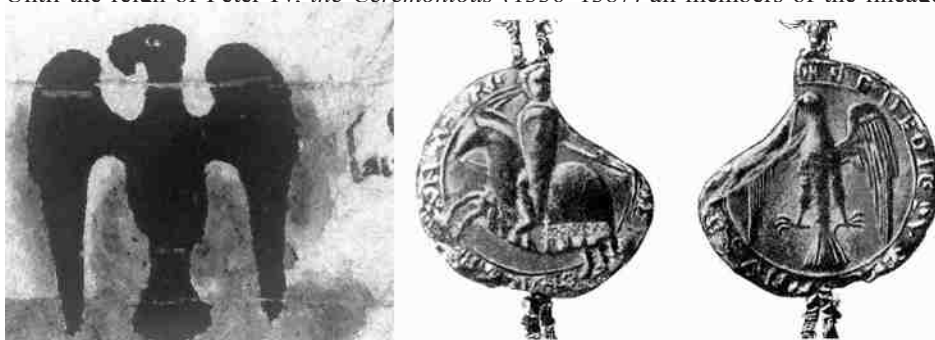
The first record of the use of the *paly* arms is the seal of Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona, dated around 1150, the period when heraldic emblems first appeared (**Figure 18**). It is a coat of arms that retains the distinctive style and characteristic shape of the period. Ramon Berenguer IV married Petronila, Queen of Aragon between 1157 and 1164, and was therefore also Prince of Aragon. Their son reigned under the name of Alfonso II, *the Chaste*, King of Aragon and Count of Barcelona between 1164 and 1196.

On the seal of Alfonso *the Chaste* (**Figure 20**) we see that he assumes as the *paly* arms of his lineage, which can be seen on the shield, on the horse's caparison, and on



Kingdom of Aragon. Left, *Figure 18*: seal of Raymon Berengar IV; centre, *Figure 19*: arms of Aragon; right, *Figure 20*: seal of Alfonso II.

his lance banner. Thus, it can be affirmed that the device *Paly or and gules* (**Figure 19**) originated as a personal emblem of Ramon Berenguer IV and being transmitted to his descendants, became the arms of the House of Aragon, initially without any territorial relationship, although this occurred with the passage of time. We see that when Alfonso II allowed its use by the municipality of Milhau in 1187, he called it “vexillum nostrum”. Until the reign of Peter IV. *the Ceremonious* (1336–1387) all members of the lineage



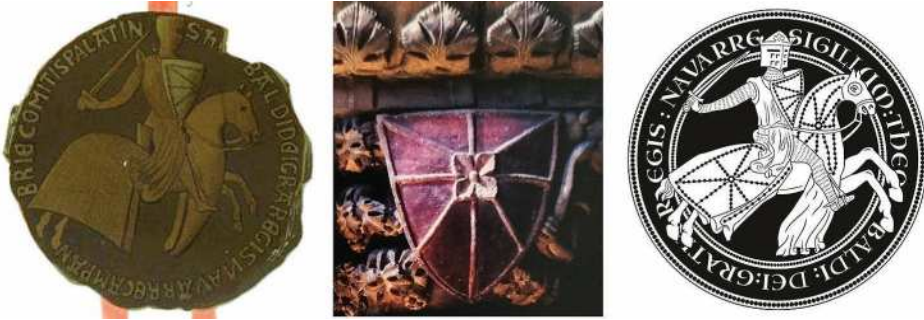
Kingdom of Navarre. Left, *Figure 21*: eagle device on manuscript of Sancho VII; right, *Figure 22*: seal and counter-seal of Sancho VII.

would use the arms without distinction, but from that time onwards, differences were established for those who did not hold the crown.

The Royal House of Navarre

We have very precise information on the heraldic emblem used by the King of Navarre, Sancho VII, *the Strong* (1194–1234), which was an eagle, as can be seen in documents and seals (**Figures 21 and 22**). It is very likely that the origin of this emblem lies with the king’s grandmother, Marguerite de l’Aigle, Queen of Navarre (d. 1141). Sancho’s successor was his nephew Theobald I, *the Troubadour*, who was King of Navarre from 1234 to 1253. He bears an escarbuncle shield on his seal (**Figure 23**), which cannot be classified as a heraldic coat of arms, as is clear from an architectural relief from the cathedral of Tudela (**Figure 24**). This shows his decision not to continue with the eagle

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Kingdom of Navarre. Left, *Figure 23*: seal of Theobald I; centre, *Figure 24*: shield of Theobald I from the Cathedral of Tudela; right, *Figure 25*: seal of Theobald II.

emblem of his predecessor. The escarbuncle had evolved into a truly heraldic device by the reign of his successor Theobald II, on whose seals it can be seen on both the shield and the horse caparison (**Figure 25**).

The origin of the escarbuncle device is the strengthening metal bars of a war shield fastened with nails or rivets. Due to a certain similarity, in the fifteenth century the legend spread that the coat of arms of the King of Navarre was not an escarbuncle, but chains whose origin was in the battle of Navas de Tolosa, in which Sancho VII, King of Navarre, had broken the chains that protected the tent of the Caliph Muhammad An-Nasir. In the centre was placed the emerald taken from the Caliph's treasure (**Figure 26**). The first references that mention the chains are in the *Genealogía latina de los reyes de Navarra* and in the *Crónica de los reyes de Navarra*, by the Prince of Viana, both dating to the

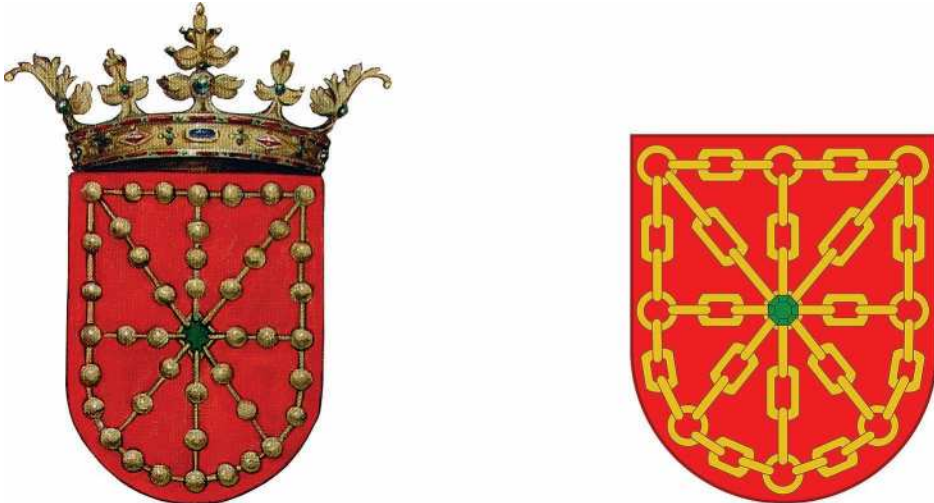


Figure 26, left: original shield of Navarre; right: later arms of Navarre.

fifteenth century. Thus, the arms of the kingdom of Navarre officially became chains with an emerald in their centre.

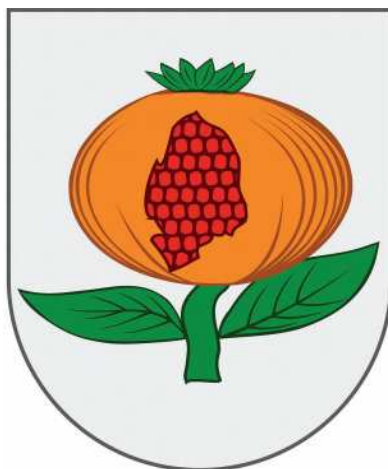


Figure 27: the granada or pomegranate of the Kingdom of Granada.

The Kingdom of Granada

After the conquest of the Kingdom of Granada in 1492, the Catholic Monarchs decided to incorporate a heraldic emblem representing the kingdom into their coat of arms. They used the canting device of the pomegranate (granada, **Figure 27**).

Evolution of the arms of the Kings of Spain

Let us now consider the arms of the kings of Spain, which are not the arms of the Spanish nation, since, although on many occasions the equivalence is made, they are not the same thing. Spain, as a nation, did not have its own arms until the end of the nineteenth century. In order to guarantee the accuracy of this account, the coinage has been utilised as the primary point of reference, further illustrated with the author's own drawings.

The 'Catholic Monarchs' Isabella I (1451–1505) and Ferdinand V (1452–1516), of Trastámara

It is with these monarchs that the development of Spain as a unified kingdom began in a process which lasted a century. Isabella was proclaimed Queen of Castile in Segovia on 12 December 1474, and Ferdinand in early January 1475. On the 15th of that month, in the *Concordia de Segovia*, they agreed on the titles and coats of arms that both would bear. Titles and armorial bearings would belong to both spouses.

The joint arms of the Catholic Monarchs (**Figure 28**) are a quartered coat of arms: 1 and 4, quartered Castile and Leon (arms of the Queen); 2 and 3, parted, 1, Aragon (an inheritance of the house of Trastámara); 2, Sicily (the Kingdom of Sicily was inherited with that of Aragon). With the conquest of Granada, in 1482, a pomegranate (canting emblem) is added, pointed at the point. Holding the shield, the eagle of Saint John, nimbate (haloed) which was originally the device of Isabella. Supporting the shield below is the yoke badge of Ferdinand and the bundle of arrows of Isabel. The appearance of the

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Figure 28: Versions of the arms of the ‘Catholic Monarchs’. Top left: grille from the Cathedral of Granada; top right: Missal of Queen Isabella; centre left: eight real coin; centre right: excelente coin of Granada; bottom left, manuscript version of the arms; bottom right: arms carved in the Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes, Toledo.

pomegranate as a quarter referring to the kingdom of Granada should not be confused with the bouquet of pomegranates used as a badge by Henry IV of Castile.

Joanna, the Mad (1479–1555) of Trastámara

Queen Joanna, daughter of the Catholic Monarchs, was the first sovereign to reign over all the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, except Portugal, which would be incorporated in the reign of her grandson Philip II. The arms of the Catholic Monarchs were quartered with those of her husband, Philip the Fair, Duke of Burgundy (**Figure 29**) which are: quarterly: 1 Austria; 2 Burgundy modern; 3 Burgundy ancient; 4 Brabant, overall an escutcheon party of Flanders and Tyrol.



Figure 29: Arms of Queen Joanna and Philip the Fair. Left: real coin of Joanna minted at Amberg in 1505; right: the quartered arms of the couple.

Charles I (1500–1558) of Habsburg (the Emperor Charles V)

Charles of Habsburg inherited the kingdom of Spain in 1516. A key reference for his arms is the edition of the *Siete Partidas* of 1555 (**Figure 30**). In this work the coat of arms is charged with the heraldic emblems associated with Castile, León, Aragon, Navarre, Sicily, Jerusalem, Hungary, Austria, Brabant and Burgundy, and in the escutcheon, of Tyrol and Flanders. Navarre is here represented with an escarbuncle, not chains, although the king's arms on the façade of the cathedral of Granada (**Figure 31**) has chains. This is explained by what has already been said about the origin of the coat of arms of Navarre. The essential differences between the coat of arms of Charles I and that of Joanna are: the double-headed eagle with the imperial crown; the addition of the cross of Jerusalem and the barry arms of Hungary (which together represent the kingdom of Naples); and the ribboned columns of Hercules with the legend *Plus Ultra*. Although these columns were a personal motto of Charles I, they have remained in the coat of arms of Spain, and are the origin of the dollar sign (**Figure 32**).

The above-mentioned coat of arms on the façade of the cathedral of Granada has some minor differences of position in the arrangement of the quarters from those in the *Siete Partidas*, and the Pillars of Hercules are absent.

Philip II (1527–1598) of Habsburg

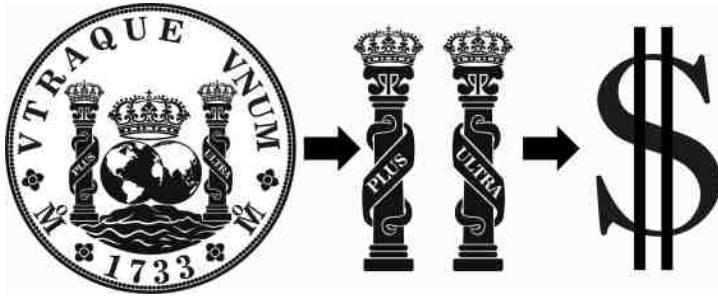
When, on 22 November 1566, Philip II approved the pragmatic and provision that we know under the name of the *Nueva Estampa*, he established that gold and silver coinage

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Arms of Charles I. Top left, *Figure 30*: as illustrated in the *Siete Partidas* of 1555; top right: author's drawing of the same; bottom, *Figure 31*: as carved at the Cathedral of Granada.

be made with the royal arms, which are: shield quarterly: 1, quarterly of Castile and Leon; 2, party per pale 1, Aragon, 2, Sicily; 3, party per fess, in chief Austria, in base Burgundy ancient; 4, party per pale, in chief Burgundy modern, in base Brabant; between quarters 1 and 2, in base, an escutcheon of Grenada; between quarters 3 and 4 an escutcheon of Flanders impaling Tyrol. Later, in 1580, an escutcheon of the royal arms of Portugal was



32: origin of the dollar sign.

added between quarters 1 and 2 (**Figure 33**). This followed Philip II's proclamation of himself, by right of succession, as King of Portugal. For the ensuing sixty years all of the kingdoms of Iberia were united under a single sovereign. Unlike Carlos I, Philip II did not bear the arms of Navarre or Naples (Jerusalem and Hungary).



Figure 33: Arms of Philip II. Top left: as carved on El Escorial; top right: as drawn by the author; bottom: eight real coin.

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Figure 34: Arms of Philip V, Louis I and Ferdinand VI. Left: as drawn by the author; top right: eight escudos coin of Philip V from his second reign in 1730; bottom right: eight escudos coin of Louis I from his brief reign in 1724.

Philip III (1578–1621), Philip IV (1605–1665) and Charles II (1661–1700), of Habsburg
These three kings used the same arms as Philip II, except at the end of the reign of Charles II when the escutcheon of Portugal was withdrawn following a revolution in that country which had restored an independent Portuguese monarchy.

Philip V (1683–1746), Louis I (1707–1724) and Ferdinand VI (1713–1759), of Bourbon

Charles II bequeathed all his possessions to Philip of Anjou, of the House of Bourbon. As Philip V he was proclaimed King of Spain at Versailles on 16 November 1700. The change of dynasty led to changes in the royal arms, both in the general arrangement and with the addition of an escutcheon with the arms of his Bourbon lineage, France with a bordure gules (for Anjou). This displaced the embattled point of Granada from the centre point of the shield, and displaced the arms from the escutcheon of Flanders and Tyrol to a new embattled point at the base of the shield (**Figure 34**).

Charles III (1716–1788) and Charles IV (1748–1819) of Bourbon

King Charles III had a greater and a lesser coat of arms, the lesser being Castile quartering León with an escutcheon of Anjou and Granada in base. The lesser arms were later widely used on coins and elsewhere, and were placed as an escutcheon on the full armorial bearings, with all the various quarters. He was the son of Philip V (1683–1746) and his second wife, Isabella de Farnese (1692–1766). The infant Charles, the future king, had inherited the duchies of Parma and Piacenza from his great-uncle Antonio Farnese in 1731, and possessed the hereditary right to Tuscany, which came to him through the grandmother of Queen Isabella de Farnese, daughter of the Grand Duke



Figure 35: Arms of Charles III and Charles IV. Left: as drawn by the author; top right: four escudos coin of Charles III, 1779; bottom right: eight escudos coin of Charles IV, 1791.

Cosimo de Medici. The Medici (Duchy of Tuscany) and Farnese (Duchy of Parma) arms were added to the royal arms, significantly modifying the layout of the ensemble (**Figure 35**).

Joseph I (1768–1844) Bonaparte

After the invasion of Spain by French troops in 1808, Napoleon proceeded to appoint his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as King of Spain and to impose a new constitution on Spain. The Statute was approved on 6 July 1808, and the following day the Assembly accepted Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain and the Indies. Since the new king had no connection with the lineages that reigned in Spain, new arms had to be designed, taking some of the previous emblems, but referring to territories, not dynasties. These arms were approved by a Royal Decree dated 12 October 1808 in Vitoria. The royal arms consisted of six quarters of Castile, León, Aragon, Navarre, Granada, and an entirely new quarter of the eastern and western terrestrial hemispheres accompanied by the Pillars of Hercules (for the Indies); over all was a central escutcheon of the Napoleonic imperial eagle (**Figure 36a and b**). These arms laid the foundations for the future arms of the Spanish nation.

Ferdinand VII (1784–1833) and Isabella II (1830–1904) of Bourbon

Once the invading French army had been defeated, on 24 March 1814 Ferdinand VII returned to Spain and, restored to the throne as the legitimate king, restored the former royal arms (**Figure 36c**) which were also used by his daughter and successor, Queen Isabella II

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Figure 36. Left, 36a: arms of Joseph I as drawn by the author; top right, 36b: twenty real coin of Joseph I, 1809; bottom right, 36c: two escudos coin of Ferdinand VII.

The Revolution of 1868 and the Provisional Government (1868–1871)

The Provisional Government of 1868–1871 was the executive formed in Spain after the triumph of the 1868 Revolution, known as the Glorious Revolution, which put an end to the reign of Isabella II and approved a new Constitution in June 1869. On 19 October 1868, the then Minister of Finance signed a Decree establishing the peseta as the monetary unit, for which new coins were to be minted. Article 6 of the Decree stipulated that “All coins of the size permitted will bear a figure representing Spain, with the arms and attributes of national sovereignty, and will show their value, weight, law and year of manufacture”. In order to comply with this mandate, the Government requested an opinion from the Royal Academy of History, which on 6 November 1868 proposed the following arms: “*Shield quartered in cross: first, of gules and a castle Or, crenellated with three battlements, and donjoned with three towers, the middle one greater, each one also with three battlements, the whole Or embattled sable and charged with azure; second, of argent a lion gules, crowned Or, armed and langued of the same; third, of Or four pales gules: fourth, of gules and a chain Or placed in border, in cross and in saltire; in point, of argent a pomegranate proper showing its grains of gules, supported, carved and leafed with two leaves vert. Lying, one on each side, the two columns of Hercules argent, the bases and capitals Or, bound with a scroll gules, charged with the motto Plus Ultra in Or*”(Figure 37).

It might be argued that this is the first historically defined coat of arms of Spain, as distinct from the arms of the monarch. The report states that “The new coat of arms, the coat of arms of the Spanish nation, as a political unit and without relation to the persons who govern it, must declare the history of this great State, as it is constituted, combining



Figure 37: arms and 200 peseta coin (1869) of the Provisional Government.

the devices of the independent Kingdoms that successively merged and achieved a coat of arms of dominion composed of the various arms of community, excluding any idea of family or alliance: Leon, Castile, Aragon, Navarre and Granada are, together with the overseas dominions, the component states of this great whole”.

A mural crown replaces the royal crown because the Constitution was being discussed which was to decide what type of regime Spain would have, and for this reason a neutral type was chosen, not to be confused with the seal that years later was adopted by the Second Republic. It represents a territory waiting to decide its form of government, which in the end would be a monarchy. Thus, there remain two types of arms, the great arms of the kings, since Charles III, and the purely territorial arms adopted by the Provisional Government, which are intended to be free of monarchical significance, except for the seal and the dynastic escutcheon when Spain becomes a monarchy.

Amadeus (1845–1890) of Savoy

The functions of the Provisional Government came to an end on 2 January 1871 with the swearing in before the *Cortes Constituyentes* of the new king elected by that government, Amadeus of Savoy. He was the son of Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy, unifier and first king of Italy, and his wife, Archduchess Adelaide of Austria. Amadeus soon became discouraged by the political struggle and the behaviour of the Spanish people towards

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Figure 38: arms as drawn by the author, and five peseta coin (1871) of Amadeus I.

himself and the Queen, leading him, on 11 February 1873, to submit his irrevocable renunciation of the Crown, both for himself and for his successors. For his coat of arms, the only change was the replacement of the mural crown with the royal crown, and the addition of an escutcheon with the arms of his Savoy lineage (**Figure 38**).

The First Republic (1873–1874)

The First Spanish Republic existed from 11 February 1873 until 29 December 1874, when the declaration of General Martínez Campos led to the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy. With the proclamation of the First Republic, a report was again requested from the Royal Academy of History, which stated that “The coinage of 1868 was already characterised by its independence from all personal or hereditary power and only the Spanish nation appeared on it as the master of its destiny”. This meant that the coat of arms established by the provisional government was maintained. The First Republic did not mint coins.



Figure 39: Arms of Alfonso XII and Alfonso XIII. Top left, 39a: arms as drawn by the author; top right, 39b: bookplate of Alfonso XIII; bottom left: five peseta coin of Alfonso XII, 1885; bottom right: 100 peseta coin of Alfonso XIII, 1897.

Alfonso XII (1857–1885) and Alfonso XIII (1886–1941) of Bourbon

Alfonso XII was the son of Queen Isabella II and King consort Francisco de Asís de Borbón. On 29 December 1874 the monarchy was restored when General Arsenio Martínez-Campos Antón declared himself in favour of Prince Alfonso's accession to the throne in the Valencian town of Sagunto. This put an end to the brief period of the First Spanish Republic. In January 1875, Don Alfonso de Borbón arrived in Spain and was proclaimed king before the Spanish Cortes, in what became known politically as the Restoration.

The coat of arms established by the provisional government was maintained, although, as in the reign of Amadeo I, the mural crown was replaced by the royal crown and a shield was added with the arms of the Bourbons (Anjou), as the reigning dynasty in Spain (Figure 39a). This was established in the Decree of 6 January 1875 signed by Cánovas del Castillo. As an example of the clear separation between the King's personal arms and those of the nation, the arms used by Alfonso XIII on his ex Libris are shown in Figure 39b.

The Second Republic (1931–1939)

Municipal elections were called in Spain and held on 12 April 1931. The victory of the Republican parties, especially in urban areas, led Alfonso XIII to renounce the crown and to go into exile in Spain. Thus, on 14 April 1931, the Second Republic was proclaimed and a provisional government was formed which called elections for a Constituent Cortes, which were held on 28 June 1931.

The Decree of 27 April 1931 of the Provisional Government of the Second Republic established the new tricolour flag, with three red, yellow and purple stripes, stating “In the centre of the yellow stripe will appear the coat of arms of Spain, adopting as such that which appears on the reverse of the five-peseta coins minted by the Provisional Government in 1869 and 1870” (**Figure 37**).

General Franco’s regime (1936–1975)

On 18 July 1936 a military uprising took place in Spain, leading to a civil war that lasted until 1 April 1939. Among the rebel generals was General Franco, who in October 1936 was elevated to the dual position of head of state and government of “national” Spain and generalissimo of the army. With the victory of the rebels, a dictatorship began that ended with the death of the dictator on 20 November 1975. During the war there was a legitimate Republican government and a government operating in the Spain won by the rebels.

A Decree of 29 August 1936, published in the Official Gazette of the Junta de la Junta de España (Official Gazette of the Junta) of National Defence of Spain, re-established “the bicolour flag, red and yellow, as the flag of Spain”. An Order of 13 September 1936 developed the previous decree, stipulating that “The shape and dimensions of the Flags or Standards of the Units of the Army and Navy shall be the same as those they had before the proclamation of the Republic, and their coat of arms, the current one, without bearing, for the time being, any inscription whatsoever”. There was no change to the Spanish coat of arms in the “national” zone until the Decree of 2 February 1938 approved the new Spanish coat of arms. In its explanatory memorandum it said “... this coat of arms was preserved, with modifications, by the Savoy monarchy, the first Republic, the Bourbon restoration and the Republic of 1931. With the establishment, by the glorious national revolution of 1936, of a new state, radically different in its essence from the one it has come to replace, it is necessary to reflect it in the national emblems”.

Article 1. Spain is constituted with the heraldry of the Catholic Monarchs, substituting the arms of Sicily for those of the ancient Kingdom of Navarre, thereby integrating the coats of arms of the groupings of medieval states that make up present-day Spain.

Article 2. The coat of arms of Spain shall be described as follows: Quarterly, the first and fourth, quartered also; first and fourth, gules a castle Or crenellated with three battlements, with three towers with three battlements each, masoned sable and clarified azure; second and third, argent a lion rampant gules crowned Or; langued and armed of the same. Second and third, party per pale, the first, or four pales gules; the second, gules a chain Or of eight segments that meet in the centre in a jewel, centred with an emerald. Pointed in point, argent a pomegranate Or slashed gules and leafed with two leaves vert. A crowns of eight fleurons (five visible). The whole on the eagle displayed of St. John sable, nimbate Or; the beak and talons of gules, the latter armed Or. To the right of the eagle’s tail, a yoke gules, with its



Top, *Figure 40*: arms of Francoist Spain, source Wikimedia Commons; below, *Figure 41*: arms of Juan Carlos I and Felipe VI as drawn by the author.

THE COAT OF ARMS OF SPAIN

ribbons of the same, and to the left a bundle of arrows, gules, with its ribbons of the same. The motto “Una Grande Libre” (One Great Free). The whole flanked by two columns of silver, on waves of azure surmounted by gold crowns. On the right-hand side, a ribbon with the word “Plus”; on the left-hand side, another with the word “Ultra”.

The decree cited adds that the coat of arms, as described, “has its proper place in those places where the national emblem can be represented in a relatively large size, or beautifully drawn or engraved, but its excessive complication makes it unsuitable for the summary and sometimes careless representation which is usually employed for bureaucratic attentions. For this reason, it seems advisable to admit, for these purposes, a simplification which, while containing all the essential elements of the great coat of arms, is easier to represent”. A Decree of 11 October 1945 illustrated the arms and showed the two mottos on ribands gules (**Figure 40**). With minimal change this coat of arms remained in force until 1981, and is the one that appears in the signed copy of the 1978 Constitution.

Juan Carlos I (1975–2014) and Felipe VI (2014–today) of Bourbon

In 1981, after six years of democratic rule, with Juan Carlos I reigning, Law 33/1981 of 5 October 1981 was passed, which established a new coat of arms for Spain. The criterion for the new arms was to ... “faithfully reproduce the Historic Coat of Arms of Spain, with a description that, in heraldic terms, is at the same time intelligible to the people”. As on other occasions, the opinion of the Royal Academy of History was sought.

The first article of the law describes the coat of arms as follows: “*The Spanish Coat of Arms is quartered and pointed. In the first quarter, gules a castle Or crenellated, clarified of azure and masoned sable. In the second, argent a lion rampant purpure langued and armed gules and crowned Or. On the third Or four pales gules. On the fourth gules a chain Or, set in a cross, saltire and border, charged in the centre with an emerald proper. Tierced in base argent a pomegranate proper, slashed gules with two leaves vert. Accompanied by two columns argent with base and capital Or resting upon waves azure and argent, surmounted by an Imperial crown to the right, and a royal crown to the left, both of gold; and surrounding the columns, a ribbon gules charged with letters Or, on the right “Plus” and on the left “Ultra”. At the helm, a royal crown, closed, which is a circle of gold, set with precious stones, composed of eight fleurons of acanthus leaves, five visible, adorned with pearls, from whose leaves emerge two diadems with pearls added, converging on an orb azure with the semi-meridian and the equator Or, surmounted with a cross Or. The crown lined gules*”. The second article adds: “*The Coat of Arms of Spain, as described in the previous article, bears on an escutcheon azure, three lis Or, set two and one, the bordure plain, of gules, proper of the reigning dynasty*”. This is the national coat of arms still in force in Spain.