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# **Dissertation**

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*Alfonso de Valdés a univerzální říše Karla V.*

**Alfonso de Valdés and the universal empire of Charles V**

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I hereby declare that I have written this dissertation independently, using only the mentioned and duly cited sources and literature, and that the work has not been used in another university study programme or to obtain the same or another academic title.

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## Abstract in Czech

Práce se zabývá tématem reflexe problematiky takzvané „univerzální říše“ císaře Karla V. v díle španělského humanisty Alfonse de Valdés (c. 1490-1532), který mezi lety 1520 až 1532 postupně působil u císařského dvora jakožto písař, sekretář nejvyššího kancléře Mercurina di Gattinary a posléze jakožto sekretář samotného císaře Karla V. Prostřednictvím kvalitativní analýzy primárních pramenů, z nichž většinu tvoří španělsky a latinsky psané písemnosti Alfonse de Valdés, se práce pokouší objasnit Valdésův postoj k podstatě císařské moci Karla V., stejně jako k dalším dobovým problémům, které s problematikou císařského universalismu úzce souvisí, tedy ke stavu katolické církve a potřebě její reformy či k počínající reformaci. Práce je tematicky dělena do tří bloků, přičemž první z nich je věnován představení osoby samotného Alfonse de Valdés a Karla V., druhý blok je následně věnován problematice Valdésova postoje k císařskému universalismu, načež třetí blok je zaměřen na Valdésův postoj k počínající reformaci, a to včetně jeho osobního zapojení do jednání v rámci říšského sněmu v Augsburgu roku 1530.

## Abstract in English

This work is dedicated to the topic of reflection of the idea of the so-called “universal empire” of the emperor Charles V in work of Spanish humanist Alfonso de Valdés (c. 1490-1532), who between the years 1520 and 1532 worked at the imperial court first as a scribe, then as a secretary of the grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara and finally as a secretary of Charles V himself. Using qualitative analysis of primary sources, mostly Latin and Spanish documents and writings left by Alfonso de Valdés, the work attempts to uncover and interpret the attitude of Valdés towards the nature of imperial power of Charles V as well as to other contemporary topics related to the problem of imperial universalism, such as his attitude towards the Catholic church and its reform or to the beginnings of the Reformation. The work is divided into three main sections, first of which is dedicated to the introduction of persons of Alfonso de Valdés and Charles V, the second to Valdés’s attitude towards the universal empire itself, while the third deals with the topic of Valdés’s attitude towards the Reformation, including his personal involvement in the imperial diet of 1530 in Augsburg.

### Key words in Czech:

Alfonso de Valdés, Karel V, Mercurino di Gattinara, universalismus, Španělsko, Svatá říše římská, renesance, humanismus, protestantismus, reformace

### Key words in English:

Alfonso de Valdés, Charles V, Mercurino di Gattinara, universalism, Spain, Holy Roman Empire, renaissance, humanism, Protestantism, Reformation

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## Table of contents

Editorial note.....	7
Introduction.....	8
The purpose of this work.....	11
The universal empire of Charles V: a phantom, or a possibility?.....	18
The methodology and the structure of the work.....	22
The primary sources.....	27
The secondary sources.....	30
Part I:	
The world of Charles V and Alfonso de Valdés.....	32
1.1. Plus Ultra: the ascendancy of Charles V.....	32
1.2. Spain of the Renaissance and Spain of the Counter-reformation.....	34
1.3. Alfonso de Valdés – the man and his imperial career.....	38
1.4. The dialogues of Valdés.....	43
Part II:	
Establishing the universal monarchy – fight for supremacy against France and the papacy.....	49
2.1. The great mentor and the architect of the universal empire: Mercurino di Gattinara.....	49
2.2. The history of European universalism.....	54
2.3. The Christian empire: Alfonso de Valdés and imperial universalism.....	61
2.3.1. Alfonso de Valdés and the imperial chancellery.....	67
2.3.2. Promoting the universal empire.....	69
2.4. Ramón Menéndez Pidal and “the Imperial Idea of Charles V”.....	75
2.5. Dante Alighieri and his Monarchia.....	82
2.6. The kingdom of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire.....	88
2.7. The universal monarchy of Mercurino di Gattinara.....	90
2.8. The emperor as archetypal Christian prince.....	96
2.9. Sacral character of the universal empire.....	105
2.10. General council as a means of imperial policy.....	113
2.11. The fight for Italy: the empire of Charles V against the League of Cognac.....	117
2.12. Treaty with the pope – the end of imperial universalism?.....	138
2.13. The defence of Europe from the Ottoman menace.....	142
Part III:	
Between the unity and the reform: Alfonso de Valdés, universalism and early Reformation.....	147
3.1. The beginnings of the Reformation.....	149
3.2. Martin Luther: the chief adversary.....	151

3.3. Alfonso de Valdés and the reflection of early Protestantism.....	153
3.4. Alfonso de Valdés and the accusation of Lutheranism.....	163
3.5. The imperial diet of Augsburg.....	181
Conclusion.....	198
Bibliography.....	205

## Editorial note

The present work is based on linguistically heterogeneous material. In case of direct citations, the full original version of the cited material is included in the footnotes, as is the case of certain paraphrases. All direct quotations are included in their original forms, including their orthography and possible mistakes. The exception from this are some citations from Latin texts, in which the logogram “&” had been replaced by “et”, while some missing letters, usually the letters “m” and “n”, indicated by macrons in the original texts, are added. All translations from Spanish, Latin, German, Czech, Italian and French are the work of the author, unless stated otherwise. The titles of documents and publications cited in the text are left in their original form. In order to avoid confusion and to facilitate reader’s orientation in the cited material, the titles of all works cited in the footnotes are left in their full form throughout the entire text. When quoting the authors who published their studies in one of the volumes of the collection of *Cambridge Histories*, we prefer to quote directly the author of the study, with the information regarding the particular volume, in which the study in question was published, attached to its first quotation. The full bibliographical information regarding the volume is then available in the bibliography section.

*Ya se acerca señor, o es ya llegada  
La edad gloriosa, en que promete el cielo  
Una grey, y un pastor solo en el suelo,  
Por suerte a vuestros tiempos reservada:  
Ya tan alto principio en tal jornada  
Os muestra el fin de vuestro santo zelo,  
Y anuncia al mundo para más consuelo  
Un monarca, un Imperio, y una Espada.*

Al rey Nuestro Señor - Hernando de Acuña<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

During the spring of 1520, it was clear that the whole western Christendom is entering a new and rather tumultuous period. Germany<sup>2</sup> was rife with discontent directed at the Catholic church, its ecclesiastical hierarchy and even towards the person of the pope himself. This discontent was constantly fanned by numerous public critics such as Augustinian friar Martin Luther, poet Ulrich von Hutten and many others. On the other side of the world, a Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés, accompanied by *hueyi tlatoani*<sup>3</sup> of Mexicas Moctezuma II, ascended the top of the great temple of Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec Empire, and contemplated the immensity of this city with its numerous temples, palaces, schools, water channels and the enormous market of Tlatelolco. When discussing the wealth of the Aztec Empire and its abundance of gold, Cortés reportedly said to the lord of Tenochtitlán, who was soon to fully realize the bitter truth behind these words: “Send it to me, since I and my companions suffer from a disease of heart, a disease that can be cured only with it”.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile in Spain, the young king and recently elected emperor of the Holy Roman Empire Charles had so far only scarce knowledge of Mexican civilization and its immense riches, which were soon to begin to cross the Atlantic Ocean, and which would soon start to play a decisive role in funding his

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<sup>1</sup>Morelli, *La visione europea di Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara, Gran Cancelliere di Carlo V*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Throughout the text, we will use the term „Germany“ to describe the German speaking area of the Holy Roman Empire. Although Germany by no means constituted a national state in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the contemporaries clearly made the distinction between German speaking lands and wider concept of Holy Roman Empire, which also included non-German speaking lands such as Bohemia. Many contemporary Spanish authors, including Alfonso de Valdés, routinely referred to the German speaking areas simply as “Alemania” and its inhabitants as “Alemanes”, thus proving that they were conscious of linguistic and ethnic specifics of this region.

<sup>3</sup>Literally „the great speaker“. This term, which has its origin in the language of nahuatl was used to describe the governor of so-called *altepetl*, which was the basic political entity in the area of Mesoamerica in the times before the Spanish conquest.

<sup>4</sup> Sánchez, *Hernán Cortés y la enfermedad del oro*, p. 37. “Envíeme, dice, de ello, que tenemos yo y mis compañeros mal de corazón, enfermedad que sana con ello”.



armies. But at this moment, Charles had other more pressing preoccupations. In March of 1520, the emperor and his court travelled towards the city of Santiago de Compostela, where the Cortes of Castile were about to be convoked and from which Charles hoped to secure additional financial resources to fund his upcoming journey to northern Europe. After the convocation of the Cortes, the emperor planned to set sail from the port of A Coruña and to travel to his dominions in the Netherlands and then to Germany, where he was to be crowned as the new king of Romans<sup>5</sup> and then to preside over the imperial diet in Worms.<sup>6</sup> But the visit of his northern dominions and imperial business in Worms was not the sole reason for the journey towards the north. After the arrival of news concerning the planned meeting between the king of England Henry VIII and Francis I of France, the grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara<sup>7</sup> urged the emperor to travel northwards as far as possible and to meet with the king of England before he meets with his French counterpart.<sup>8</sup> This diplomatic “dance” between the three of the most powerful European monarchs of their time would characterize the coming decades. The situation in Spanish kingdoms,<sup>9</sup> however, was far from stable. Castile of 1520 displayed visible signs of discontent with the regime of its new king, which was directed not so much against the person of Charles himself, but rather towards the members of his Flemish entourage, who accompanied him to his new kingdom in 1517 and whose behaviour quickly won them considerable number of enemies among Castilians. The representatives of cities as well as the representatives of nobility demanded from Charles not to bestow administrative or ecclesiastical posts to the foreigners, as happened in the case of the richest archbishopric of Spain in Toledo, which was bestowed upon Guillermo de Croÿ, the nephew of William II de Croÿ, Lord of Chièvres and Charles’s first chamberlain, which according the Spanish 16<sup>th</sup> century historian Prudencio Sandoval caused widespread indignation, since the see of Toledo was regarded as “the best gem of the kingdom”.<sup>10</sup> The list of grievances presented by the representatives of Castilian nobility during the session of the Cortes, which took place in February 1518 in Valladolid, was indeed extensive. In total, the nobility presented seventy-four demands, which they hoped the king would address. Among other things, the nobles demanded that Charles learns the Castilian language, so that he could better understand his subjects and they could better understand him.<sup>11</sup> And while this request was soon granted, the other

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<sup>5</sup>The Holy Roman Empire traditionally conserved the distinction between the royal dignity of “the king of Romans” and imperial dignity. Being elected and crowned as a king of Romans was seen as a prerequisite for becoming an emperor.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español: De Colón a Magallanes*, p. 512.

<sup>7</sup>By full name “Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara”. While some authors prefer to use the form “Mercurino de Gattinara” or “Mercurino Gattinara”, we have decided to employ the form used also by Rebecca Ard Boone in her work *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of Spanish Empire*.

<sup>8</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 69.

<sup>9</sup>From the time of Catholic kings, Isabelle of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, Spain essentially represented a personal union between Castile, Aragon and Navarre, which was added to the union in 1512.

<sup>10</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperador Carlos V*, Libro tercero, IV. “Lo cual se murmuró en estos reinos, por haber dado la mejor joya de ellos a un extranjero.”

<sup>11</sup>Idem, Libro tercero, X. “Que fuese servido de hablar castellano, porque haciéndolo así lo sabría más presto, y podría mejor entender sus vasallos, y ellos a él.”

issues turned out to be more problematic. The representatives were also displeased with the departure of king's younger brother Ferdinand to the Netherlands, because they were convinced that he should remain in Spain until the time that Charles gets married and sires his own children.<sup>12</sup>

In the end, the Cortes of Castile eventually voted in favour of another *servicio*<sup>13</sup> and the imperial fleet successfully set sail towards England, where the emperor met first the cardinal Wolsey and the king of England himself.<sup>14</sup> But in his wake, Charles V was leaving his Spanish kingdoms, which were now on a verge of an open revolt. In Castile, this revolt eventually manifested in the form of so-called Revolt of the Comuneros (or Comunero Revolt),<sup>15</sup> which eventually ended in April 1521 with a loyalist victory in the battle of Villalar.<sup>16</sup> This armed conflict can be interpreted as a first clash between a local forces and imperial universalism of Charles V. After all, it was precisely during the session of the Cortes in Santiago, where the bishop of Badajoz Pedro Ruiz de la Mota made his famous speech, in which he extolled the arrival of future universal empire:

“Now, the glory that had been laid to rest for many past years had returned to Spain. Those who write in its praise claim that while other nations used to send tribute to Rome, Spain had been sending emperors; it sent Trajan, Hadrian, Theodosius..... and now, the empire came to Spain in search of the emperor, and our king had been made king of the Romans and the emperor of the world.”<sup>17</sup>

What exactly did the bishop of Badajoz have in mind, when he referred to Charles as the “emperor of the world”? Can we disregard it as a mere rhetorical figure or a propagandistic tool, which would be latter repeatedly overused by the court and supporters of imperial policy, or can we consider it as a hint of a viable political program and a clear vision, which was pursued by the emperor and his court? With our advantage of hindsight, we are well aware that no project of the universal empire had been successful, neither during the lifetime of Charles V nor after his death. This failure to actually unite the world under the rule of one single sovereign does not however indicate that universalist ideas did not play their role during the formative period of modern Europe, which took place in the first half of 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>12</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperador Carlos V*, Libro tercero, XVI. “[...] porque les parecía que no se debía hacer hasta que el rey se casase y tuviera hijos.”

<sup>13</sup> Spanish term “servicio” describes a sum granted by the Cortes of Castile in favour of the king. According to Álvarez, *servicios* represented one of the three principal fixed sources of income of the crown of Castile. See Álvarez, *Carlos V: El Caesar y el Hombre*, p. 221.

<sup>14</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 71.

<sup>15</sup>In Spanish: Guerra de las Comunidades. For more information regarding this conflict, see Maravall, *Las Comunidades de Castilla*, or Espinosa, *The Empire of the Cities: Emperor Charles V, the Comunero Revolt, and the Transformation of the Spanish System*.

<sup>16</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 73.

<sup>17</sup>Muñoz Gallardo, *Carlos V y el Obispo de Badajoz*, p. 16. “Agora es vuelta a España la gloria que muchos años pasados estuvo dormida. Dicen los que escribieron el loor de ella, que cuando las otras naciones enviaban tributos a Roma, España enviaba emperadores; envió a Trajano, Adriano, a Teodosio..., y agora vino el imperio a buscar el emperador a España, y nuestro rey es fecho el rey de Romanos y emperador del mundo.”

This formative stage in the history of Europe is often described as the Renaissance, the term which itself points to the supposed rebirth of classical civilization of antiquity and which describes a wide cultural movement, the movement that shaped the western half of European continent during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, and which is characteristic for its reverence to classical authors of the antiquity such as Cicero, Virgil and many others, and in general for its admiration of classical Roman and Greek cultural achievements. It is useful to note that the men and women living in this period did not literally think of themselves as living in the period of “the Renaissance”, since this term itself was allegedly created only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by French historian Jules Michelet (1798-1874). This was however not the case of the intellectual movement called humanism, which at first appeared in Italy in the course of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and which brought a new intellectual perspective in which it redefined the human being as well as his surrounding world, since even authors of the 16<sup>th</sup> century often talked about being involved in *studia humanitatis*.<sup>18</sup> The Renaissance and humanism<sup>19</sup> were later followed by a religious movement known as the Reformation, which unlike the Renaissance and humanism, which had both its roots in Italy, started to develop in German speaking area of the Holy Roman Empire at the end of the second decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and which soon spread to Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Switzerland and even to France. Although the main protagonists of the Reformation often shared certain opinions with humanists and often criticized the church or the papacy on similar grounds, it would be a mistake to classify the Reformation as a mere extinction of the Renaissance. On the other hand, it is undeniable that both movements clearly tried to bring the change to the Christian world, the change whose necessity was perceived by many, but whose exact nature was always contested. Some had believed that the best way to change the world for better was to unite it under the rule of one supreme monarch. Among those, we can find a young Castilian courtier named Alfonso de Valdés.

### The purpose of this work

What is then, the main motivation for writing this work, and more importantly, what is its main purpose? Why choose this particular topic of imperial universalism? How exactly is this topic related to the person of Alfonso de Valdés? Before elaborating further, it must be stated here that in the course of writing this work, its topic underwent a certain revision. In its initial stage, it was planned to undertake a study of the phenomenon of imperial universalism during the reign of Charles

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<sup>18</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 42. The term “the renaissance” was also used by Victor Hugo as soon as in 1831, see Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, p. 281-298.

<sup>19</sup>For a closer definition of the term „humanism“ itself, we may use the definition of Norman Davies, who characterised humanism as “an intellectual movement”, which was characteristic by a shift from medieval theocratic world-view to an anthropocentric world-view of the Renaissance. Davies further mentions a work of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), entitled *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, as a manifesto of this new movement. See Davies, *Evropa*, p. 497-498.

V in its entirety. Although a study of this type could be without a doubt very contributive, it would face a great danger to be superficial and descriptive rather than being innovatory. After all, the person of the emperor Charles V himself as well as the general history of his reign have already been an object of research of various historians, to some of whom we are going to refer throughout our work. The same could be said, although in significantly lesser degree, about the person of his grand chancellor, Mercurino di Gattinara, who is generally, although not unanimously, perceived as the main architect of the project of the universal empire.<sup>20</sup> In this context, it makes much more sense to focus on one particular person, who spent a great part of his productive years as a member of the imperial court and whose work can be illuminative while studying the imperial politics and self-presentation of the court of Charles V, but whose contribution to the history has so far not been studied that thoroughly. This person is Alfonso de Valdés.

It is important to note that the present work is not based in any new discovered material. It is very well possible that some of the letters or other writings left by Alfonso de Valdés, or those who closely collaborated or maintained corresponded with him, still remain undiscovered in the archives throughout the European continent. The prevailing circumstances, the international situation and various restrictions, which were imposed by majority of European countries after the outbreak of so-called coronavirus pandemic during the spring of 2020, which in some form persisted even to 2022, made it almost impossible to try to localize these eventual new sources. This is however not the cause for great concern. It is naturally true that our knowledge of life and work of Alfonso de Valdés would be enhanced by eventual discoveries of so far lost pieces of his correspondence, but even today, the most substantial part of his work is available to us thanks to the work and dedication of those scholars and scientists, such as Fermín Caballero or Ángel Alcalá, who systematically collected it and made it accessible in various editions. This work thus draws mainly on material previously published in these critical editions, with exception of Latin document *Pro divo Carolo*, which remains unedited as of now, but whose various 16<sup>th</sup> century prints are nonetheless available for research.

One of the main obstacles for the research of the topic of the universal empire of Charles V has traditionally been the linguistic question. As is apparent by the very nature of the empire of Charles V, available sources dating from this period are linguistically quite heterogeneous. The languages used in correspondence, political pamphlets or administrative documents are written mostly in Spanish, French, German, Italian or in Latin, making it rather difficult for researchers with the knowledge of just one or two of these languages to make use of all available material. This is, however, not the case of the present work, which is based mainly on Spanish and Latin material, but which also occasionally draws on the material written in or translated to German and French.

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<sup>20</sup> Some authors prefer to use the term “universal monarchy” or its Latin form, “monarchia universalis”, which are generally interchangeable with the term “universal empire”, for which we have opted.

One of the central aims of this work is to advance the research in the area of Spanish humanism and also to increase the awareness of the person of Alfonso de Valdés himself, who, despite being in his time rather important member of the imperial court of Charles V, remains relatively “unknown”, however difficult it may be to define his notoriety precisely. We may however note that while some biographers of Charles V or authors who dedicate their works to the person of Mercurino di Gattinara give some attention to Alfonso de Valdés,<sup>21</sup> or that they at least mention him, some other authors do not acknowledge his role at the imperial court or even his mere existence at all.<sup>22</sup> This insufficient attention which Alfonso de Valdés so far received is in itself sufficient reason to examine his work and his ideas more closely. The study of the work of Alfonso de Valdés will also help to create clearer and more nuanced picture of the imperial court of Charles V. After all, this court, which during the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century functioned as one of the most important power centres of the entire world, was not limited to the persons of Charles V or his grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara but hosted a great number of other significant men likes of Francisco de Cobos, Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle, Antoine de Granvelle, Juan Garcia Loaysa y Mendoza, Alfonso de Valdés and many others.

On a more general level, the topic of Spanish humanism is in our mind important mainly because it shows the face “the other” Spain than that associated with so-called Counter-Reformation and religious intolerance, which prevailed in Spain as well as in some other European countries in the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Spanish humanism was naturally not an isolated phenomenon, which is apparent by the mere amount of contacts which Spanish humanists such as Alfonso de Valdés had with their European counterpart, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam.

In order to define the purpose of our work precisely, we may state that throughout our work, we will aim to answer the main following research question: What was the exact attitude of Alfonso de Valdés towards the project of universal empire of Charles V, or more precisely, what was the content of the “universalist ideology” of Alfonso de Valdés? This broader research question can then be supplemented by two other subquestions, the first of which is: Did Alfonso de Valdés develop and project his ideas independently of other members of the imperial court, especially the grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara, or did he just disseminate the ideas whose content was outlined by someone else? Our second subquestion is: What was the attitude of Alfonso de Valdés towards the Reformation, whose beginning coincided with the beginning of the reign of Charles V? Before discussing the selected methodology, we will pay a closer attention to the problem of the study of “universalism” itself and the significance of this topic in today’s world.

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<sup>21</sup>This group of authors includes for example Geoffrey Parker, John M. Headley, Rebecca Ard Boone or Manuel Fernández Álvarez. We will discuss the work of these authors further throughout our work.

<sup>22</sup>As an example of this, we may mention otherwise contributive dissertation of Vladimir Schnurbein, entitled *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V.*

Firstly, it may seem legitimate to ask whether the topic of universalism is even worth of studying at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After all, no truly “universal” empire had ever been established and after the end of The Thirty Years’ War, the international relations in the western world took form of the power balance between various more or less equally powerful states, generally referred to us “powers”.<sup>23</sup> Not all of these powers were national states, as is evident from the example of Habsburg central-European empire, which presented a highly heterogeneous mixture of nationalities and linguistic groups, although it is undeniable that in the long term, the historical development in modern Europe favoured the consolidation of national states over supranational entities, and this development eventually culminated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the unification of both Germany and Italy, which in its turn drastically reshaped the geopolitical map of the whole continent. Did this development, however, signify the end of universalism? Not quite. Although the imperial universalism, whose last main serious protagonist had been Charles V, and which was rooted in western imperial tradition of the Holy Roman Empire as well as in the Catholic version of Christianity, lost its importance, the universalist ideas or attitudes survived in a form of various modern ideologies.

The French Revolution, which started in 1789, eventually led not only to the temporary overthrowing of the French monarchy and the execution of its king Luis XVI, but also to, partly also only temporary, demolition of feudal system and other radical social changes, some of which endured even after the restoration of the monarchy in 1815. Meanwhile, the chaotic and often bloody revolutionary period culminated with the establishment of the new French Empire headed by Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), who was crowned the emperor in 1804. Just like the French Revolution crushed the feudal system, Napoleon and his armies intended to crush the prevailing system of international relations and to establish a new system of continental hegemony. This intention however ultimately failed and after Napoleon’s final defeat at Waterloo in 1815, European monarchs managed to re-establish the system of balance of power, but only temporarily. The First World War, lasting from 1914 to 1918, not only destroyed the old continental system, this time for good, but also gave rise to two new aggressive “empires”, which unlike their predecessors did not derive their claim to legitimacy from monarchic tradition, but from hence rather unknown ideologies.<sup>24</sup> Both USSR as well as Nazi Germany sought to drastically reshape the face of European continent and to achieve an undisputed hegemony, which would allow them to implement their ideological goals unhindered by any opposition, and then eventually expand beyond the European continent. Both of these attempts to establish a new European hegemony came to an inglorious end,

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<sup>23</sup>The list of these powers tended to change over the time, while some of them, like for example Spain, experienced gradual decline, others saw their importance and power increased over time. In general terms, the list of these powers included Austria, France, England (from 1707 part of Great Britain), Spain, Sweden, and later also Prussia and Russia.

<sup>24</sup>It is of course true that the theoretical postulates of Marxism, which became a dominant ideology of USSR, were already formulated in the course of 19<sup>th</sup> century, this ideology was however not applied in practise until the success of Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917.

and while Nazi Germany was militarily defeated only twelve years after its leader Adolf Hitler took power, the collapse of USSR came some forty-five years after the end of the Second World War, mainly as a result of flawed socialist theories and its economic inefficiency.<sup>25</sup>

But as it turns out, universalism had not said its last word even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Europe, some have put their hopes into a project of European Union and the idea of European federalism, through which they hope to create some kind of supranational community, grounded in common European identity, which would eventually render traditional national states obsolete. But the fact that the prevailing system of international relations cannot be taken for granted and that it may be challenged by other means than by peaceful and democratic evolution was clearly illustrated on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, when the military forces of Russian federation attacked the independent state of Ukraine. And although the Russian military as of June 2022 failed to achieve most of its objectives, the very fact that the conflict of this kind even started is extremely significant. Even though the Russian expansionist policy probably cannot be defined as universalist in the correct sense of this word, the recent development in the eastern Europe should also serve as a reminder that the days of strive for open hegemony, so typical for early modern Europe, are not over. Despite the fact that the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> and first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw several other armed conflicts or military interventions, which often took form of an invasion and subsequent occupation of some hostile country, the main purpose of these armed conflicts was nonetheless usually either to change political structure and to remove the current leadership of the attacked country, or the exact opposite, that is to prevent its regime from being overthrown.<sup>26</sup> To see one of the world powers to attack a neighbouring country with the intention to either directly annex part of its territory or to reduce it to a virtual vassalage based on arguments that the said territory forms a part of “the same historical and spiritual space”<sup>27</sup> may not seem to fit in today’s world, yet it happened anyway.

The current political development that we observe in a real time thus reminds us that history may indeed sometimes take unexpected turns and that it does not necessarily always follows some predestined path, as some might have imagined just a few decades ago. On a more general level, it again reminds us how imperative it is to know and understand our own history, on both regional as well as on the global level, if for no other reason than to prevent the gross manipulation of history in

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<sup>25</sup> It can also be argued that other factors played its significant role in the fall of USSR, be it failed and costly military intervention in Afghanistan (1979-1989), high military expenses caused by arms race between the United States and USSR, low oil prices of the 1980s or the need to deal with the consequences of the accident at the nuclear power plant in Chernobyl in 1986.

<sup>26</sup> The notorious examples of the first case are military operation conducted in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, while the example of the second case is Russian intervention in Syria, which began in September 2015 and whose purpose was to save Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad from being overthrown by Islamist rebels.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from the official English translation of the article allegedly written by the president of Russian federation Vladimir Putin himself and published on the official website of Kremlin. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>

order to justify violent expansionist politics. And last but not least, it also shows us that it is indeed imperative to understand what the spiritual roots European civilisation really are.

Why then choose the topic of the universal empire of Charles V and the person of Alfonso de Valdés? One of the main goals of this work is to advance the study of the person of Alfonso de Valdés. So far, the person of Alfonso de Valdés has received the attention of historians who conducted studies of other historical personages, whose paths in some way crossed with that of Alfonso de Valdés, such as Charles V, Mercurino di Gattinara or Johannes Dantiscus,<sup>28</sup> while the works that are dedicated to Alfonso de Valdés himself are mostly editions of his works. Although these editions could indisputably serve as a valuable source of information, they are mostly product of the 20<sup>th</sup> or even the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and thus may not reflect some more recent findings or advances in the historical research. We are thus convinced that the person of Alfonso de Valdés and his work deserves closer attention and for this reason, and we aim to offer a modern interpretation of his ideas and thoughts, which would reflect the current state of research.

It must also be stated that our main purpose is not to find out whether Alfonso de Valdés supported the universalist project of Charles V or not, but as we have already stated earlier, our aim is rather to discover the precise content of Valdés philosophy related to the project of the universal empire. The role of Alfonso de Valdés as an influential propagandist of Charles V and one of the main supporters of the idea of the establishment of the universal empire had been already recognized by various authors, such as John M. Headley,<sup>29</sup> Rebecca Ard Boone,<sup>30</sup> Manuel Fernández Álvarez,<sup>31</sup> Hugh Thomas,<sup>32</sup> Krzysztof J. Odyńiec<sup>33</sup> or Ramón Menéndez Pidal,<sup>34</sup> and although some of these authors differ in their opinions regarding the precise nature of “the imperial idea” of Charles V and the role his various counsellors had in its making, they all basically agree on the fact that Alfonso de Valdés acted as one of the main proponents of imperial universalism. Trying to determine whether Alfonso de Valdés supported the universal empire of Charles V would thus be superfluous, because this particular question was already answered before. Our main purpose is therefore not to answer “if”, but rather “how”. We are going to try to discover and to reconstruct, if possible, the vision and the concept of the universal empire Alfonso de Valdés had, to discover in which way he understood the nature of the imperial power, which arguments he used in favour of Charles V and to reconstruct the historical role of the emperor, which he ascribed to his sovereign. We must also consider the fact

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<sup>28</sup>The attention to the person of Alfonso de Valdés is paid mainly by John M. Headley and Rebecca Ard Boone, both of whom dedicated their works to the study of the person of Mercurino di Gattinara, while Krzysztof J. Odyńiec, writing about Johannes Dantiscus, dedicated a small subchapter in which he discusses the person of Alfonso de Valdés. See *Odyńiec, Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 172-178.

<sup>29</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 81.

<sup>30</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V, el Cesar y el Hombre*, p. 208-209.

<sup>32</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 40.

<sup>33</sup>Odyńiec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 161.

<sup>34</sup>Pidal, *Idea Imperial de Carlos V*, p. 9-35.



that Alfonso de Valdés lived and wrote in a historical situation, which was quite unique from a point of view of Spanish history, because Spain, or more precisely the kingdoms that formed it like Castile and Aragon, had never before or after been ruled by a prince who had been at the same time the king of Spain as well as the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>35</sup> In a person of Alfonso de Valdés, several identities converged. Valdés was a Spaniard, or better said Castilian, but he was also a *converso*, that means a Christian, whose ancestors converted to Christianity from Judaism, which made him a representative of “the other” Spain. He was a Catholic, but he was also a humanist and a follower of Erasmus, and above all, he was a co-author of a new political program for the whole Europe.

As a person who lived and worked in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Alfonso de Valdés was a deeply religious person, arguably even more than most of his contemporaries. To understand his philosophy without delving deeper into the religious questions with which Valdés occupied himself would be impossible. It might be even claimed that he viewed the secular as well as the sacral aspect of the world as being so intertwined as to be indistinguishable. Therefore, in the course of our work, we will pay attention to some particular questions which may not seem to be directly connected to the topic of the universal empire, but which play nonetheless an important role in understanding the philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés.

It must be also noted that the study of the epoch of the Renaissance draws attention to the question of language. And although much of the material that we have at our disposal and that we are going to use throughout our work was written in vernacular, in our case mostly in Spanish, much of it is also written in Latin. Often dubbed as “dead language”, Latin is sometimes viewed by some as an archaic relict of the past, which has nothing left to offer in our gloriously modern and progressive times. This is obviously not true. From the point of view of a historian, at least rudimentary knowledge of Latin is often necessary to access the primary sources needed for the research. Furthermore, knowledge of a language in which men and women of the past used to express their thoughts helps to understand these thoughts more clearly, to understand them in a way which cannot be fully guaranteed by their translations, however good they are.

As was explained by German Latinist Wilfried Stroh, the supposed “death” of Latin language is what actually preserved it. Whereas all languages tend to evolve and change, it thus becomes more and more difficult over centuries to understand them by speakers of their modern versions, Latin remained essentially same as it was in the period of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.<sup>36</sup> Latin language thus act as a key to the vast treasure of knowledge collected by some of the most brilliant minds who helped to build the European civilization over the period of time spanning roughly over two millennia.

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<sup>35</sup> Technically, the imperial title was claimed by the king of Castile Alfonso X (r. 1252-1284), but he never managed to actually exercise this office. See Chalupa, *Dějiny Španělska*, p. 124.

<sup>36</sup> Stroh, *El latín ha muerto, ¡viva el latín!*, p. 127-128. “A la vez que su expansión global, se produjo la “muerte” del latín, al menos del literario; es decir, que ya en esa época se consolidó y adquirió la forma inalterada que presenta hoy en día.”

Humanists of the 16<sup>th</sup> century greatly valued Latin, which is easily attested by the fact that they employed it as a language in which they used to communicate with each other, even in cases when they could have done so in vernacular. Ignoring the importance of Latin while writing about the epoch of the Renaissance would thus be gross mistake.

### The universal empire of Charles V: a phantom, or a possibility?

In order to achieve the purpose of our work, it is necessary to first define the term “universalism” itself, which we are going to use in connection with the project of universal empire of Charles V. In order to do that, we are going to rely on our own definition of this particular term. We suggest that the adjective “universalist” can be used in order to describe either a set of ideas, not necessarily of political nature, or a particular political program, which aims, at least on a theoretical level, to encompass the whole world. Broadly speaking, universalism can be further described as consisting of three different sub-variants, which can be classified as political, religious and spiritual, although all these three categories can and often indeed do overlap each other, as it was in the case of the project of the universal empire of Charles V, which effectively combined political as well as religious elements. The term “universalism” is closely related to the term “hegemony”, although the difference between the two lies in the fact that hegemony can be restricted just to a limited part of the world, or a continent and it is often void of universalist pretensions.

The principal aim of political universalism is to establish a certain type of political authority, which would encompass or would be recognized as supreme throughout the whole world. This does not however necessarily imply the creation of some kind a global superstate, nor does it rule out the existence of various lesser autonomous entities, subordinated to one supreme authority. The good example of this kind of authority, which theoretically acted as universal, is the institution of the Holy Roman Empire, whose emperor, at least on a theoretical level, acted as a supreme secular representative of the whole Christian world. In practical terms, most of Christian emperors however lacked necessary power and means to actually fully exercise its authority. Not only were they forced to contend with other secular princes, but they also often had to struggle with representatives of spiritual power, such as popes or bishops, as well as with the external forces operating outside the Christian world. Medieval western emperors also had to take into account the existence of the Eastern-Roman Empire,<sup>37</sup> which lasted until 1453 and which was making the same universalist claims.

One of the key principles of political universalism is hierarchy of power. In short, the idea of the universal empire supposes the establishment of some kind of hierarchy of power, or at least hierarchy of dignity, between various political entities. The summit of this hierarchy is represented

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<sup>37</sup>The Eastern-Roman empire, whose capital city was Constantinople, is often incorrectly referred to as “Byzantine Empire”.

by a singular entity, in this case the ruler of the universal empire, who theoretically acts as a supreme global authority. It is necessary to add “theoretically”, because as we have already mentioned, no empire ever managed to actually achieve ascendancy over the whole world. This was recognized by Kołodziejczyk and Fibiger Bang in their collection of essays dedicated to the topic of the universal empire, in which they claimed, while referring to the Holy Roman Empire and Qing Empire,<sup>38</sup> which existed in China: “These empires in short, represented a hierarchical ordering of diversity and were frequently presented as the embodiment of divine and civilisational order.”<sup>39</sup>

This idea stands in contrast with the system of international relations based on balance of power, which in Europe was fully established with the ratification of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648,<sup>40</sup> and which in some form continues to form the basis for international relations even in a present time,<sup>41</sup> although some authors prefer to describe the current system as “Post-Westphalian”.<sup>42</sup> The new Westphalian system naturally did not appear all of sudden in 1648. Rather, it is a result of long-time development, whose beginning can be traced back to the late medieval epoch.

Mere extent of power, however great it might be, is insufficient to classify a certain political entity as universalist, in case that it lacks theoretical universalist aspect. In this way, it would be a mistake to classify the British Empire of the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century as universalist, despite its undeniable political, military and economic power as well as its territorial extent, because British Empire did not define itself as a supreme representative of Christian world nor did it make any other universalist claim, at least not explicitly.

The term “religious universalism” can be used while referring to those religions whose explicit aim, which is usually codified in their sacral texts, is to eventually encompass the whole world. Beside Christianity, this term applies also to Islam. Both Christianity and Islam are monotheistic religions, which means that their adherents believe in the existence of one supreme God, who in a metaphysical sense acts as an ultimate authority. Monotheistic religions to huge extent favour the emergence of political universalism, because their religious doctrine, which supposes the existence of one supreme God, makes it relatively easy to argue that this hierarchical ordering of the creation should be reflected within the human society as well. As we will see throughout our work, Christian medieval imperial

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<sup>38</sup> The name of this empire comes from its ruling dynasty, which reined in China from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>39</sup> Fibiger Bang, Kołodziejczyk, *Universal empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Oğurlu, *Understanding the Distinguishing Features of Post-Westphalian Diplomacy*, p. 176. “The basis of modern international relations was established by the 1648 Westphalian Peace Treaties, which mark the birth of nation states as the privileged and primary actors, replacing the medieval system of centralized religious authority with a decentralized system of sovereign states as the sole legitimate form of sovereign authority.”

<sup>41</sup> It may be argued that current Russian aggression against Ukraine and attempts to achieve the hegemony over the whole eastern, and possibly central Europe as well, presents a challenge against this system of international relations in a similar way, in which it was challenged by Nazi Germany during the Second World War.

<sup>42</sup> The distinction between Westphalian and Post-Westphalian system is applied for example by Oğurlu in his article *Understanding the Distinguishing Features of Post-Westphalian Diplomacy*.

universalism, whose development culminated during the time of Charles V, essentially combined both political and religious aspects of universalism.

The term “spiritual universalism” is probably most difficult to define, because it presents a relatively loose and vague category, whose use would be the most relevant in a study of modern times with its secular ideologies. Generally speaking, this term could be used to describe any set of commonly shared ideas of non-religious nature, which are perceived as being universally valid, such as for example the conviction of universal validity of human rights.

In a context of western half of European continent, the situation had been for a long time complicated by existence of dualism between temporal and spiritual power, which distinguished it from the Eastern-Roman Empire, whose emperor also acted as the head of the church, or from Islamic caliphate, whose caliphs also held the supreme authority in both temporal as well as spiritual matters.

How can we then define the project of the so called “the universal empire” of Charles V and how and in which way is this idea connected to the emergence of the Renaissance, humanism and the Reformation? In his doctoral thesis entitled *Jardin de l'Empire et clef de la monarchie universelle: l'Italie au cœur du projet de Mercurino Gattinara*,<sup>43</sup> Quentin Jouaville noted the fact that the universalist ideology of the imperial court of Charles V, whose main authorship is generally ascribed to Mercurino di Gattinara, was not some static or fixed set of ideas, but that is instead represented a dynamic and constantly evolving concept, while he wrote: “[...] it would be wrong to believe that his concept [of the universal monarchy] is fixed. He [Gattinara] has, throughout his memoirs and the political action that he undertook, adjusted it according to events, circumstances and his intellectual progress. The universal monarchy is not a singular program, but rather the expression of several, sometimes political, sometimes spiritual and religious concepts, and it was undergoing constant redefinition.”<sup>44</sup>

This assertion is certainly correct in a sense that universalism of the imperial court of Charles V did not present a well-defined program for political action but functioned rather as an overlapping political and philosophical framework, which was based on certain basic principles, but it was also simultaneously constantly undergoing a certain re-evaluation and development. As the title of Jouaville’s dissertation suggests, the project of the universal empire of Charles V is generally perceived as a creation of Mercurino di Gattinara (1465-1530), who joined the court of the future emperor Charles V soon after the ascendancy of Charles to the Spanish throne<sup>45</sup> and who for more

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<sup>43</sup>In English: „Garden of the Empire and key to the universal empire: Italy at heart of the project of Mercurino Gattinara“.

<sup>44</sup>Jouaville, *Jardin de l'Empire et clef de la monarchie universelle*, p. 11. « [...] on aurait tort de croire que ce concept [de la monarchie universelle] est figé. Il a, tout au long de ses mémoires et de l’action politique qu’il a menée, procédé à des ajustements en fonction des événements, des circonstances ou de son cheminement intellectuel. La monarchie universelle n’est pas d’un programme unique, mais l’expression de conceptions plurielles, à la fois politiques, spirituelles et religieuses, et en constante redéfinition. »

<sup>45</sup>In the course of our work, we are going to refer to Charles using his imperial title, that is as “Charles V”, not only because this form is more prevalent in literature, but also because we are concerned mainly with Charles’s empire as a

than a decade served as the emperor's grand chancellor, the position which he held until his own death in 1530.

For the purpose of this work, we are going to consider the idea of the universal monarchy as a manifestation of a specific kind of humanist philosophy, which partly thanks to the favourable geopolitical context and partly thanks to the skill and determination of some of its proponents turned into a political program, however vague and only broadly defined it was, pursued by the imperial court of Charles V. Proponents of the idea of the universal empire, including the imperial secretary Alfonso de Valdés, were concentrated mainly in a circle of intellectuals around the grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara, and were significantly influenced by the philosophy of Erasmus of Rotterdam, while Gattinara himself even described these men as the "third force", standing in opposition to both Protestants as well as the partisans of the pope.<sup>46</sup>

The emergence of this "third force" to which Gattinara referred, was made possible mainly due to the development of humanism and the Renaissance. The epoch of the Renaissance itself correlates with a period of so far unprecedented technical development, which accelerated during the 15<sup>th</sup> century and which in turn caused many political, social and religious changes. The progress in navigation culminated in discovery and subsequent colonization of hence unknown American continent. This colonization was in turn greatly facilitated by the emergence of artillery and firearms,<sup>47</sup> which not only enabled the subjugation of great part of American natives,<sup>48</sup> but which also significantly changed the way in which European rulers fought their mutual conflicts. The printing press, whose invention was described by famous French novelist Victor Hugo as the "the greatest event in the history",<sup>49</sup> appeared thanks to a German goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1400-1468) in the fourth decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>50</sup> and it in turn allowed faster spread of thoughts and knowledge and thus is generally seen as one of the basic prerequisites of the Reformation. These new technologies were also accompanied by advances in the intellectual field. The Renaissance brought back to the fore the classics of antiquity and revived the interest not only for the study of classical Latin, but also of the ancient Greek, and thus reawakened the interest in the classical philosophy. This progress also manifested itself on a field of political theory, whose probably most notorious example is the work of Florentine author Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), known as *Il Principe*, which appeared in 1532.

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whole. Some authors, especially those writing in Spanish and dealing mainly with topics set firmly in the context of Spain itself, however, may prefer to use the Spanish title and refer to Charles as "Charles I".

<sup>46</sup> Nauert, Dalzell, *The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 1658 to 1801, January 1527-March 1527*, p. 375.

<sup>47</sup>Lafaye, *Sangrientas fiestas del Renacimiento, La era de Carlos V, Francisco I y Solimán (1500-1557)*, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that certain parts of South America, for example in the south of modern-day Chile, remained unconquered until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>49</sup> Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, p. 290. „L'invention de l'imprimerie est le plus grand événement de l'histoire.“

<sup>50</sup>Davies, *Evropa*, p. 464.

In general terms, the Renaissance brought with itself a certain wave of optimism and hope for advancement and progress not only in science and knowledge, but also in practical life. According to Hugh Thomas, this optimism was shared not only by intellectuals such as Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536), who hoped for an advent of a new “golden age”, but also by a part of wider social circles, including in Spain.<sup>51</sup> This optimism was however also accompanied by significant distress caused by new menaces. One of the most obvious ones was the danger presented by the Ottoman Empire, whose forces in 1453 dealt a final blow to the Eastern-Roman empire by capturing its capital Constantinople. But the Ottomans did not stop there, but continued their onslaught on the Balkan Peninsula, whose great part they have already controlled before the fall of Constantinople, and eventually, they began to threaten even the area of central Europe, while fleets of Ottoman vassal states regularly attacked the Christian Mediterranean shores, including the southern shores of the Iberian Peninsula. But the external threats were not the only challenge with which early modern Europeans had to struggle. Despite the common threat presented by the Ottoman Empire, the early modern states never stopped contending with each other. A most telling example of this was the series of wars waged on the Italian Peninsula, which started by an attempt of the French king Charles VIII (r. 1483-1498) to capture the kingdom of Naples in 1494 and which triggered the prolonged conflict between France and Spain, the conflict which continued even during the reign of Charles V. The dawn of the new age also brought with itself a new religious crisis. We have already mentioned the process of the Reformation, whose beginning is generally set to 1517 and the publication of *Ninety-five Theses* by German Augustinian friar Martin Luther (1483-1546) in a Saxon city of Wittenberg. But the critique of the church or the papal curia was not limited to early Protestants. On the contrary, even many humanistically oriented persons, who considered themselves true Catholics, initially acted as political opponents of the pope and often presented their own ideas for the necessary reforms.

The epoch of the Renaissance is thus a time of both anxiety and hope, of danger and opportunities. Old medieval concepts mixed with rediscovered treasures of antiquity as well as with fresh impulses brought by new technologies and geographical discoveries. Many were wondering which direction should the Christendom take next. For some, the answer lay with a young monarch of the Habsburg dynasty named Charles.

#### The methodology and the structure of the work

The nature of the project of the universal empire of Charles V had been for a long-time object of interest as well as debates among historians of various nationalities. In his biography of Charles V, entitled *Carlos V: el Cesar y el Hombre*, Spanish historian Manuel Fernández Álvarez recounts two

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<sup>51</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio español de Carlos V*, p. 23-24.

main historiographical approaches towards the problematic of the universal empire of Charles V.<sup>52</sup> According to Álvarez, the first approach is represented by German historian Karl Brandi, who considered the universal empire to be a project created by the grand chancellor of Charles V Mercurino di Gattinara, who, under the influence of the work of Dante Alighieri known as *Monarchia*, then attempted to instil this idea on the emperor himself and apply it in practice. The alternative approach is then represented by Spanish historian Ramón Menéndez Pidal, who in Álvarez's words claimed that the imperial idea itself is an ancient concept, which was always present in "the environment of the princes", but who also insisted on the historical role of various Spaniards in its promotion, including the bishop of Badajoz Pedro Ruiz de la Mota, the bishop of Guadix and historian Antonio de Guevara and, what is most important in the context of our work, the Latin secretary of the emperor, Alfonso de Valdés.<sup>53</sup> In the course of all our work, we will not only discuss the ideas of Ramón Menéndez Pidal, but we will also take into account the research done by other historians such as John M. Headley and Rebecca Ard Boone, who dedicated their works to the person of Mercurino di Gattinara, but who also paid attention to the role that Alfonso de Valdés played in attempts to turn the universalist ideas of his patron into reality. We are also going to take into account the research done by various biographers of Charles V, not only already mentioned Manuel Fernández Álvarez, but also others like Alfred Kohler or Geoffrey Parker, about whom we are going to talk later.

As for the time frame of our work, we will concentrate mainly on the period of years from 1520 to 1532, because this marks the time which Alfonso de Valdés spent in the service of the emperor Charles V. Although it would also be illuminating to research more closely the years of intellectual formation of Alfonso de Valdés, this is made basically impossible because of lack of reliable primary sources, which would make this research viable. We are however going to take into account the long-term development of broader intellectual concepts, which in some way contributed to the creation of a specific ideology of imperial universalism in the time of Charles V.

From a methodological perspective, our work is based mainly on qualitative research, using our primary sources, while applying both inductive as well as comparative method, while the latter was used mainly when comparing the ideas of Alfonso de Valdés with those of Mercurino di Gattinara or Martin Luther. This approach is only logical considering the nature of our primary sources, which consist of written documents left by Alfonso de Valdés or some of his associates such as Mercurino di Gattinara. It can be also argued that we are going to use the person of Alfonso de Valdés as case study in order to research the topic of imperial universalism of Charles V. Alfonso de Valdés himself represents an ideal candidate for this kind of research, because he enjoyed the personal access to the

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<sup>52</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V el César y el Hombre*, p. 208.

<sup>53</sup>Idem p. 208. "Frente a la tesis de Brandi, Menéndez Pidal sostiene que el concepto imperial no era algo inventado por el César ni por su canciller, sino noción viejísima que estaba en el ambiente de principios del siglo XVI. Para el historiador español, en lugar de la figura de Gattinara las que hay que destacar son las de Mota, Valdés y Guevara."

emperor, while being tasked to produce his Latin correspondence for six years; he was also a co-author of propagandist writings produced by the imperial court and he also left his own distinctive literary legacy, which grants us great insight into his mind. All these factors give us the opportunity to try to reconstruct the way of thinking of one of the emperor's courtiers, whose work can be regarded as a synthesis of Hispanic element with the broader idea of the Christian universal empire. With that being said, we must be cautious not to forget the fact that while Charles V ruled for a period stretching over more than forty years, Alfonso de Valdés served him only for twelve years. After his death in 1532, general geopolitical context as well as the domestic situation in Spain itself continued to evolve and change. The figure of Alfonso de Valdés thus cannot be regarded as an example of "typical" courtier for the whole reign of Charles V, but it can serve as an example of one of the main proponents of the idea of the universal empire, the idea which dominated the politics of the first decade of the reign of Charles V, but which, under the weight of circumstances and failure to score a decisive victory over France as well as to resolve the religious situation in the Holy Roman Empire, gradually lost its momentum and although the reign of Charles V always had its own distinctive universalist undertone, the hopes for the establishment of some kind of grand universal empire were replaced by more realistically looking political goals towards the end of the reign of Charles V, such as reaching the acceptable religious settlement in the Holy Roman Empire.

In general terms, the work of Alfonso de Valdés is centred around several key events, which defined the twelve years he spent in the service of Charles V. These events are the coronation of Charles in Aachen in 1520, the imperial diet in Worms in 1521, the first war with France, which ended with the imperial victory at Pavia in 1525, the failure of the treaty of Madrid and following establishment of the League of Cognac in 1526, the Sack of Rome in 1527, the imperial diet in Augsburg in 1530 and finally the defence of Vienna from Ottoman forces in 1532. Throughout our work, we are going to pay the attention to all of these events.

We are going to try to reconstruct the content of the universalist ideology of Alfonso de Valdés by paying closer attention to how exactly he presented the figure of Charles V as well as his opponents such as the pope Clement VII or Francis I of France, especially in the light of aforementioned events, by judging the arguments he made in the emperor's favour as well as the way in which he tried to legitimize or excuse his claims and actions. We are also going to try to describe, as far as our primary sources allow, the way in which the universal empire of Charles V was supposed to be constituted according to Alfonso de Valdés. We are also going to pay attention to Valdés's stance on contemporary religious issues, his criticism of the Catholic church as well as his attitude towards the person of Martin Luther and the Protestant movement in general. We will also try to reconstruct the role of Alfonso de Valdés in the negotiation of the imperial diet held in Augsburg in 1530. This point is especially important, because while this significant imperial diet already received a substantial attention from historians studying the religious history of Europe or history of the Holy Roman



Empire in particular, our research centring on the role which Alfonso de Valdés played there will add another layer to already accumulated knowledge and it will also help to reconstruct a Spanish point of view of this mostly “German” affair. In order to do that, we are going to rely mostly on Valdés’s correspondence with cardinal Pietro Accolti (1455-1532). It is natural that we must bear in mind that Valdés tried to present his own role to Accolti in the most positive way possible, while simultaneously trying to influence the person of Clement VII through his letters, obviously hoping that their content would be presented to the pope. With keeping this in mind, the letters from Augsburg offer us a great opportunity to study the thinking of one of the participants of this important imperial diet, especially considering the fact that since these letters were written during the diet itself, their content was not influenced by the knowledge of later development. And even though probably not “objective”, these letters will allow us to reconstruct the attitude of Alfonso de Valdés towards the Protestantism and his stance to the brewing conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants, as well as the way in which he reconciled the existence of this conflict with his universalist attitude.

With that being said, our work is divided into three main thematic section. The purpose of the first part, entitled “The world of Charles V and Alfonso de Valdés” is to introduce the two main personages of this work as well as the general context in which they lived and acted. We will thus briefly overview the childhood and the beginning of the reign of Charles V as well as the beginning of the imperial career of Alfonso de Valdés. We will also pay attention to the two dialogues of Valdés, which constitute the main primary source of this work. Since we will utilize these dialogues throughout the entire work, it is worthwhile to introduce the context of their creation and explain their significance before looking more closely to their particular content. We are also going to briefly overview the intellectual environment of Spain of early 16<sup>th</sup> century, especially paying attention to the humanist influences which are so apparent in the work of Alfonso de Valdés, and which also helped to form the universalist ideology of the imperial court in general.

The second part, entitled “The Christian empire: Alfonso de Valdés and imperial universalism” is dedicated to the general analysis of the universalist ideology promoted by Alfonso de Valdés himself in its geopolitical as well as historical context. Since the study of this topic would be impossible without considering the influence of Valdés’s mentor Mercurino di Gattinara, we are also going to include the chapter dedicated to Gattinara himself, which will summarize the most important facts regarding life and contributions of this statesman, but when needed, we will also discuss Gattinara’s actions or ideas throughout the main body of our work.

While discussing the universalist ideology promoted by Alfonso de Valdés, we are going to briefly go through the historical development of Christian imperial universalism itself, which started developing with the re-establishment of the Holy Roman Empire in the West by the emperor Charlemagne at the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and which subsequently developed through the interactions with other representatives of secular as well as spiritual power, especially the papacy. We

are also going to discuss the work of 14<sup>th</sup> century Italian poet Dante Alighieri entitled *Monarchia*, which through the person of Mercurino di Gattinara influenced the imperial ideology of the court of Charles V. Then, we are going to discuss the content of Valdés's work itself, while aiming mostly at the first years of the reign of Charles V, the first stage of conflict with France of Francis I as well as the conflict with the papacy of Clement VII. The nature of our topic also means that will have to pay attention to general geopolitical framework, in whose context Alfonso de Valdés set his work, such as the wars between Charles V and Francis I of France, the event known as *Sacco di Roma* (the Sack of Rome) by the imperial forces in 1527, as well as external dangers to Christian Europe represented by the Ottoman Empire.

The third part of the work is entitled "Between the unity and the reform - Alfonso de Valdés and early Reformation". We have decided to dedicate this large section of our work to the discussion over the attitude of Alfonso de Valdés towards the nascent Protestant movement for various reasons. The Protestantism represented one of the most pressing issues of the whole early-modern Christendom, an issue which coincidentally started almost at the same point when Charles V gained both Spanish as well as the imperial throne, and it also represented one of the most pressing problems with which the emperor Charles V had to deal throughout his entire reign. Although the Protestantism actually never got the opportunity to spread in Spain itself, it nonetheless deeply influenced Spanish intellectual landscape and the life in general, albeit it did so only indirectly. What actually did spread in Spain was not the Protestantism itself, but rather the fear of the Protestantism, accompanied by a firm resolution to prevent its dissemination by all means. The institution tasked with eradicating any possible signs of the Protestantism was of course none other than the Spanish Inquisition, which already had at its disposal a vast bureaucratic structure, whose main purpose was until now the control of Jewish converts known as *conversos*.

The attitude of the Spanish Inquisition and other "conservative" forces towards the Protestantism was thus clear, but what was the attitude of Spanish humanists, especially those who served at the imperial court of Charles V? How did Alfonso de Valdés personally interpret the beginnings of the Reformation and its spread throughout Germany and beyond? Did he and his fellow humanists share some of the opinions of Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon and other early Protestant theologians? What course of action did they envisage the empire should take in order to deal with the religious crisis?

In order to answer these questions, we are going to work primarily with two polemical dialogues of Valdés, written towards the end of the third decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as well as with his own correspondence, which among other topics deals with the problem of the Protestantism. We are going to focus mostly on two key events, to which Alfonso de Valdés was personally present. The first of these events was the imperial diet in Worms, which took place in the spring of 1521, and which saw the only personal confrontation between Martin Luther and Charles V. The second was already

mentioned imperial diet which took place in the summer of 1530 in Augsburg, which can be interpreted as one of the last efforts to seal the ever-growing rift between Protestants and Catholics, that actually might not have been doomed to fail from the very beginning.

### The primary sources

The main sources for this work are documents and writings left by Alfonso de Valdés himself. Most of this material is accessible thanks to the edition published in 1996 by Spanish author Ángel Alcalá, entitled *Alfonso de Valdés: Obra completa*. This edition contains a material written by Valdés which ranges from personal correspondence, Latin and Spanish correspondence of Charles V prepared by Alfonso de Valdés as well as official documents, such as *Ordenanzas de la cancellería imperial*, published in Valladolid in 1524, or an official treaty between Charles V and the pope Clement VII from 1529, which settled their mutual conflict and set ground for the imperial coronation of Charles V. Greater part of this material is written in Latin, especially official documents and correspondence of Charles V, since it was Alfonso de Valdés's main task as a secretary to produce this kind of documents. Alcalá's edition also contains two polemical dialogues, which were written in Spanish and to which we are going to pay closer attention in a chapter dedicated specifically to these two documents, and several letters which were addressed to Alfonso de Valdés by his various correspondents, such as Johannes Dantiscus or Erasmus of Rotterdam, but also a letter written by one of his principal rivals, papal legate Balthasar Castiglione (1478-1529), which was written in Italian. Although Alcalá's edition is indispensable for studies of the work of Alfonso de Valdés, it unfortunately cannot be viewed as a critical edition, on grounds that it lacks necessary annotations or commentaries to the presented material.

The great part of the documents available in Alcalá's edition comes from older editions. It is thus also possible to consult an older 19<sup>th</sup> century edition published by Fermín Caballero in 1876, entitled *Alonso y Juan de Valdés*, which served as one of the sources for modern edition of Alcalá and which, as the title suggests, contains also material left by Alfonso's brother Juan. Unlike Alcalá's edition, Caballero included Spanish translation of Latin documents, which makes this edition especially useful for those who lack the necessary knowledge of Latin language. The dialogues written by Alfonso de Valdés are also available online, courtesy of La Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes. The material published there is based on two different editions. In the case of *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, it is the edition prepared by José F. Montesinos, which was published in 1969,<sup>54</sup> while *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* is based on the edition of Joseph V. Ricapito, published

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<sup>54</sup> The text of this dialogue is available here: [https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/dialogo-de-las-cosas-acaecidas-en-roma--0/html/fede2498-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064\\_2.html#I\\_0\\_](https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/dialogo-de-las-cosas-acaecidas-en-roma--0/html/fede2498-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_2.html#I_0_)

in 1993.<sup>55</sup> Both of these texts are available with modernized orthography and as for their content, *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* differs in certain aspects from the text published in the edition of Alcalá. In some places, it outright misses certain parts of the text,<sup>56</sup> while in several other places the text is somewhat reduced. While these changes are not crucial, we would certainly recommend the use of the edition of Alcalá for the purposes of research. Part of the correspondence of Alfonso de Valdés, namely with the Polish ambassador at the court of Charles V Johannes Dantiscus, is also accessible online thanks to the project *Internet publication of Corpus of Ioannes Dantiscus' Texts & Correspondence*, which contains not only transcriptions of Valdés's letters, but also scans of their originals.<sup>57</sup>

Apart from these editions, we can also utilize the unedited document, whose full title is *Pro divo Carolo eius nominis quinto Romanorum Imperatore Invictissimo*, but which is generally known simply as *Pro divo Carolo*.<sup>58</sup> This document, which was for the first time published in 1527, is a classic example of early modern age use of press in order to influence public opinion. This document had been widely popularized by American historian John M. Headley, who discussed it in his work *The Emperor and His Chancellor: A Study of the Imperial Chancellery under Gattinara*, and according to whom this document formed a part of what Headley himself called "imperial propagandist campaign". *Pro divo Carolo* consists of two parts; while the first one is dedicated to the feud between Charles V and the pope Clement VII, the second part addresses the controversy between Charles V and the French king Francis I. After its initial publication in 1527, *Pro divo Carolo* has been republished several times during the following decades, while some versions contained only the first part. In its essence, the first part of *Pro divo Carolo* is a collection of letters exchanged by the imperial chancellery on one hand and the papal curia on the other, to which is also added a letter addressed in the name of Charles V to the college of cardinals.<sup>59</sup> All of these letters, that is two letters addressed to Charles V by Clement VII<sup>60</sup> and two imperial responses as well as the letter to the collegium of cardinals, were written throughout the year 1526, therefore *Pro divo Carolo* does not cover the cataclysmic event known as the Sack of Rome, during which the imperial forces brutally

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<sup>55</sup> The text of this dialogue is available here: [https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/dialogo-de-mercurio-y-caron-0/html/fedf5b9c-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064\\_2.html#I\\_0](https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/dialogo-de-mercurio-y-caron-0/html/fedf5b9c-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_2.html#I_0)

<sup>56</sup> The material published by Cervantes Virtual for example completely lacks the character of a young nun, who meets Mercury and Charon on her way to hell. See Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 417-419.

<sup>57</sup> The website of this project is accessible here: <http://dantiscus.al.uw.edu.pl/>

<sup>58</sup> Throughout our work, we are going to quote from the edition published in 1587, available courtesy of University of Utrecht.

<sup>59</sup> *Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 57. "Epistola Caroli caesaris ad senatum sive collegium cardinalium, in qua petit, ut negante seu differente pontifice generalis concilii indictionem, ipsi indicant."

<sup>60</sup> The authors of *Pro divo Carolo* took no chances and in fact reminded readers that Clement's letters contain false accusations, when they wrote that the publication includes "The letters of Clement VII, or, as they are called, breves, which contain all, however false, accusations against the emperor Charles, fifth of this name, that could had been collected." *Pro Divo Carolo*, fol. 7. "Clementis Septimis literae, seu, ut ipsi vocant, breve, in quo omnes, etiam falsissimas, quas potuit criminationes adversus Carolum Caesarem huius nominis quintum congesit."

sacked the eternal city and imprisoned Clement VII himself.<sup>61</sup> Some of these documents were separately included by Alcalá in his edition, more precisely the second imperial response, the letter to the collegium of cardinals and both papal briefs, which form the part of appendix; because all these individual documents, naturally barring the papal briefs, bear the signature of Alfonso de Valdés. Alcalá however did not include the introduction as well as the first imperial response, which is by far the longest and thus constitutes the core of the whole *Pro divo Carolo*. The edition of Alcalá also does not include the second part of *Pro divo Carolo*, entitled *Apologiae Madritiae Conventionis dissuasoriae pro Francisco Francorum Rege emissae refutatio*, on grounds that these parts lack the signature of Alfonso de Valdés and according to Alcalá, it thus cannot be viewed as a part of his work.<sup>62</sup>

The same, however, could be said about the first imperial response to Clement VII, which also lacks the signature of Alfonso de Valdés. We are thus forced to ask ourselves a question: who was the author of this first imperial response to the pope Clement VII? Luckily for us, this question was already addressed by none other than John M. Headley, according to whom, *Pro divo Carolo* is essentially the result of work of a collective of authors, who apart from Mercurino di Gattinara and Alfonso de Valdés probably included Alexander Schweis, Jean Lalemand and future vice-chancellor Balthasar Waldkirch.<sup>63</sup> This deduction is logical, since the early modern age, just like medieval epoch that preceded it, lacked our modern view concept of authorship, it is however more than likely that the final version Latin text was written personally by Alfonso de Valdés, who at that time already worked as a personal secretary of Charles V and who was charged with producing official Latin correspondence and documents. This is further supported by the preface to the edition published in Mainz in 1527, which explicitly mentions Valdés's name as the author of the text.<sup>64</sup> Rebecca Ard Boone also considers the text of *Pro divo Carolo* to be a work of Alfonso de Valdés, but she also notes that it is nonetheless problematic to fully differentiate between the grand chancellor Gattinara and Alfonso de Valdés, claiming that "Valdés was the personal secretary to Gattinara, so it is very difficult to distinguish the words and ideas of the secretary from those of the chancellor".<sup>65</sup> There is also evidence that even the Polish ambassador Johannes Dantiscus, along with Cornelius Schepper, counselled Valdés with the preparation of the text which later formed a part of *Pro divo Carolo*, as is apparent from a letter sent by Valdés to Dantiscus from Granada at the beginning of October 1526. This letter, in which Valdés mentioned his request to Gattinara, demanding whether he can "make

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<sup>61</sup>The official privilege which sanctioned the publication of *Pro divo Carolo* was published in Valladolid on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1527, that means two months before the Sack of Rome. See Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 69-71.

<sup>62</sup>Alcalá in Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. XXXII.

<sup>63</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 94.

<sup>64</sup>This edition of *Pro divo Carolo* is available online, courtesy of Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum, at <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb11064724?page=1>

<sup>65</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 152.

some changes in his apology”<sup>66</sup> further supports the notion that *Pro divo Carolo* was essentially a collective enterprise of Gattinara’s circle, while the choice of words, indicating that the apology was “Gattinara’s” (in sua Apologia) likely points to the fact that the whole project was initiated and oversaw by the grand chancellor. We must nonetheless naturally treat a source such as *Pro divo Carolo* cautiously, since as an official document with multiple authors, it does not contain the personal opinions of Alfonso de Valdés, but rather the arguments that the imperial court wanted to present to the wider European public. On the other hand, as we will see further throughout our work, there is no reason to suspect that the personal opinions of Alfonso de Valdés significantly differed from those that were expressed by the imperial court.

As for the primary sources which are useful for the studies of the reign of Charles V, we may rely on a three volume Spanish edition prepared by Manuel Fernández Álvarez, which was published in Salamanca in 1981 under the title of *Corpus Documental de Carlos V*, as well as the German edition prepared by Alfred Kohler, entitled *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V*,<sup>67</sup> which contains not only the correspondence of Charles V himself and official documents published in the course of his reign, but also great number of documents addressed to Charles himself, including various writings of Mercurino di Gattinara.

As for the other primary sources, we may mention Gattinara’s early writing known as *Oratio Supplicatoria*, written in 1516,<sup>68</sup> whose significance we will discuss later in our work. Although we do not have the full text of *Oratio*, we are able to use its parts quoted by Rebecca Ard Boone in her publication. This publication also includes an English translation of Gattinara’s autobiography.<sup>69</sup>

### The secondary sources

The literature which deals with the topic of life and reign of Charles V is so abundant that it would be meaningless to list it in its full extend. Instead, we can mention several key publications, which deal with the person of Charles V. Among those, the probably most famous is the biography written by a German historian Karl Brandi, entitled *Kaiser Karl V.: Werden und Schicksal einer Persönlichkeit und eines Reiches*, which was initially published in 1937. As we have already mentioned, it was Brandi who drew the attention to the importance of the figure of Mercurino di Gattinara and who suggested that his goal was actually the formation of “the universal empire”. From

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<sup>66</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 55. [...] impetravi a domino cancellario, ut possim in sua Apologia aliquid immutare, dummodo maneat substantia prout est. Ego vero nollem quicquam tentare, nisi vel Dominationis Vestrae, vel domini Cornelii adesset auxilium, hoc tamen, quanto citius fieri posset, factum vellem.“

<sup>67</sup>In English: „The sources for the history of Charles V“.

<sup>68</sup>While Ard Boone suggests that this works has been written in 1516, see Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 25, Schnurbein puts the date of its creation in 1517, see *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V*, p. 60.

<sup>69</sup> Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 75.

the newer biographies, it is worth to mention the work of Austrian historian Alfred Kohler *Karl V: 1500-1558: eine Biographie*, which was published in 1999, or the works of well-known Spanish historian Manuel Fernández Álvarez entitled *Carlos V: Un hombre para Europa*, published in 1995, or later *Carlos V: el Cesar y el Hombre*. Even more recent is a work of British historian Geoffrey Parker entitled *Emperor, A New Life of Charles V*, which saw the light in 2019.

As for the studies of the person of Mercurino di Gattinara, we have already mentioned the work of American author John M. Headley entitled *The Emperor and His Chancellor: A Study of the Imperial Chancellery under Gattinara*. John M. Headley is also the author of a study *The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism*, which was published in *Theories of Empire, 1450-1800*. This publication also includes the study of Franz Bosbach, entitled *The European Debate on Universal Monarchy*, which summarized the development of the universalism in the early modern Europe, and to which we are going to refer in the course of our work. To this, we may also add the publication of Rebecca Ard Boone *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, published in 2014, which apart from the biographic study of Gattinara also includes the English translation of his own autobiography, originally written in Latin. Works of Headley as well as Ard Boone also to some extent deal with the person of Alfonso de Valdés, whose extensive collaboration with Gattinara would make it impossible to omit him.

The universal empire of Charles V was an object of study of a doctoral thesis of Vladimir Schnurbein, entitled *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V*, which was defended at the university of Vienna in 2010. We have already mentioned a thesis with a similar topic, written by Quentin Jouaville from the university of Lorraine in 2019, entitled *Jardin de l'Empire et clef de la monarchie universelle: l'Italie au cœur du projet de Mercurino Gattinara*.

As for the studies of Spanish humanism in general, it is fitting to mention the work of French historian Marcel Bataillon *Erasme et l'Espagne*, published in Spanish as *Erasmus y España*, or the work of Austrian historian Friedrich Heer *Europäische Geistesgeschichte*, which we are going to use in its Czech translation *Evropské duchovní dějiny*.

The material based on the present work was used for publication of the study entitled *Alfonso de Valdés: španělský humanista ve službách císaře Karla V.*<sup>70</sup> in a peer reviewed journal *Historie – Otázky – Problémy* 14/2022, n. 2, published by the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague, which is about to be published during the second half of 2022.<sup>71</sup> This study, written in Czech, summarizes the basic information regarding the life and work of Alfonso de Valdés, including his attitude towards the Protestantism and his role in the negotiations during the imperial diet of Augsburg in 1530, his relationship with the grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara, his support for the idea of

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<sup>70</sup> In English: “Alfonso de Valdés: a Spanish humanist in the service of the emperor Charles V”.

<sup>71</sup> For more information regarding this journal, see <https://historieotazkyproblemy.ff.cuni.cz/en/>

the universal empire of Charles V as well as his attitude towards the contemporary problems of the Catholic church.

## Part I: The world of Charles V and Alfonso de Valdés

### 1.1. Plus Ultra: the ascendancy of Charles V

In this chapter, we are going to briefly summarize the main points of early life and the beginning of the reign of future Spanish king and the emperor Charles V, whose person became of focal point of imperial universalism of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In the context of early modern European history, the person of Charles V is significant for numerous reasons. First of all, Charles V was the first member of Habsburg dynasty to ascend the Spanish throne.<sup>72</sup> It was exactly during the reign of five consecutive Habsburg monarchs, starting with Charles I (V) in 1516 and ending with Charles II in 1700, when Spain at first finished its transformation into a first class world power, a position which it held while it was ruled by Charles V and his son Philip II (r. 1556-1598), but then also experienced a gradual decline during the time of so called *Austrias menores* (lesser Habsburgs), which began with Philip III (r. 1598-1621) and continued during the reign of Philip IV (r. 1621-1665) and culminated during the reign of Charles II (r. 1665-1700), whose physical and mental incapacity is often seen as a symbol of decadence of Spanish power.<sup>73</sup>

Although the person of Charles V symbolized an ascendancy of a new dynasty, it also symbolized a continuity with the old Spanish dynasty of the house of Trastámara. This important link between Habsburgs and Trastámara was forged thanks to the successful Habsburg marital diplomacy, which eventually gave rise to a Latin saying “*bella gerant alii, tu felix austria nube* (Let others wage wars, you, happy Austria, marry)”. And although the house of Habsburg did not actually shun from waging wars, it is nonetheless undisputable that the marriage alliance between Habsburg and Trastámara indeed changed not only the course of history of Spain itself, but also the course of history of the whole European continent, because it tied the fate of Spain to the northern part of former duchy of Burgundy,<sup>74</sup> later known as the Netherlands. The diplomatic development eventually leading to the creation of the vast empire of Charles V started several decades before his own birth.

When the last duke of the Burgundy Charles the Bold (r. 1467-1477) died during the siege of Nancy, he did not leave a male heir who would inherit his complex dominions, which included a part

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<sup>72</sup>Although Charles's father Philip I briefly reigned in the kingdom of Castile, he never controlled the kingdom of Aragon, which was then ruled by Ferdinand of Aragon.

<sup>73</sup>For more regarding the reign of Philip III, Philip IV and Charles II, see Lynch, *Spain under the Habsburgs. Vol. 2., Spain and America 1598-1700.*

<sup>74</sup>For more regarding the development and the significance of Burgundy see *Drška, Dějiny Burgundska.*



of modern-day France, as well as modern-day Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands and whose capital was situated in Dijon, the city whose significance was steadily growing during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The only heir of Charles the Bold was thus his daughter Marie (1457-1482), who recently contracted a marriage with the Habsburg prince named Maximilian (1459-1519), a son of the emperor Friedrich III (r. 1440-1493), who himself became the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 1508. Although Marie died during a hunting accident just five years after the death of her father, she gave birth to son named Philip (1478-1506), later known as “Philip the Handsome”. Philip in turn contracted matrimony with the daughter of Catholic kings of Spain named Joanna (1479-1555), who is thanks to the mental illness from which she suffered for most of her life commonly known as “Joanna the Mad”.<sup>75</sup> Philip and Joanna had several children, the oldest of whom was Eleanor, born in 1498, followed by Charles, who was born on 24<sup>th</sup> of February in Ghent, followed by Isabella, born in Brussels in 1501, and Ferdinand (1503), Mary (1503) and Catherine (1507), all of whom were born in Spain. All the children of Joanna and Philip eventually played their role on European political scene. The four sisters of Charles V became queens consort of various monarchs. Eleanor at first married the king of Portugal Manuel I (r. 1495-1524) in 1518 and after his death, she married Charles’s arch-rival Francis I of France in 1531; Isabella in turn married the king of Denmark Christian II (r. 1513-1523); Mary married the king of Bohemia and Hungary Louis II (r. 1516-1526) and Catherine followed Eleanor’s path as a queen of Portugal by marrying the king John III (r. 1521-1557). As for Charles’s brother Ferdinand, he later became not only the king of Bohemia and Hungary, but also successor of Charles on the imperial throne, being elected the king of Romans in 1531.<sup>76</sup>

Charles, who spent his entire childhood in Burgundian dominions, lacked a direct contact with his parents during his most formative years, who after the death of his grandmother Isabella of Castile in 1504 travelled to Spain, where his father Philip tried to secure his position as the new king of Castile, a project which abruptly ended with his own untimely death in 1506. The death of Philip not only significantly worsened the symptoms of mental illness of his wife Joanna, who was now essentially completely insane,<sup>77</sup> but also had a great impact on the future of Spain and the whole European continent. In immediate terms, the death of Philip allowed Ferdinand of Aragon to regain his own control over Castile, which he did not relinquish until his own death in 1516. Ferdinand even contracted a new matrimony with Germaine de Foix (1488-1536), who even bore him a son, who however died only a few hours after his birth. Had this new-born son of Ferdinand and Germaine survived, he would have eventually inherited Spanish kingdoms with all their dependant territories in

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<sup>75</sup>In Spanish: Juana la Loca. Although Joanna later became a titular queen of Spain, she spent the years after an early death of her husband in isolation at the castle of Tordesillas until her own death in 1555.

<sup>76</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 405.

<sup>77</sup>Joanna for example ordered that the dead body of her husband was supposed to be guarded by armed guards and forbade any woman to come to its vicinity, because she was afraid that these women would attempt to “rob her of her husband” even after his death. See *Álvarez, Carlos V el César y el Hombre*, p. 56.

America and Italy. Other possible rivals of Charles had died before his own birth. This was the case of son of Catholic Kings Juan, who died in 1497, as well as other possible heir to the throne named Miguel de la Paz, the son of the daughter of Catholic Kings Isabella and Portuguese king Manuel.<sup>78</sup> The whole inheritance of houses of Trastámara and Habsburg thus fell to young prince Charles.

But how was Charles V raised without the contact with his parents? As was noted by Alfred Kohler, the precise information regarding the upbringing of young Charles is rather scarce, although he suggests that the personality of the future emperor was formed mainly by his tutor Adrian of Utrecht (1459-1523), future pope Adrian VI, who himself was influenced by Dutch reformist movement known as *Devotio Moderna*. In the age of nine, Charles also became a member of a prestigious Order of the Golden Fleece,<sup>79</sup> founded by the duke of Burgundy Philip III in 1430.

It must be noted that the northern Habsburg dominions over which Charles eventually ruled did not constitute a single entity, but rather a conjunction of individual dominions, such as Flanders, Artois, Hannau, Frisia or Franche-Comté.<sup>80</sup> Beside Adrian of Utrecht, Charles spent his formative years under the tutelage of William II de Croÿ, lord of Chièvres (1458-1521), who also acted as his First Chamberlain. After the death of his grandfather Ferdinand of Aragon at the beginning of 1516, Charles was solemnly proclaimed a new Spanish king in a ceremony held in Brussels on 14<sup>th</sup> of March.<sup>81</sup> At this time, the new motto of Charles, “Plus ultra (Further beyond)”, devised by his physician Marlianus, emerged.<sup>82</sup> This motto heralded the coming of a new age as well as the immense potential, which even in his young age, many contemporaries felt in Charles.

Eventually, it took more than one year before Charles finally left for his new kingdoms, to which he at last arrived in September 1517. But as a result of a mistake in navigation, Charles did not disembark at the port of Santander, as was originally planned, but rather near a small Asturian village of Villaviciosa,<sup>83</sup> from which Charles and his vast entourage were forced to make a rather arduous journey that lasted several weeks, until they finally arrived at Valladolid, when the new Spanish king expected to convoke his first Cortes of Castile at the beginning of the following year.

## 1.2. Spain of the Renaissance and Spain of the Counter-reformation

What exactly waited for Charles in his new kingdom? Early modern history of Spain is today most commonly associated not only with its successful discovery and subsequent colonization of American continent, but Spain itself is also often viewed as the fortress of so-called Counter-

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<sup>78</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y de hechos del Emperador Carlos V*, Libro primero, I.

<sup>79</sup>Kohler, *Carlos V*, p. 42-43.

<sup>80</sup>Idem, p. 120.

<sup>81</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 45.

<sup>82</sup>Headley, *The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism in Theories of Empire, 1450-1800*, p. 45.

<sup>83</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y los hechos de Carlos V*, Libro tercero, II.

reformation. But the fact that on the international level Spain undisputedly acted as a powerhouse in the Catholic camp, while on the domestic front it strove to maintain the maximal level of orthodoxy, even at the cost of severe repressions against its own population, should not eclipse the fact that early-modern Spain was at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century also heavily influenced by the spirit of the Renaissance and humanism. In words of a famous Spanish historian Manuel Fernández Álvarez the Renaissance was “A time, an epoch, years of great studies, of men full of wisdom, full of dedication, in day and night, to the study of the books and to the speculations, conducted with pen as well as [spoken] word, who were trying to make men more wise, more learned, and in the end, more humane; as if to say better Christians. Those were the times of the Dutch Erasmus of Rotterdam, the English Thomas More, and of the Spaniards Luis Vives and Alfonso de Valdés.”<sup>84</sup>

It is telling that Manuel Fernández Álvarez lists Alfonso de Valdés as one of the main protagonists of the whole movement of the Renaissance, and although his personal fame never came nowhere near enough to that of other men mentioned by Álvarez, this claim may not be unjust.

As we have already mentioned, the image of early modern Spain is almost inseparably tied to religious intolerance, whose most famous manifestation is without a doubt the infamous Spanish inquisition,<sup>85</sup> which was established by Catholic Kings in 1478 and which continued to operate until the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was finally dissolved. Although the initial purpose of the Spanish inquisition was to monitor the behaviour of so called *conversos*, that is the Christians who converted to Christianity from Judaism or Islam, it eventually started to monitor the orthodoxy of all subjects of the Spanish crown, especially during the period following 1517, in which Spain was gripped by fear of the Protestantism. Roughly following the year 1530, the Spanish inquisition also increasingly started to persecute intellectuals oriented towards humanism and followers of Erasmus of Rotterdam.<sup>86</sup>

But who were actually these humanists, who represented “the other” face of early modern Spain? Apart from brothers Alfonso and Juan de Valdés or Luis de Vives, the new current of Spanish intellectual life was represented by names such as Antonio de Nebrija, who in 1492 published the first official grammar of Spanish (or Castilian) language, who reportedly claimed that “the language always accompanied the empire”<sup>87</sup> or cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros(1436-1517), who is notorious, among other things, for his foundation of the university in Alcalá de Henares and for acting as a regent in Castile after the death of Ferdinand of Aragon in and 1516 and 1517, and whom the Spanish

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<sup>84</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V el César y el Hombre*, p. 6. „Un tiempo, una época, unos años de grandes estudiosos, de hombres llenos de sabiduría, entregados con afán, día y noche, al estudio de los libros y a especular con la pluma y con la palabra para hacer a los hombres más prudentes, más cultos y, en definitiva, más humanos; como si dijéramos, mejores cristianos. Eran los tiempos del holandés Erasmo de Rotterdam, del inglés Thomas More, de los españoles Luis Vives y Alfonso de Valdés.”

<sup>85</sup>For more regarding the establishment and the activity of the Spanish inquisition see Kamen, *The Spanish inquisition: a historical revision*.

<sup>86</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmo y España*, p. 7-78.

<sup>87</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español, De Colón a Magallanes*, p. 98. “La lengua fue siempre compañera del imperio”.

historian Prudencio Sandoval characterized as: “a man of noble thinking, who was born to poor parents. He acted with good intentions when it came to the public good, although he sometimes erred as a man.”<sup>88</sup> Cisneros, who in 1484 entered Franciscan order, also became a confessor of Isabella of Castile and is notorious for his reform zeal, which he tried to apply in the Spanish church.<sup>89</sup>

The Spanish intellectual landscape of the early modern period was also influenced by a movement of so called alumbrados, who practised a mystical form of Christianity. As the name itself suggest, the alumbrados were those who were “enlightened” or those who “have seen the light”, which means that they supposedly managed to enter a certain kind of communion with God without a mediation of institutional church or its sacraments. Alumbrados, whose ranks also allegedly included a number of notable women,<sup>90</sup> were heavily persecuted by the Spanish inquisition, especially in the second half of the third decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and onwards and were often accused of Lutheranism or heresy. The activity of alumbrados and Spanish humanists in general was also significantly influenced by none other than of Erasmus of Rotterdam.

The figure of Erasmus of Rotterdam, probably the most widely known intellectual and scholar of early modern age Europe, casts a decisive influence upon spiritual history of first half 16<sup>th</sup> century. The influence of Erasmus is so great that it had become a custom to label a similarly minded humanist spirits of this epoch as “Erasmians”. This label is not entirely unjust, because the influence of Erasmus indeed deeply penetrated the intellectual environment of western Christendom and influenced a great number of other scholars and intellectuals, including some key figures of early Reformation.<sup>91</sup> Erasmus of Rotterdam had also held lively correspondence with a great number of other intellectuals, including those from Spain. Although he personally never visited Iberian Peninsula, the ideas of Erasmus resonated strongly in Spanish society of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>92</sup> and became a topic of a fight between friends and proponents of Erasmus on one side and his critics and detractors, who recruited themselves mostly within the religious orders such as Dominicans or Franciscans, as well as the Spanish inquisition itself. In his work dedicated to the relationship between Erasmus and early modern Spain, French historian Marcel Bataillon suggested “that which constitutes the bottom line of the debate, under the names of Lutheranism or illuminism, is the great vindication of the cult of

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<sup>88</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y los hechos de Carlos V*, Libro tercero, II. “[El] varón de altos pensamientos, con haber nacido de padres humildes. Tenía buena intención al bien público, aunque algunas veces erraba como hombre.”

<sup>89</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español, De Colón a Magallanes*, p. 101-102.

<sup>90</sup>As an example of famous woman among alumbrados, we may mention María de Cazalla, see: Real Academia de Historia: <https://dbe.rah.es/biografias/45302/maria-de-cazalla> , or Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 52-54. María de Cazalla herself denied the charge of being alumbrada. Another woman accused of belonging to the movement of alumbrados was Francisca Hernández, whose arrest and numerous denunciations led to wider persecution of alumbrados, see: *Bataillon, Erasmus y España*, p. 10-13.

<sup>91</sup>It has been argued that Erasmus’s Greek edition of the New Testament, which was published in 1516, had a decisive influence on Martin Luther’s concept of grace, which forms a key fundament of his theological doctrine. See Bainton, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, p. 88.

<sup>92</sup>The relationship between Erasmus and Spain had been a main topic of the work of French historian Marcel Bataillon entitled *Erasmus et l’Espagne*.

spirit against the ceremonial religion, vindication whose almost official herald is, for the Spaniards of that time, Erasmus.”<sup>93</sup> This assessment almost completely sums the essence for the great fight between the proponents of Erasmus and his detractors, which took place in early modern Spain.

Among the persons who were deeply influenced by Erasmus we can find for example one of the confessors of Charles V Jean Glapion (1460-1522)<sup>94</sup> or the bishop of Tlaxcala and the defender of Indians Julián Garcés or the bishop of Ciudad de México Juan de Zumárraga (1468-1548),<sup>95</sup> but also the great Spanish humanist Juan de Vergara (1492-1557) and many others, including the bishops of Seville and Toledo.<sup>96</sup> Although Erasmus himself did not support the idea of universal monarchy,<sup>97</sup> his ideas and philosophy nonetheless greatly influenced some of those who did. Among those who were deeply influenced by Dutch scholar was none other than a scribe and latter a secretary at the imperial court of Charles V, Alfonso de Valdés, who, if we will use Bataillon’s words, took a part in quest for vindication of spirit against the ceremonial religion. Alfonso de Valdés was also a man who did not hesitate to utilize Erasmian philosophy in order to strengthen the imperial claims for Charles V.

The influence of Erasmus in Spain of 1520s was indeed significant, but just as the spread of the thoughts of Erasmus attracted many of his supporters and friends, they also attracted many of his enemies. The doctrine of Erasmus even became a subject of a special *junta* of theologians, which met in Valladolid in 1527, where Cortes of Castile were being held at that time.<sup>98</sup>

Although Manuel Fernández Álvarez suggests that the activities of the Spanish inquisition were rather limited after the ascension of Charles V to the Spanish throne in 1516 well until the beginning of the Schmalkaldic war in 1546,<sup>99</sup> this seems not to be the case, because the inquisition indeed continued to persecute all kind of nonconformists throughout this entire period. As we have already mentioned, Spanish humanists were forced to fight a bitter struggle against the “conservative”<sup>100</sup> forces represented mostly by mendicant orders or the inquisition, the fight that they have utterly lost. As Bataillon suggests, the year 1530 can be viewed as a certain turning point in an intellectual history of Spain. Although Spanish humanists had to deal with strong opposition even

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<sup>93</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 55. „Lo que constituye el fondo del debate, bajo los nombres de luteranismo o de iluminismo, es la gran reivindicación del culto en espíritu contra la religión ceremonial, reivindicación cuyo heraldo casi oficial, para los españoles de entonces, es Erasmo.”

<sup>94</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 26.

<sup>95</sup>Idem, p. 520-526.

<sup>96</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 20.

<sup>97</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 50.

<sup>98</sup>Pineda, *Carlos V (I), dos acercamientos a la reforma protestante*, p. 458-459. This “Valladolid debate” should not be confused with the famous Valladolid debate between Ginés Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de las Casas, which took place in 1552 and whose topic was the treatment of Indians in America.

<sup>99</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V el César y el Hombre*, p. 236-237. “Y durante un período bastante largo, pareció que la Inquisición estaba adormecida. Hasta que la guerra contra la liga protestante de Schmalkalden y los supuestos brotes luteranos en Castilla de mediados de siglo reanimaron el fanatismo religioso, dando otra vez a la Inquisición su terrible poder.”

<sup>100</sup>We use terms such as „conservative“ or „liberal“ as a strictly descriptive tool in order to describe the historical reality on the 16<sup>th</sup> century. To make any kind of analogy between political or social forces of the 16<sup>th</sup> and modern ideologies, who originated mostly during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, would be extremely ahistorical.

before 1530, they were usually able to either hold their ground or they were at least able to continue to operate. However, from the fourth decade of the century onwards, the majority of Spanish humanists either faced persecution, even those most influential ones such as Juan de Vergara, who worked as a secretary of the archbishop of Toledo Alonso de Fonseca, or they left the country, which was the case for example of Juan de Valdés, or they recanted, as was the case of Juan de Maldonado (1485-1554). In Bataillons' words: "There is no doubt: the atmosphere in Spain changed after 1530. The Erasmians who did not sing the song of recantation like Maldonado have to suffer cruel consequences."<sup>101</sup>

### 1.3. Alfonso de Valdés – the man and his imperial career

As we have already mentioned, Alfonso de Valdés<sup>102</sup> can be counted among the typical representatives of Spanish humanism. Despite the fact of his relatively high importance, the knowledge about the personal life of Alfonso de Valdés and his youth is scarce and often even dubious in some aspects, as was recognized even in a relatively recent study of Manuel Rivero Rodríguez.<sup>103</sup> As was the case of many other Spanish humanists and significant personages of Spanish life in general, Alfonso de Valdés was of *converso* origin; his uncle Fernando de Barrera was even burned alive in 1491 for a crime of supposed *relapso judaizante*, that a "relapse into a Jewish faith",<sup>104</sup> a death which was not unusual in early modern Spain. Although we do not know the exact date of birth of Alfonso de Valdés, it is probable that he was born around the year 1490, which would mean that he started imperial service in his early thirties, although some authors such as Odyniec suggest that Alfonso de Valdés was actually born as late as in 1500.<sup>105</sup> What we know for certain is that Alfonso came from a relatively large family; he had five sisters and six brothers, among which we can find another significant Spanish humanist, Juan de Valdés (ap. 1490-1541).<sup>106</sup> The Valdés family originated from the Castilian city of Cuenca, where its members were relatively well established. Alfonso's father Fernando de Valdés (ap. 1460-1530)<sup>107</sup> held the office of Cuenca's *regidor* until 1520, when he

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<sup>101</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 74. "No cabe duda: la atmósfera cambia en España desde 1530. Los erasmistas que no cantan la palinodia como Maldonado tienen que sufrir crueles consecuencias."

<sup>102</sup>Some authors like Fermín Caballero prefer to use the version of the name "Alonso de Valdés". See Caballero, *Alonso y Juan Valdés*, p. 85.

<sup>103</sup>Rodríguez, *Alfonso de Valdés y el Gran Canciller Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara: El erasmismo en la Cancillería imperial (1527-1530)*. "Como es sabido, no disponemos de mucha información sobre su vida, gran parte de los datos que tenemos resultan dudosos o equívocos por tratarse de hipótesis que con el paso del tiempo han tomado carta de naturaleza."

<sup>104</sup>Alcalá en Valdés, *Obra Completa*. p. X.

<sup>105</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 172.

<sup>106</sup>Just like in the case of Alfonso, the writings of Juan de Valdés were collected and published by Ángel Alcalá. See *Obras completas de Juan de Valdés: Diálogos; Escritos espirituales; Cartas*.

<sup>107</sup>According to Caballero, Fernando de Valdés was approximately seventy years old when he died in 1530, since he had held the office of regidor of Cuenca for 35 years until 1520. See Caballero, *Alonso y Juan Valdés*, p. 61-69.

renounced it in favour of his other son Andrés, and other members of Valdés family then held the office of Cuenca's *regidores* until at least half of 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>108</sup>

We do not know many details about the life of young Alfonso, nor do we know with certainty where or from whom exactly did he receive his education. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Spanish historian Fermín Caballero suggested that Alfonso de Valdés may have been educated by none other than famous humanist of Italian origin, Pedro Mártir de Anglería (1457-1526), who spend great part of his life in Spain and although Alfonso de Valdés provably knew Mártir, it is unclear whether he was actually involved in his intellectual upbringing. Caballero further mentions the hypothesis that Valdés may had studied at the university of Alcalá de Henares, although neither this could be supported by evidence.<sup>109</sup> Nonetheless, both of these suggestions are not exactly baseless. After all, we know that Valdés had been in contact with Mártir as soon as in 1520 and as their correspondence suggests, they already knew each other for a longer period of time by then. It is does very well possible that Mártir in some form contributed to the education of young Alfonso. As for the hypothesis that Valdés studied at Alcalá de Henares, this makes sense if we consider the fact that this university, founded by none other than Jiménez de Cisneros, served as an intellectual center of Spanish humanism, therefore the possibility of Valdés studying there, especially if we consider his humanist erudition and good knowledge of Latin, does not seem improbable, although it cannot be proven unless some concrete evidence emerges.

Caballero also suggests that Alfonso de Valdés might had traveled on his first official mission to Germany as early as in 1516, while stating that it is possible that he also met Mercurino di Gattinara there for the first time.<sup>110</sup> What is certain is that Alfonso de Valdés was with the imperial court when it sailed from Galicia in the spring of 1520 first to England and then to the Netherlands, from where Valdés wrote its first attested letter, whose recipient was aforementioned Pedro Mártir and which is dated to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1520.<sup>111</sup> During the time of his imperial service, Alfonso de Valdés steadily continued to climb the ranks of the imperial administrative hierarchy. In just six years, Valdés was gradually promoted from being an ordinary scribe to the position of the secretary of the emperor himself, when he replaced previous secretary Felipe Nicola, who left the imperial service.<sup>112</sup> There, Alfonso de Valdés rendered service mainly as a scribe who specialized in Latin correspondence. It should be noted that in the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Latin language, which was recently “revived” by learned humanists, still served as an important tool and *lingua franca* in communication not only

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<sup>108</sup>Caballero, *Alonso y Juan de Valdés*, p. 46-65.

<sup>109</sup>Idem, p. 86-87.

<sup>110</sup>Idem, p. 92-93.

<sup>111</sup>Valdés, *Obra Completa*, p. 11.

<sup>112</sup>Idem, p. 535. “[...] Yo he mandado a Alonso de Valdés my secretario que me sirva en el dicho cargo y oficio para los dichos despachos en latín, como fasta agora lo ha fecho en ausençia del dicho Felipe y es mi merçed y voluntad que por manera de provisión goze de otros tantos maravedís como el dicho Gaspar thenía de nos por razón del dicho oficio por el tiempo que fuera my voluntad[...].”

between intellectuals and members of church but was also to some extent still utilized by nobility and in official correspondence between European rulers. Alfonso de Valdés himself used Latin in correspondence with his various associates and friends, such as Pedro Mártir, Maximilian Transilvanus,<sup>113</sup> Johannes Dantiscus or Erasmus of Rotterdam, although he did not shun from using his native Spanish either. The figure of Johannes Dantiscus (1485-1548), who spent the majority of the third decade of 16<sup>th</sup> century in Spain as the ambassador of Polish king Sigismund I (r. 1506-1548) and became a friend of Alfonso de Valdés, is especially interesting, because despite being a subject of a foreign prince, he became a member of humanist cycle around the grand chancellor Gattinara.<sup>114</sup> Dantiscus is also known for his literary work *De Nostrorum Temporum Calamitatibus Silva*, written in 1530.<sup>115</sup> Even as an ambassador who served the king of Poland, Dantiscus shared some of his friends universalist attitudes and he viewed the figure of Charles V as having the potential to protect the Christendom from ever present, and ever growing, Ottoman menace.<sup>116</sup> Apart from Dantiscus, the humanist cycle around Gattinara included also Dutchman Cornelius Schepper, with whom Alfonso de Valdés also corresponded.<sup>117</sup>

Previously mentioned Pedro Mártir de Anglería was in his turn one of the most influential intellectuals and humanists of the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century who were active in Spain, although he himself was of Italian origin and moved to Spain in 1487, when he started to teach at the university of Salamanca. Mártir held a close contact with many other influential persons of his time, such as the cardinal Ascanio Sforza and even the pope Leo X (1513-1521) himself. Apart from his academic activities, Mártir also served at the royal court of Catholic Kings, in whose service he once led the embassy to the sultan of Ottoman empire Selim.<sup>118</sup> Mártir was also notorious for his good Latin, which he used as his main communication language even with Castilians such as Alfonso de Valdés.

Alfonso de Valdés spent the greatest part of his imperial service in his homeland. After the return from the Netherlands and Germany in 1522, the court of Charles V spent the following seven years in Spain, shifting its residence among cities such as Valladolid, Granada, Madrid, Burgos and others. The change came in 1529, when the imperial fleet with the emperor on board made its long-awaited journey to Italy, where Charles V subsequently received his imperial crown from the hands of the pope Clement VII. After this, the imperial court travelled northward to Germany, where Alfonso de Valdés partook in the important imperial diet in Augsburg, which was held during the summer of

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<sup>113</sup> In secondary literature, it is also possible to encounter transcription “Transilvanus”. Barring direct citations of other author, we prefer to use the variant “Transilvanus” in the course of our work. This variant seems more fitting considering that this name is derived from the original Latin word “silva”, meaning “forest”.

<sup>114</sup>For more regarding the person of John Dantiscus and his activities, see recently published doctoral thesis of Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*.

<sup>115</sup>The Latin text of this work as well as its English translation appears as the appendix in Odyniec’s thesis. See Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 234.

<sup>116</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 111.

<sup>117</sup>Caballero included some letters written by Schepper to Valdés, namely the one from 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1528 and another dated on 21<sup>st</sup> of the same month. See Caballero, *Alonso y Juan Valdés*, p. 354-358.

<sup>118</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 74.



1530. After the end of the diet, the imperial court remained mostly on the territory of Holy Roman Empire, while making short journeys to Italy as well as to the Netherlands. In 1532, upon receiving the news regarding the impending Ottoman attack and subsequent siege of Vienna, Charles V initiated a military campaign in order to relieve the city, Ottomans however broke their siege before the imperial army, accompanied by Alfonso de Valdés, arrived. This proved to be a last journey of Alfonso de Valdés, who died in Vienna, probably as a result of contracting some kind of infectious disease, on 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1532.<sup>119</sup>

The ideas of Alfonso de Valdés can serve us as a good example of Spanish humanist thinking in a time, when this humanism was challenged on one side by quickly growing Protestant movement and on the other by a growing pressure towards the Catholic orthodoxy, which later resulted in the so-called “Counter-reformation”, and which almost completely prevailed in Spain after 1530 and which, as we have already mentioned, forced many notable Spanish humanists to leave the country, while those who stayed had to frequently suffer persecution, imprisonment or even death.<sup>120</sup> Bataillon counts Alfonso de Valdés and his brother Juan among “Erasmian alumbrados”, whose activities and publications were increasingly monitored by the Spanish Inquisition,<sup>121</sup> but as we will yet see, the Spanish Inquisition actually started to pay closer attention to Valdés only as late as in 1530, that is in the time when Valdés was already not personally present in Spain. The influence of the philosophy of alumbrados on Alfonso de Valdés is also corroborated by Rebecca Ard Boone, who states that alumbrado doctrine “especially appealed to *conversos* whose Jewish heritage caused them to reject superstitions and ‘empty’ rituals”, and then names both Alfonso and his brother Juan as an example of intellectuals who were “strongly influenced by the alumbrado movement”.<sup>122</sup>

Despite the interest of the Spanish Inquisition, Alfonso de Valdés managed to thrive in his position at the imperial court, mostly thanks to the fact that he was able to maintain a good relationship with the emperor himself, who depended on him most thanks to his good knowledge of Latin. Their mutual good relationship is attested by the fact that Charles V even sent letters of appreciation to Valdés, thanking him for “the good will that you display in [despatching] my affairs, for which I thank

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<sup>119</sup>Alcalá in Valdés, *Obra Completa*, p. XXI. The claim that Alfonso de Valdés died as a result of plague was also made by Caballero, who quoted a message written on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1532 by English ambassador Thomas Crammer, according to whom the whole city of Vienna experienced a strong outbreak of the disease. This was corroborated by another Englishman named Augustin, writing from Bologna on 14<sup>th</sup> of October: “Inter caeteras causas festinationis Caesaris ex Vienna in Italiam pestis fuit in causa, quae cum multi obscuri nominis interissent, postremo Secretarius Valdesius amissit animam”, although Caballero suggests that the most probable date of Valdés’s death is 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, see Caballero, *Alonso y Juan Valdés*, p. 104-107. The testament of Valdés, included in the Alcalá’s edition, is however dated on 5<sup>th</sup> of October, further supporting the claim made by Alcalá, according to whom Alfonso de Valdés died the following day, that is on 6<sup>th</sup> of October. For the text of this testament, see Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 273-276.

<sup>120</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 58.

<sup>121</sup>Idem, p. 20.

<sup>122</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of Spanish Empire*, p. 51.

you and ask you to preserve in it. And I will not be ungrateful towards you, and I ask God so that he, in the end, will keep you, sir secretary, in his grace.”<sup>123</sup>

Besides his work done on behalf of the emperor Charles V, Alfonso de Valdés is most known for his two polemical dialogues, entitled *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*<sup>124</sup> and *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*,<sup>125</sup> to which we have dedicated an individual chapter and about which we will talk throughout our entire work. It is worthwhile to mention the claim made by Rossa Navarro Durán, who suggested that Alfonso de Valdés is actually also the author of a picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes*, which was anonymously published in 1554,<sup>126</sup> although this claim remains speculative.

What can we say about the person of Alfonso de Valdés himself? According to Ángel Alcalá, the author of a modern-day edition of his preserved works, Alfonso de Valdés was “profoundly and sincerely Christian, and religiously less anti-papal than what his political anti-papalism suggests”. Alcalá also characterized the person of Alfonso de Valdés as a tolerant mind striving to resolve the most pressing issues which were affecting Christendom, when he said that:

“[The letters to cardinal Accolti] eloquently testify of his good will, his irenicism, his conviction of the absolute urgency [of a convocation] of a Council, until all its participants arrive to the agreement on the minimum which is required by the Christian liberty, his typically Erasmian conviction of the secondary role of dogmatic divisions and theological polemics between Christians, but of the primary role of personal and social virtues: charity, tolerance, mutual understanding, humility, individual reform of behaviour and official reform of bureaucratic structure of the church.”<sup>127</sup>

Fermín Caballero (1800-1876), who was writing in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, also praised Alfonso de Valdés and his brother Juan, especially for their virtues and morality:

“Their morality, their austere way of life and their renown as being decent and good men were being taken as true among their friends as well as adversaries. In the opinion of upper classes of society as

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<sup>123</sup>Caballero, *Alonso y Juan de Valdés*, p. 441. “[...] le bon vouloir qua en mes affaires dont vous mercye vous priant vouloir perseverer. Et je non seray point yngrat envers vous priant dieu pour la fin qui vous ait monsigneur le secretaire en sa saincte garde.”

<sup>124</sup>„Dialogue about the things that took place in Rome“.

<sup>125</sup>„Dialogue on Mercury and Charon“.

<sup>126</sup>Navarro Durán, *Alfonso de Valdés, autor del ‘Lazarillo de Tormes’*

<sup>127</sup>Alcalá in Valdés, *Obra Completa*, p. XXXVIII. “[Las cartas al cardinal Accolti] testimonian elocuentemente su buena voluntad, su irenismo, su idea de la absoluta urgencia de un Concilio hasta lograr, unos y otros, la concordia en lo mínimo que exige la libertad cristiana, su convicción típicamente erasmista del papel secundario de las divisiones dogmáticas y de las polémicas teológicas entre cristianos, pero del primario de las virtudes personales y sociales: caridad, tolerancia, mutuo entendimiento, humildad, reforma individual de las costumbres y reforma oficial de la estructura burocrática de la Iglesia.”

well as in the common understanding of the people, they were seen in all social hierarchies as men as virtuous as capable.”<sup>128</sup>

A present day American historian John M. Headley, who is known for his study of the imperial chancellery and of the role of person of Mercurino di Gattinara, has described Alfonso de Valdés as being “more Erasmian than Erasmus, the chancellery’s registrar and Latin secretary, brilliantly lettered in the vernacular, and the most strident champion of an imperial messianism.”<sup>129</sup> Headley thus identified Valdés as one of the key members of Gattinara’s humanist circle, who strove to advance the cause of Charles V and whose ideas and work were under heavy influence of Erasmus of Rotterdam. The similar opinion is shared also by Rebecca Ard Boone, who claims that Alfonso de Valdés “was also a fierce defender of the interests of the emperor. He and Gattinara shared the same vision of universal monarchy, but the secretary had a talent for eloquence lacking in the grand chancellor. In fact, he never mentioned Valdés in his autobiography at all, despite their close relationship. As his personal secretary, Valdés lived in the household of the grand chancellor.”<sup>130</sup>

In a preface to one of his polemical dialogues, Alfonso de Valdés described himself in this way: “And if there is someone so curious as to want to know who the author [of this work] is, let him be certain that it is a man who sincerely wishes [to uphold] the honour of God and the universal well-being of Christian republic.”<sup>131</sup>

#### 1.4. The dialogues of Valdés

The event generally known as The Sack of Rome, committed by semi-mutinuous imperial army initially commanded by the duke of Bourbon<sup>132</sup> in May 1527, proved to be fateful in various ways. Among other things, it moved Alfonso de Valdés to write one of the most significant of his works, that is *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, which together with another work entitled *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* forms the bulk of literary legacy of Alfonso de Valdés. In his dialogue dedicated to The Sack of Rome, which Manuel Rivero Rodríguez interestingly called “a fusion of Gattinara and

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<sup>128</sup>Caballero, *Alonso y Juan de Valdés*, p. 80. “Su moralidad, su austeridad de costumbres y la fama de hombres probos y buenos, pasaron como verdades notorias entre afectos y adversarios. Lo mismo en la opinión de las clases elevadas, que en el concepto común del vulgo, en todas las jerarquías sociales eran tenidos por hombres tan virtuosos como capaces.”

<sup>129</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 81.

<sup>130</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 47.

<sup>131</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 364. “Y si huviere alguno tan curioso que quisiere saber quién es el autor, tenga por muy averiguado ser un hombre que derechamente desea la honra de Dios y el bien universal de la República cristiana.”

<sup>132</sup>Duke Charles III Bourbon (1490-1527) was a rogue French noble who previously fought on behalf of Francis I in the battle of Marignano or during the first war between Francis I and Charles V, when he captured Hesdin. In 1522, Francis I however decided to move against the duke and seize his lands, which prompted the duke of Bourbon to pledge his allegiance to the emperor, on whose behalf he then fought until his own death during the Sack of Rome. Alfonso de Valdés praised the duke of Bourbon extensively for his virtues and good service to the emperor. See Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 89; Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 407.

Erasmus, of ghibellinism and erasmianism”,<sup>133</sup> Valdés did not limit himself to the discussion of the event itself, but instead seized the opportunity to fully express his attitude regarding the contemporary state of the Catholic church as well as the Roman curia, with which he was deeply dissatisfied, and to present the case for its reform. The circumstances which surrounded the creation of this work are known thanks to the letter addressed to Erasmus of Rotterdam, written in Barcelona on 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1529, a few weeks before embarking on a journey to Italy, in which Alfonso de Valdés informed his friend about the reaction of some of his friends upon hearing the news of what took place in Rome:

“On a day when we were told that the city of Rome was captured and sacked by our soldiers, some of my friends were just having a dinner at my place, some of which [upon hearing the news] laughed, while the others decried it; they were asking me to give my opinion regarding this matter, to which I have promised that I am going to write it, while pointing out the matter to be too difficult for someone to be able or have to give his opinion at that time. They lauded it and wanted me to promise that I am going to deliver what I have promised. Thus, I am forced to deliver, and I delivered. And I give it liberally, almost playfully, and I wrote the dialog about the capture and the sacking of Rome, but in a way in which I absolved the emperor of all guilt, which I have completely assigned to the pope, or better said to his councilors; I have also incorporated a lot that I have selected from the fruit of your nightly studies.”<sup>134</sup>

The confession of Valdés that he relied heavily of Erasmus’s works is fitting, since there is no denying that both dialogues of Valdés heavily draw on Erasmian philosophy. This does not mean, however, that the work of Alfonso de Valdés lacks its own intrinsic value. On the contrary, it serves as a perfect example how Erasmian humanistic philosophy could be creatively utilized and serve as a basis for political thought, which strove to remodel the relationship not only between the Christian princes, but also between the representatives of spiritual and temporal power; in short for establishment of the Christian universal empire, despite the fact that this political goal was not shared by Erasmus himself. The very fact that Valdés chose to present his thoughts in the form of a dialogue may have been inspired by the models of antiquity as well as the example of Erasmus himself, who authored famous dialogue entitled *In Praise of Folly*, as well as the treatise known as *Institutio Principis Christiani*, which he dedicated to none other than Charles V himself,<sup>135</sup> and in which he

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<sup>133</sup>Rodríguez, *Alfonso de Valdés y el Gran Canciller Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara: El erasmismo en la Cancillería imperial (1527-1530)*; 21. „[...] fusión de Gattinara y Erasmo, de gibelinismo y erasmismo.“

<sup>134</sup>Valdés, *Obra Completa*, p. 159. “Quo die nunciatum nobis est Urbem Roman a militibus nostris captam atque dirutam, cenarunt apud me amici aliquot, quorum aliis factum arridebat, alii execrabantur; efflagitatusque ut et ego ea in re sententiam dicerem, pollicitus sum id me scriptis facturum, subindicans rem difficiliorum esse quam ut de ea sic ex tempore pronunciare quis posset aut deberet. Quod cum illi laudassent, voluerunt ut fidem darem me prestaturum quod pollicebar: coactus sum dare: dedi. Utque datam liberarem, quasi praecludens, Dialogum de capta ac diruta Roma scripsi, sed sic ut Caesarem omnino a culpa liberarem, et in Pontificem, aut verius in illius consultores, totam transfunderem; multaque his admiscui, quae ex tuis lucubrationibus excerpresam.”

<sup>135</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V: el Cesar y el Hombre*, p. 48.

tried to present an image of a “good sovereign”, something which Alfonso de Valdés later tried to replicate mainly with his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*.

The dialogue dedicated to the Sack of Rome can serve us as a comprehensive summary of the philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés. Given its relatively harsh language and arguments which its author utilized in his critique of the church, it is little wonder that the work caused uproar soon after it had begun spreading in the public. In already quoted letter to Erasmus, Valdés further described how outraged papal nuncio Balthasar Castiglione<sup>136</sup> denounced him as a heretic and a Lutheran and how he tried to secure the condemnation of his work at the imperial court.<sup>137</sup> Castiglione condemned Valdés for his criticism of Clement VII,<sup>138</sup> claiming that “the principal topic of your book is to speak badly of the pope, as everyone can see”,<sup>139</sup> as well as accusing Valdés of attacking the Catholic cult and ceremonies, defaming all those who honour the Cross, Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary, relics of the saints as well as excusing the sacking of Rome.<sup>140</sup>

Valdés also had to endure attacks from the midst of the imperial court itself, namely from one of his colleagues, the secretary Jean Lalemand,<sup>141</sup> whom Valdés himself described to be “first among the emperor’s secretaries”.<sup>142</sup> Just like Valdés, Lalemand, who came from Burgundy, but whose name hints at his German origin, already spent several years in the imperial service while continuously ascending in the court’s hierarchy. After the temporary departure of the grand chancellor Gattinara to Italy in 1527, Lalemand tried to take advantage of his absence to further improve his position; his attack on Valdés, who belonged to Gattinara’s close circle, was thus most likely motivated by inner-court political rivalry rather than by the content of Valdés’s work itself. It is also interesting to note that in a letter to Castiglione from August 1528, Alfonso de Valdés actually claimed that he showed the manuscript of his dialogue dedicated to the Sack of Rome to Lalemand himself, asking him for advice.<sup>143</sup> If true, it would mean that the actions of Jean Lalemand were driven by nothing than pure opportunism, and that he turned against Valdés only after his work has become known to the public. Nonetheless, Valdés later noted that Lalemand started to harbour “inexplicable hate” towards him.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Balthasar Castiglione is known mainly for his own work entitled *Il Cortegiano* (The Book of the Courtier), which was published in 1528.

<sup>137</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 159-160. „Subornat Pontificis Nuncium qui tunc apud nos agebat, ut me veluti hereticum et Lutheranum accuset, atque libellum Vulcano tradi petat.“

<sup>138</sup>Castiglione addressed Valdés directly by a letter written in August 1529. See Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 540-574.

<sup>139</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 542 “[...] la materia principale del vostro libro è di dir male del papa, come ognuno vede [...]”.

<sup>140</sup>Ibidem. “[...] che biasimate il culto divino e le cerimonie, e i riti cristiani, e calunniate tutti quelli che onorano le croci, e le statue di Cristo, e di nostra Signora, e le reliquie de’ santi: e per iscusar coloro che hanno ruinato Roma [...]”.

<sup>141</sup> Before coming to Spain, Lalemand served Habsburgs as a scribe at the parliament in Dôle, located Burgundy, the same institution Gattinara was president of. He gained importance at the imperial court during 1522, during the absence of Gattinara, who at that time spend in time in Calais. See Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 68-69.

<sup>142</sup>Idem, p. 159. „[...] inter secretarios Caesaris primus [...]”.

<sup>143</sup>Idem, p. 109.

<sup>144</sup>Idem, p.153. „Tam inexpiable odium in me conceperat bonus ille vir [...]”.

Lalemand first tried to achieve Valdés's condemnation by appealing to the emperor himself. This attempt however failed, as Valdés recounted in a letter to Maximilian Transilvanus:

“To this [accusation] the emperor (in his prudence of the most humane prince) said that he never saw the said book nor that he believed that Valdés would be so impious or insane to publish something which would be either impious or not enough Christian. He also said that he wanted to read the book, so that he could more justly judge it.”<sup>145</sup>

After Lalemand failed to secure Valdés's condemnation by the emperor himself, he turned to the archbishop of Seville Alonso Manrique de Lara (1476-1538). This proved to be a tactically bad move, since Manrique himself was notorious by his Erasmian inclinations<sup>146</sup> and as could have been expected, he decreed that the book did not contain any serious error which would warrant its prohibition and public burning, as Valdés himself recounted in a letter to Transilvanus.<sup>147</sup> The matter, however, did not end there. After failing in Seville, Lalemand turned to the bishop of Santiago de Compostela, but to his probable dismay, not even bishop of Santiago found Valdés's dialogue to contain any heretic material.

Soon after his failure to achieve the condemnation of Alfonso de Valdés, more precisely in December 15228, Jean Lalemand himself was accused of treason, collaboration with France and forgery of official documents.<sup>148</sup> Ironically, when Lalemand's position started to deteriorate, he tried to appeal to none other than the man he just so recently tried to brand as a heretic, as Valdés himself recounted to Transilvanus:

“[...] I however did not want to strike back, so it would not seem that I long for vengeance. But his business came crushing down and he was about to be arrested. When he found out about it, he came to me, pleading, beseeching, even begging me to help him and to restore his lost position. But I indeed was not able to help him in his hopeless situation, so he was arrested and was removed from emperor's hall as a traitor [...].”<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p.153. “Ad haec Caesar (quae est humanissimi Principis prudentia) huiusmodi libellum se nunquam vidisse ait, neque credere, Valdesium tam impium, aut insanum, ut quicquam non pium, aut parum Christianum aediderit. Se tamen velle libellum perlegere, quo rectius de his posset iudicare.”

<sup>146</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 42.

<sup>147</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p.155. „Hispanlesis autem, libello perlecto, se nullam in eo invenire causam sit, quare flammis tradendus sit“.

<sup>148</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 126-130.

<sup>149</sup>Valdés, *Obra Completa*, p. 156. „[...] reiicere tamen nolui, ne vindictae cupidus videter. Sed eo illius res delapsae erant, ut iam de capiendo homine ageretur. Quod quum ille persensisset, ultro ad me venit, orans, obsecrans, atque rogans, ut sibi auxilio essem, ut rem suam collapsam restituerem. Ego vero desperatis iam rebus, hominum iuvare non potui, captus itaque est, atque velut proditor ab aula Caesaris abductus [...].“

As for the accusation from Balthasar Castiglione, Valdés personally defended himself from nuncio's accusations in a letter written in August of 1528. At the beginning, Valdés claimed that he never intended to make his work accessible to the wider public, but that he had written it solely for his friends, some of whom then allegedly leaked it to the wider public.<sup>150</sup> Whether this statement was true remains uncertain. According to Bataillon, something similar also happened in the case of *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, written in 1528, which has been leaked and disseminated by one of the brothers of Valdés, named Diego.<sup>151</sup> Although Valdés already claimed in a letter to Erasmus that he was urged to write the dialogue by his friends, we may only speculate if he would write such a complex and relatively long text without intending to publish it, especially if we consider the fact that the stated aim of the dialogue was to absolve the emperor of his guilt for the whole event, although it may seem doubtful that Valdés would go to such lengths to defend the emperor before his friends, who after all already were on his side. On the other hand, Valdés was probably aware that the content of the book could cause its author problems, especially in the context of previous clashes with the members of mendicant orders regarding the teachings of Erasmus. Whatever his initial intentions were, Valdés categorically refused Castiglione's accusations while claiming that the papal nuncio was badly informed and actually did not even read the book:

“But if Your Worship claims that I am speaking against resolutions of the church to the detriment of icons and relics, I know that Your Worship did not see the book, because if you did, I cannot believe that you would say a thing like this [...].”<sup>152</sup>

Valdés also stated that while he himself was not a theologian, he had sought advice from various learned men, such as the grand chancellor Gattinara or doctor Coronel, who allegedly advised him to correct several passages, which although “were not impious, could had been labeled as such by some.”<sup>153</sup>

The opinion that *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* was not intended to be published but was rather written solely for the purpose for internal polemics among the restricted circle of persons, is also defended by Manuel Rivero Rodríguez,<sup>154</sup> although it remains unclear what would be the motivation of Alfonso de Valdés to seek the advice of several other persons in order to guarantee

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<sup>150</sup>Valdés, *Obra Completa*, p. 108.

<sup>151</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 66.

<sup>152</sup>Valdés, *Obra Completa*, p.109. „Mas en decir VS, que yo hablo contra determinaciones de la Iglesia en prejuicio de las imágenes, y reliquias, conozco que VS. No ha visto el libro; porque sy visto lo hoviera, no puedo creer que dixera una cosa como ésta [...].“

<sup>153</sup>Idem, p. 109-110. „[...] aunque no fuessen impías, podían ser de algunos caluniadas.“

<sup>154</sup>Rodríguez, *Alfonso de Valdés y el Gran Canciller Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara: El erasmismo en la Cancillería imperial (1527-1530)*, 30. “Todas las fuentes indican de manera incontestable que el texto no fue escrito con ánimo de ser publicado, no era precisamente un documento propagandístico, sino que era empleado en una polémica restringida a un circuito cerrado de personas, al que se dirige también Castiglione.”

that the text would not contain any serious errors, had he not intended to publish it. This action was probably motivated as an insurance against the possible future investigation by the Spanish inquisition, which several years later indeed came, but would make little sense in case that the text was not supposed to be made accessible to the public at all.

Alfonso de Valdés was eventually spared further clashes with Castiglione by the death of the papal nuncio, which took place in February 1529. Writing to the cardinal Accolti from the imperial diet in Augsburg some sixteen months later, Alfonso de Valdés nonetheless felt the need to declare that the accusations leveled on him by Balthasar Castiglione, as well as the cardinal of Osma, one of the other enemies of Valdés, were unjust, while also laconically stating that the men responsible for them already “received their pay”.<sup>155</sup>

Shortly after completing his dialogue dedicated to the Sack of Rome, Valdés started working on his second dialogue, entitled *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, which has been finished sometimes during 1528. The main purpose of this work, whose length exceeds earlier *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, was to defend the case of the emperor during his feud with Francis I and Henry VII, following release of the French king from his captivity in Madrid 1526 and his refusal to honour the content of the treaty of Madrid, which supposed the restitution of whole territory of former duchy of Burgundy to Charles. The dialogue centres around the planned personal combat between Charles and Francis, which was supposed to take place somewhere on the border between France and Spain, which however never took place. *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* was also utilized by Valdés to present his own view on the problem of morality and human salvation, which he demonstrated on the example of various souls of dead people, who were making their way either to heaven, or to hell.

Despite the fact that efforts made by Lalemand and Castiglione in order to secure the condemnation of Alfonso de Valdés failed, the dialogues of Valdés eventually earned the interest of the Spanish inquisition, which was almost inevitable outcome. The inquisition however did not start to seriously consider the dialogues until 1531. By that time, Valdés had already left Spain and accompanied the emperor first to his imperial coronation in Italy and then to German lands. Valdés thus found himself outside the Inquisition’s reach and avoided the fate that befell Juan de Vergara and many other notable humanists, who often had to endure several years of imprisonment before their trials even began. Whether the same fate would befall Valdés, who worked as a personal secretary of the emperor himself is a question, to which we will never know the answer.

The dialogues of Valdés nonetheless continued to exert their influence even after the death of their author. In 1545, in the same year when the council of Trent started, an Italian translation of both

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<sup>155</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 213. “Por cierto, señor Reverendísimo, yo me tengo por muy dichoso que se aya offrescido cosa donde pueda mostrar a Su Santidad que soy otro que el Conde Balthasar por una parte y el Reverendísimo Cardenal d’Osma no me han en diversas partes pintado, y todo por malicia de uno, que tiene ya su pago, y el otro también le llevó [...]”



of Valdés's dialogues was published in Venice. Unsurprisingly, this translation was published in a time when relationship between Spain and papal curia significantly worsened, thus showing the potential the dialogues of Valdés had in ever recurring struggle between the papacy and the empire.<sup>156</sup>

## Part II: Establishing the universal monarchy – fight for supremacy against France and the papacy

### 2.1. The great mentor and the architect of the universal empire: Mercurino di Gattinara

*“Si licito he saper cose futurae,  
Si secreti divini a alcun fian noti.  
Si a prophete se crede, o a denoti.  
Si per imagination de sogni, o cure,  
Si per revelation, o per scripture,  
Si per voce nocturne, o spiriti ignoti,  
Si per scientia infusa in ydioti,  
Si per planete, segni, o stelle pure,  
Si per carcultation de vera scientia,  
Si per viva ragion indicio recto,  
Si per speculation, o experiential,  
Se pode aver noticia o intelecto,  
De praedestinatione, o praescientia  
De choluy chi ab aeterno e stato electo  
Per accomplir leffecto  
De vera monarchia universale.  
Qua dentro troverai il doctrinale,  
Lasciando y vicii et I male  
Le trompe de Parys, flute, et forcete.  
Seguendo le virtute al mondo elette  
Et quel che dio permette.  
Per soy comandamenti, et vera lege.  
Per congregar sotto un pastor suo grege”<sup>157</sup>*

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<sup>156</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 86.

<sup>157</sup>“If one can have knowledge of future things/ If divine secrets may be known/ If by prophecy they can be believed or revealed/ If by the images in dreams, or preoccupations/ If by revelation, or by scripture/ If by nocturnal voices, or unknown spirits/ If by wisdom infused in the foolish/ If by planets, signs, or even stars./ If by calculations of true science/ If by living reason and right conjecture/ If by speculation or experience,/ One can have information or understanding/ About the Predestination or Prescience/ Of him who from the beginning of time was chosen/ To accomplish the fulfilment/ Of true universal monarchy/ Here within you will find the doctrine/ Leaving aside the vices and evils/ The mouth harp,

It would be impossible to attempt to study the phenomenon of the imperial universalism during the time of Charles V as well as the life and work of Alfonso de Valdés without taking into account the influence of the grand chancellor of Charles V and one of the most influential personalities of the imperial court of the 1520s, Mercurino di Gattinara. Nonetheless, as is explained by Jouaville in his doctoral thesis, which was dedicated to the study of Mercurino di Gattinara and his Italian policy, the person of the grand chancellor had also been an object of controversy among some historians. Famous German historian and biographer of Charles V Karl Brandi suggested, that Gattinara indeed acted as a principal architect of the empire of Charles V and Austrian author Vladimir Schnurbein went as far as claiming that Gattinara “promoted the idea of the universal monarchy with fanaticism.”<sup>158</sup> The line of thinking introduced by Brandi was further developed throughout the work of current historians such as John M. Headley or Rebecca Ard Boone, which we have already mentioned earlier. Some other historians, mainly Spaniards such as Ramón Menéndez Pidal, however tended to diminish his role and importance mainly in favour of Spanish element.<sup>159</sup>

For our purposes at this moment, it will be sufficient to affirm that Mercurino di Gattinara indeed possessed considerable amount of influence over the imperial policy, although he never became the emperor’s *privado*<sup>160</sup> in a similar way as lord of Chièvres did. It is also reasonable to consider Gattinara to be the principal architect and promoter of the idea of the universal empire, but we will pay more attention to the precise definition of his role, especially in the light of criticism of his person, which was formulated by Menéndez Pidal, later in our work.

Who exactly was then Mercurino di Gattinara, and how did he manage to achieve such an influence at the imperial court of Charles V? The future grand chancellor was born on 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1465, in the town of Arborio, located in Piedmont in northern Italy.<sup>161</sup> After his studies at the university of Turin, where he specialized in law, he initiated his career and started to act as a lawyer. The important moments in Gattinara’s life came in 1501, when he entered the service of Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), the aunt of future emperor Charles, who then as a duchess of Savoy ruled together with her husband Philibert II (1480-1504). Gattinara remained at Margaret’s side even after

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flute and forcete/ Following virtue to the world elected/ What God had permitted/ By his commandments and true laws/  
To congregate his flock under one shepherd”

This text forms a part of Gattinara’s work *Oratio Supplicatoria*. Quoted from Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 26; 142.

<sup>158</sup> Schnurbein, *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V*, p. 57. « Gattinara propagierte die Idee der Monarchia Universalis mit einem Fanatismus [...]»

<sup>159</sup> Jouaville, *Jardin de l’Empire et clef de la monarchie universelle : l’Italie au cœur du projet de Mercurino Gattinara*, p. 14-19.

<sup>160</sup> The Spanish term „privado“ designates a person who exercise enormous amount of influence over the person of a king, often to the point of directly intervening with his decisions.

<sup>161</sup> Schnurbein, *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V.*, p. 50.

the death of her husband and accompanied her to Habsburg lands in Burgundy, where he was named the president of the parliament in Dôle.<sup>162</sup> It was also in this time when Gattinara gained his first experience with Spain, where he travelled in 1508 as a part of diplomatic mission, which eventually led to the signature of the treaty of Blois in 1511, by which Ferdinand of Aragon recognized young Charles as an heir of Catholic Kings.

After his return to Burgundy, Gattinara got involved in a conflict with various local nobles, as a result of which he was eventually relieved from his position of the president of the parliament and left Burgundy for Savoy. He did not, however, forsaken his loyalty towards the house of Habsburg. On the contrary, after his departure from Burgundy, while spending some time at the Carthusian monastery known as Charterhouse of Scheut,<sup>163</sup> Gattinara wrote his own political-philosophical tractate, composed entirely in Latin and denominated *Oratio Supplicatoria somnium interserens de novissima orbis morachia, ac futuro Christianorum triumpho, late enuncians, quibus mediis ad id perveniri posit*, which Rebecca Ard Boone translates as “Supplicatory Oration including a Dream of the Last World Monarchy and the Triumph of Christianity, Broadly Stated, with the Means of Accomplishing It”.<sup>164</sup> This document is important especially because it summarized the key points of the universalist ideology, which Gattinara tried to put into practise during following years. With regards to this document, Geoffrey Parker states that “Although written in Latin, and therefore beyond the recipient’s comfort zone, Gattinara took the precaution of giving the treatise to his countryman Luigi Marliano, Charles’s physician as well as his councillor, in the hope that it would reach ‘the ears of a certain adolescent’.”<sup>165</sup> More than being a purely theoretical tractate, *Oratio* was thus actually intended to attract the attention of leading members of Habsburg dynasty and convince them about the unique historical opportunity, which has just presented itself.

Whether it was influenced by his authorship of *Oratio* or not, Gattinara was subsequently indeed granted a position at the court of “young adolescent” Charles, who had just become a king of Spain. In the course of the following year, after the death of the grand chancellor Le Sauvage, Gattinara was awarded his position<sup>166</sup> and on 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1518, he personally took the oath of office from the hands of Charles himself.<sup>167</sup> Prudencio de Sandoval, who clearly held favourable views of Gattinara, described the change at the post of the grand chancellor in this way: “In his place [of Le Sauvage], the king put Mercurino de Catinara, wise and prudent man, friend of justice and rectitude and great jurist, and thus he served the king in the office of grand chancellor with loyalty

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<sup>162</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 7-9.

<sup>163</sup>Headley, *The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism*, p. 47.

<sup>164</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of Spanish Empire*, p. 25.

<sup>165</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 60.

<sup>166</sup>Idem, p. 59-60.

<sup>167</sup>Headley, *The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism*, p. 48; Vladimir Schnurbein puts the date of Gattinara’s oath to Charles V on 8<sup>th</sup> of October, see Schnurbein, *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V.*, p. 52.

and prudence.”<sup>168</sup> What was even more, after the death of William de Croÿ, Lord of Chièvres, which took place during the imperial diet in Worms in 1521, Gattinara became the most influential of all the emperor’s ministers. This development also greatly re-enforced Hispanic element at the imperial court, because although Gattinara himself was not a Spaniard, he did nonetheless favour Spanish interests and what was more important and he consistently displayed strong anti-French attitude, something which greatly differentiated him from Chièvres and other “flamencos”, who were notoriously unpopular among Spanish subject of Charles V.<sup>169</sup>

It is difficult to judge to which extent were the ideas of Mercurino di Gattinara product of humanist philosophy and to which extent they were a manifestation of typically Italian pro-imperial attitude known “ghibellinism”, but given the contacts between Gattinara and Erasmus, it seems to be undeniable that humanist thinking at least in some way manifested itself also in the person of the grand chancellor. This opinion is also held by John M. Headley, who claimed that Gattinara himself fell under the influence of Erasmian philosophy, especially towards the end of his life:

“Towards the end of his career and certainly after the trip to Italy in 1527 the chancellor’s emotional and intellectual life had come to focus on Erasmus and the Erasmian and it was among the humanistically inclined kindred spirits of the chancellery – Valdés, Maximilian Transylvanus, Waldkirch and diplomatic associates such as Dantiscus and Cornelius de Schepper – that he would be profoundly mourned and memorialized.”<sup>170</sup>

Gattinara even interfered on Erasmus’s part in his feud with theologians from the university of Lovania, whose theological faculty at that time counted among the most prestigious and influential in whole Europe. Interestingly, the same was done by Alfonso de Valdés himself, who in his letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1527 addressed to “the chancellor and theologians of Lovania” urged the faculty to stop its campaign against Erasmus, whom he called “the emperor’s man Erasmus, who renders the best services to the Christian commonwealth”,<sup>171</sup> but who also referred to the previous interference by Gattinara, who he wrote that “the chancellor also writes you extensively about this matter”.<sup>172</sup>

It is also obvious that Gattinara saw humanistic philosophy inspired by the teachings of Erasmus as one of the possible counterweights against both Lutheran Protestantism and papal – or

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<sup>168</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperador Carlos V*, Libro Tercero, XVII. “En su lugar puso el rey a Mercurino de Catinara, varón prudente y sabio, y amigo de justicia y rectitud y gran jurisconsulto, y así sirvió al rey en el oficio de gran chanciller leal y prudentemente.”

<sup>169</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and The Creation of Spanish Empire*, p. 13-14.

<sup>170</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 139.

<sup>171</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 68. „[...] Caesareum Erasmus virum illum de christiana republica optime meritum [...].”

<sup>172</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p.68. „[...] tametsi de hac re diffuse ad vos scribat Cancellarius [...].”

conservative – Catholicism, and even went as far as claiming that humanists constituted an independent ideological current which could act as a viable alternative to both Lutherans and papists.

It is interesting to note that while Austrian historian Friedrich Heer has suggested that during the first decades of 16<sup>th</sup> century, these “Erasmian” humanists had acted as “third force” in opposition to both protestant Wittenberg and papal Rome,<sup>173</sup> this particular notion had been also formulated by Mercurino di Gattinara himself in a letter addressed to Erasmus of Rotterdam, written in Granada on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1526, in which he made clear distinction between Protestants, Catholics loyal to the pope and “third side”, which obviously included humanists and supporters of the emperor Charles V:

“As I see it, the Christian world in our day is divided into three parts. One, with its ears blocked and its mental vision blinded, sticks to the pope whether his judgments and decrees are good or bad. A second clings tenaciously to the Lutheran party. The men of both these factions, wrapped up, as they are, in their own concerns, cannot be impartial on any issue and will not suffer anyone to dissent from their views. The praises of such people are really a humiliation; likewise their insults should properly be regarded as true praise.

But let us consider a third group, which is the exact antithesis of the other two, those who seek only the glory of God and the well-being of the state. Not wanting evil to go unrebuked or virtue unpraised, and refusing to bind themselves body and soul, as the saying is, to any faction, they can hardly escape the biting tongue of criticism whenever they feel called upon to speak the truth. So if you have both sides against you, that certainly is something to be deplored for the sake of the country, but for you it should be a source of satisfaction to know that you have this third group entirely on your side and always singing your praises. Their acclaim is glory indeed. As for the Lutheran faction, I wanted to see the pressure kept up until it disappeared altogether and all those other evils were corrected. It is my hope that this will happen under the auspices of our emperor.”<sup>174</sup>

In 1529, that is towards the end of his life, Gattinara was named a cardinal by the pope Clement VII,<sup>175</sup> Around this time, Gattinara had also written his own autobiography, though which he intended to formulate a narrative of his own life as well as his service to the emperor Charles V. As usual, he did so in Latin, entitling his work as *Historia vite et gestorum per dominum magnum cancellarium*, which translates as “The history of life and works of the great lord chancellor”. Although described as a “disappointing document” by Headley,<sup>176</sup> Gattinara’s autobiography can nonetheless help us to understand the way in which the grand chancellor thought and in which way he wanted to present his work and service not only to the contemporary public, but also to the posterity.

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<sup>173</sup>Heer, *Evropské duchovní dějiny*, p. 307.

<sup>174</sup>Nauert, Dalzell, *The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 1658 to 1801, January 1527-March 1527*, p. 375.

<sup>175</sup>Jouaville, *Jardin de l'Empire et clef de la monarchie universelle: l'Italie au cœur du projet de Mercurino Gattinara (1465-1530)*, p. 7.

<sup>176</sup>Rodríguez, *Memoria, escritura y Estado: la autobiografía de Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara, Gran Canciller de Carlos V*, p. 209.

The exact relationship between Alfonso de Valdés and Mercurino di Gattinara is somewhat ambivalent. While Alfonso de Valdés often described Gattinara in his correspondence as *senex bonus*, meaning “good old man”, Gattinara in turn did not mention Valdés in his writings at all, despite mentioning numerous other persons.<sup>177</sup> It is nonetheless undeniable that these two men were connected by strong professional relationship. Before becoming a personal secretary of Charles V, Alfonso de Valdés worked as a secretary of Gattinara himself, taking part of what Rebecca Ard Boone called was their “collaborative effort”<sup>178</sup> on behalf of Charles V.

## 2.2. The history of European universalism

As we have already mentioned at the beginning of our work, the universalist ideology of the imperial court of Charles V is firmly set into the period of time known to us as the Renaissance. G.R. Potter recognizes four characteristic aspects of this period, which according to him are: “the consolidation of princely government and the decline of rivals to monarchy; the final emergence of a pattern of international relationships based on dynasticism; the progressive instability in, and the loss in ecumenical authority of the church; and the growth of novel spiritual attitudes, both secular and religious.”<sup>179</sup>

The reappearance, or probably more precisely rejuvenation of the imperial universalism can be counted among these novel spiritual attitudes, although naturally, imperial universalism in general terms did not present a new phenomenon in the history of Europe, but indeed had quite a long tradition, a tradition which began already in the times of the antiquity. It would be more precise to claim that rather than being created, the ideology of the imperial universalism of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was reshaped in order to conform to the special needs of its time. Thus, we may consider the universalist ideology of the imperial court of Charles V to be a specifically renaissance phenomenon, but this phenomenon nonetheless heavily drew on previous European imperial tradition as well as theoretical postulates formulated by medieval author Dante Alighieri in his *Monarchia*, whose influence was absorbed mainly by Mercurino di Gattinara. Ramón Menéndez Pidal correctly recognized this, when he said that “The imperial idea was not invented by Charles nor by his chancellor; it is a most ancient notion, which they only captured and adapted to the circumstances”.<sup>180</sup>

In which way, then, were the circumstances of the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century specific? First, we must primarily take into account the unique historical settings, in which the arguments for the

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<sup>177</sup>Rodríguez, *Memoria, escritura y Estado: la autobiografía de Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara, Gran Canciller de Carlos V*; 2. “Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara no mencionó ni una sola vez a Alfonso de Valdés en sus memorias.”

<sup>178</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and The Creation of Spanish Empire*, p. 47.

<sup>179</sup>Potter, *The New Cambridge Modern History, Volume 1, The Renaissance, 1493-1520*, p. 5.

<sup>180</sup>Menéndez Pidal, *Idea Imperial de Carlos V*, p. 11. “La idea imperial no se inventa por Carlos ni por su canciller; es una noción viejísima, que ellos sólo captan y adaptan a las circunstancias”.

establishment of the universal empire led by Charles V had been made, as well as the long development of universalist ideas in Europe. From the times of ancient Roman Empire until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the European continent had indeed seen a great number of monarchs, who presented themselves as emperors and who often styled themselves as universal rulers or at least displayed universalist ambitions. In his dissertation, Vladimir Schnurbein suggests that the roots of universalist ideas can be actually found in the Old Testament, more precisely in the book of Daniel and its prophecies.<sup>181</sup>

In the political context of the European continent, we may encounter the first clear signs of this universalism during the period of the antiquity. It can be argued that certain universalist aspirations were already introduced by the Macedonian king Alexander III the Great (r. 336-323 BC), who managed to utterly defeat the Persian empire and become its ruler, thus gaining control of the area of modern-day Middle east, Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan and even penetrating to India. Alexander's early death in Babylon in 323 BC however prevented the consolidation of this great empire, which after his death almost immediately disintegrated. Alexander's conquest nonetheless greatly helped in propagating Hellenistic culture, which then become dominant in almost whole area of Mediterranean and thus can be viewed as "universalist" from a certain point of view; after all, it is no coincidence that the original texts of the New Testament were all written in Greek. After the disintegration of Alexander's empire, a new power slowly emerged in the Italian peninsula – the Roman Republic, which eventually managed to win a series of protracted wars, known as "Punic wars", against almost equally powerful Carthage, whose capital was located in modern-day Tunisia. During the last century before current era, the republican form of government was replaced by the empire, whose rulers also started explicitly formulating its universalist nature.

The age of Roman emperors starts with Octavianus Augustus (r. 27 BC–14 AC), who after eliminating his two partners Marcus Antonius and Marcus Lepidus, with whom he initially exercised power in co called second triumvirate, also managed to eliminate the political power of the Roman senate and concentrated all major powers of the state in his own hands. In the text of his own memoirs entitled *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, which was compiled both in Latin and Greek towards the end of Octavian's life, the emperor explicitly formulated the universalist aspect of Roman rule, which was stated at the very beginning of the whole text:

"Below is a copy of the acts of the Deified Augustus by which he placed the whole world under the sovereignty of the Roman people, and of the amounts which he expended upon the state and the Roman people, as engraved upon two bronze columns which have been set up in Rome."<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup>Schnurbein, *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V.*, p. 32-34.

<sup>182</sup>*Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, Part I:1. For English translation as well as Latin and Greek original text, see [https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Augustus/Res\\_Gestae/home.html](https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Augustus/Res_Gestae/home.html)

Naturally, Octavian did not in reality subject the whole world to Roman rule, although the amount of territory controlled by Rome by the time of his death was indeed impressive.<sup>183</sup> The most important is the fact that universalist pretensions, which in some form already existed during antiquity, did not disappear even after the gradual collapse of ancient Roman empire, or more precisely its western part, which took place between third and fifth century of current era.<sup>184</sup> One of the reasons for this was the simple fact that empire itself never stopped existing in the first place. Despite the collapse of imperial power in the west, the emperors of eastern half of the empire, who from the fourth century had their seat in the city of Constantinople, founded by the emperor Constantine the Great (r. 306 – 337), never stopped exercising their imperial authority and always saw themselves not only as legitimate heirs of Rome,<sup>185</sup> but also as the highest Christian authority. It was precisely during the reign of Constantine the Great, when the persecution of Christians officially came to an end, as was recognized in 313 by the edict of Milan. Constantine himself eventually even became the first Christian Roman emperor, although he did convert only shortly before his own death. Constantine also convoked the first council of Nicea, which was celebrated in 325 and which served as a platform for defining the theological basis of Catholic faith.<sup>186</sup> Constantine the Great was thus the emperor who on an institutional level tied the Roman empire to the Christian faith, the process which eventually culminated during the reign of Theodosius the Great (r. 379-395) in 383, when Christianity became the official religion of the whole empire.<sup>187</sup>

Despite its decline in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the imperial tradition in the west was revived by the Charles the Great, better known as Charlemagne (r. 774/800-814), the king of Franks and Lombards, the first western medieval Christian emperor. Charlemagne was crowned as the emperor of this “resurrected” western empire by the pope Leo III on 25<sup>th</sup> of December 800 in Rome.<sup>188</sup> The re-established Roman Empire, now also called “Holy”, however greatly differed from its classical predecessor. This was the result of the fact that the void created by the collapse of Roman authority in the 5<sup>th</sup> century was quickly filled by various mostly German tribes, such as Goths, Vandals, Lombards, Burgunds or Franks, who seized large parts of disintegrating empire and who founded their own kingdoms, and while in the east the eastern half of the empire with its seat in Constantinople prevailed, it was also forced to grapple with various threats. What was even more important, not only

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<sup>183</sup>The Roman Empire reached its zenith at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century of current era, when it controlled the whole Mediterranean, great part of current Middle east, Balkan peninsula, modern-day France, as well as part of British islands and part of modern-day Germany.

<sup>184</sup>The date that had been generally perceived as the fall of Roman empire is the year 476, which is the year of abdication of the last Roman emperor Romulus Augustulus. However, the decline of western half of Roman empire itself was rather long and slow process, whose beginnings can be traced as far as into the fourth or even third century. The year 476 thus did not mean a radical turning point in the history but can be viewed merely as a symbolic date.

<sup>185</sup>Drška, Picková, *Dějiny středověké Evropy*, p. 36.

<sup>186</sup>Davies, *Evropa*, p. 221-223.

<sup>187</sup>Drška, Picková, *Dějiny středověké Evropy*, p. 35.

<sup>188</sup>Fouracre, *Frankish Gaul to 814 in The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume II c. 700—c. 900*, p. 105.



did the eastern-Roman Empire manage to withstand the crisis, but it eventually even went on offensive, striving to regain the lost territories in the west. During the reign of the emperor Justinian I, whom Mercurino di Gattinara invoked in one of his memorandums to Charles V,<sup>189</sup> the ambitious project of so-called *renovatio imperii* was launched. Initially, the *renovatio* was successful and the Roman army led by the general Flavius Belisarius (500-565) managed to reconquer the northern shore of Africa while destroying the Vandal kingdom in 533, whose capital was located near the ruins of the ancient Carthage. After this success, Belisarius turned his attention to Italy, where in 536 he managed to gain control over the city of Rome itself and what was even more, the armies of eastern-Roman empire even managed to gain a foothold in the south of Iberian Peninsula.<sup>190</sup> However, after the devastation caused by the epidemic of so-called Justinian plague, which started in Constantinople in 542 and which was named after the emperor himself, since he also contracted the disease, but survived.<sup>191</sup> But the momentum was now lost. In the following years, the emperors of Constantinople had been gradually losing their power in the west and although they managed to retain control over a part on southern Italy well into the high medieval times, there were never able to reestablish the former Roman empire in his original form.

In the ensuing power struggle between various newly established kingdoms, one of them proved to be especially successful – the Frankish kingdom led by Merovingian dynasty, whose historically most significant figure is Clovis I, under whom Franks embraced the Christianity and unlike most of other Germanic tribes, who belonged to Arianism, they became Catholics. In the course of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Merovingian dynasty however gradually lost its power to the dynasty later known as Carolingian. The first king of this dynasty, Pepin “the Short” (r. 751-768), originally acted as a majordomo of the last Merovingian king, Childeric III (r. 743-751), whom he deposed with the consent of the pope Stephen II (752-757), who in 753 as the first pope ever journeyed north of Alps in order to meet with Pepin and gain his alliance. This strategical alliance between the papacy and the Frankish kingdom was motivated mostly by the threat posed by Lombards, who were then controlling the north of Italy. After the Frankish army led by Pepin destroyed Lombard kingdom and thus removed the threat, the pope officially sanctioned the dynastic change on the Frankish throne.<sup>192</sup>

This papal-Frankish alliance proved to have far-reaching consequences. As we already mentioned, one of Pepin’s sons named Charles successfully continued to extend Frankish power and eventually achieved the restoration of the imperial dignity in the west. At the high of his power, Charlemagne controlled the area which included modern-day France, Switzerland, northern Italy,

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<sup>189</sup>Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.*, p. 60.

<sup>190</sup>Louth, *The Eastern Empire in the sixth century* in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume I. c. 500—c. 700*, p. 101. It however useful to note that the interpretation of Justinian’s *renovatio imperii* may vary among various historians, as was shown by Louth, who claims that “[...] the reasons for his [Justinian’s] determination that this enterprise should not fail are perhaps more down-to-earth than the fulfilment of some grand design of imperial restoration.”

<sup>191</sup>Louth, *The Eastern Empire in the sixth century*, p. 111.

<sup>192</sup>Fouracre, *Frankish Gaul to 814*, p. 98.

Catalonia as well as the great part of modern-day Germany, while exercising heavy influence over the broader area of central Europe and its kingdoms and principalities, such as Bohemia. In short, Charlemagne achieved almost complete hegemony over large part of European continent, which was rivalled only by the power of Constantinople and Cordovan caliphate.

The historical role of the first western medieval emperor was so great, that he served as a role model for future kings and emperors for centuries and the influence of his image persisted even at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and his heritage was frequently invoked by humanists supporting Charles V, including Alfonso de Valdés. In his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, Valdés maintained the notion that Charles V should be equated with Charlemagne himself:

“Mercury: [...] You need to know that after the death of a King of Spain named Ferdinand, who for himself and for his successors gained the named of catholic, because it was he who finished off the moors who were occupying and governing Spain, he was succeeded in all kingdoms of Spain by his grandson Charles, who is now emperor and today I think it is more appropriate for us to call him Charles the Great, since he has well-earned it by his virtues and his greatness. And since in a time when he ascended to the throne there was war between his predecessor and this king of France, he did not want to start his rule with a war, and so he made peace with him, and while was heeding the public good more than his private gain, he promised certain things which he wasn't in any way obliged to do, because he preferred an unequal peace to a just war.

Charon: Just for this he rightly deserves to be called Charles the Great by us.”<sup>193</sup>

Mercurino di Gattinara went even farther when he claimed that the power granted by God to Charles V was actually bigger than that of Charlemagne,<sup>194</sup> by which he did not mean to belittle the might of Charlamagne, but rather to extoll the might of Charles V.

Although his legacy persisted for centuries, the death of Charlemagne in 814 meant a decisive blow to the idea of unified Christendom. In just 29 years, more precisely in 843, the unity of the empire was broken by the treaty of Verdun, by which it was divided into three parts between three grandsons of Charlemagne; Charles the Bald, who received its western part, Lothar, who received the middle part and Louis “the German”, who received the eastern part, roughly corresponding to

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<sup>193</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 375-376. „Mercurio: [...] Has de saber que, muerto un Rey de España llamado Fernando, que para sí y sus successores ganaron nombres de cathólicos, porque éste fue el que acabó de hechar los moros que ocuparon y señorearon a España, sucedió en todos los reynos de España un Carlos su nieto que agora es emperador y de oy más quiero que lo llamemos Carlomáximo pues sus virtudes y grandezas tam bien lo tienen mereçido. Y como a el tiempo de la sucession hallase guerra entre su predecessor y este rey de Francia, no queriendo començar a reynar con guerra, hizo con él paz, y teniendo más respeto al bien público que a su particular provecho, se obligó a ciertas cosas a que en ninguna manera hera obligado, queriendo más desigual paz que justa guerra.

Carón: Por solo esso mereçe muy bien que, como agora dexistem le llamemos Carlomáximo.”

<sup>194</sup>Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V*, p. 60. „Nicht einmal Karl der Große hat einen solchen gehabt, noch besaß er jemals so viele reiche und Lander wie Ihr sie zur Zeit Euer eigen nennt.“

modern-day Germany and northern Italy. Although the whole empire was later briefly united again under the rule of Charles III, his death in 888 meant the definitive end of the unified empire.<sup>195</sup>

The idea of the imperial unity was then revived again towards the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century by young emperor Otto III (r. 996-1002), whose close collaboration with Gerbert of Aurillac (946-1003), who in 999 became the pope and took on the name Silvester II (999-1003), resulted in a renewed hope for undertaking of *renovatio imperii*, only that this time, the initiative was coming from the west itself, and not from Constantinople. The vision of Silvester II and Otto III even included the shifting of the imperial capital back to Rome,<sup>196</sup> which clearly distinguished it from time of Charlemagne, whose empire lacked a fixed capital. However, early deaths of both Silvester II as well as Otto III yet again buried not only the entire project of the restoration of the universal empire, but also severed relationship between popes and emperors. In the course of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the balance of power between popes and emperors began to change significantly and close cooperation was replaced by rivalry and sometimes even with open enmity. Instead of cultivating harmonic relationship and cooperation, which was a necessary precondition for the establishment of Otonian universal empire,<sup>197</sup> popes and emperors now started to be estranged also on an ideological as well as geopolitical level. Unlike Otto III, the future emperors, starting with Henry II (r. 1002-1024), who was the first to use the title of *rex Teutonicorum*,<sup>198</sup> now started to focus more on German part of the empire, which became their power base.

The first centuries of the new millennium were filled by frequent clashes between the representatives of both spiritual and secular power, as was evident for example during the so called investiture controversy, which raged during the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and whose main protagonists were the emperor Henry IV (r. 1084-1105) and the pope Gregory VII (1073-1185), who even explicitly formulated the claim of papal prerogatives in a document entitled *Dictatus papae*, which essentially stipulated universal papal sovereignty over the entire world not only in all spiritual, but also in all temporal matters, and would place the pope above every other authority, including that of the emperor.<sup>199</sup> The papacy also traditionally based its secular pretensions and legitimacy of its rule over the central Italy on a document known as *Constantine's donation*, through which the Roman emperor Constantine the Great supposedly granted the church the secular control over the territory surrounding the city of Rome. This document was later proved to be forged, but this happened only after several centuries, more precisely during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when its in-authenticity was demonstrated by an Italian humanist Lorenzo de Valla (1407-1457).<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>195</sup>Drška, Picková, *Dějiny středověké Evropy*, p. 74-76.

<sup>196</sup>Idem, p. 91.

<sup>197</sup>Idem, p. 94-95.

<sup>198</sup>Müller-Mertens, *The Ottonians as kings and emperors in The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 3, c. 900 – c. 1024*, p. 265.

<sup>199</sup>Drška, Picková, *Dějiny středověké Evropy*, p. 154-155.

<sup>200</sup>Stroh, *Latina je mrtvá, ať žije latina!*, p. 154.

In general terms, the 11<sup>th</sup> century with its investiture controversy represents a key time in the development of the European universalism. As was observed by Franz Bosbach, this century marks the true beginning of differentiating between the “secular” and the “spiritual” power:

“When the unity of church and world, of *sacerdotium* and *imperium*, broke apart in the eleventh century, laymen and clergymen started debating how the relationship of ecclesiastical and secular order should be and how secular politics could be organised independently. In this context Universal Monarchy stood for the government of the universal powers, the papacy and the empire. At that time people did not say Universal Monarchy but only Monarchy. The pope governed in the *Monarchia Ecclesiae*, the emperor in the *Monarchia Imperii*.”<sup>201</sup>

The struggle between the two respective powers continued with renewed intensity throughout the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century, and especially during the time when the empire was controlled by Hohenstaufen dynasty, more precisely its two most significant members, which were Friedrich I Barbarossa (r. 1155-1190) and his grandson Friedrich II (r. 1212-1250), who apart from the Holy Roman Empire also acquired the kingship of Sicily, and who was even excommunicated by the pope Gregory IX (1227-1241). After his death, however, the power of emperors of Holy Roman Empire continuously declined and the Empire itself was often struck by schisms, during which various pretenders claimed the highest imperial dignity for themselves. The situation in the empire improved during the reign of the emperor Charles IV (r. 1346-1378), who also held the title of the king of Bohemia, but after his death, the empire was engulfed by new wave instability and internal conflicts, which were amplified by papal schism, which began in 1378, shortly before the death of Charles IV. Certain stabilization came again in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with the election of Friedrich III (1440-1493), through which Habsburg dynasty got hold of the empire.<sup>202</sup> As it turned out, their control was about to last for almost five hundred years, and it decisively altered the face of the European continent.

The struggle between the emperor Charles V and the pope Clement VII can thus be interpreted as a continuation of centuries long strife between two highest representatives of the western Christendom, which had its roots in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and which was essentially the result of what Bosbach called “breaking of the unity between the church and the world.”

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<sup>201</sup> Bosbach, *The European Debate on Universal Monarchy in Theories of Empire, 1450-1800*, p. 82.

<sup>202</sup>The first Habsburg emperor was Rudolf I (r. 1273-1291), known among other things by his victory over the Bohemian king Otokar II (r. 1261-1273). Rudolf I however did not manage to secure the imperial title for his dynasty.

### 2.3. The Christian empire: Alfonso de Valdés and imperial universalism

In a following part of our work, we are going to concentrate on the topic of imperial universalism and the way, in which it has been approached and further developed in the throughout the work of Alfonso de Valdés himself. But first it is worthwhile to discuss the contribution of Franz Bosbach to the study of the topic of the universal empire of Charles V.

In his study entitled *The European Debate on Universal Monarchy*, it was claimed by Bosbach that the imperial court of Charles V strove to legitimize the universal empire using five principal points. The first of these points was the divine right, according to which the universal empire was founded by God himself; the second was that the idea of *translatio imperii*, according to which the Holy Roman Empire was essentially a direct heir of the ancient Roman Empire; the third point stipulated that the universal empire was heralded by prophecies; the fourth one that God himself has sanctioned the election of Charles V; and finally the fifth point stipulated that the virtues of Charles V himself qualified him to become the ideal ruler of the universal empire.<sup>203</sup> Generally speaking, we may agree with Bosbach in his assessment, although it is worth to mention that the point one and four essentially point to the same concept, that is the sacral character of the empire of Charles V. In his study, Bosbach limits himself on general description and except for briefly mentioning the grand chancellor Gattinara, he does not address the contribution of Alfonso de Valdés or other personages of the imperial court of Charles V. Bosbach's study is thus useful as a starting point for any study dedicated to the topic of imperial universalism and in following chapters, we will corroborate that employment of prophecies, claims of divine nature of the imperial rule or conviction regarding a special character of Charles V himself are indeed present in the imperial propaganda.

In order to better understand the attitude and philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés, it is legitimate to ask about his intellectual background, which eventually led him to the support of the universalist project of Charles V. When speaking about the intellectual roots of both Alfonso and his brother Juan, Rebecca Ard Boone suggests that both brothers were strongly influenced by the ideas of alumbrados:

“Strongly influenced by the alumbrado movement were the twin brothers Alfonso and Juan de Valdés, both courtiers of converso heritage. Although they have been described as ‘Erasmians’, these friends of Erasmus had developed their ideas independent of the famous humanist from the Netherlands. Alfonso may have been exposed to Neoplatonism as a follower of Peter Martyr d’Anghiera. His Dialogue on Mercury and Charon had drawn the attention of the Inquisition for alumbrado errors, despite being a propaganda piece concerning the treachery of the French king after Pavia.”<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Bosbach, *The European Debate on Universal Monarchy*, p. 85-86.

<sup>204</sup> Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 51.

Although *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* indeed played a role of a propaganda piece directed against the French king Francis I., to classify it as such only tells half of its story, because the whole work deals with more than just with the geopolitical situation of 1528 and Francis's refusal to honour the stipulations of the treaty of Madrid, according to which he was supposed to hand over all lands of former duchy of Burgundy to Charles V. Alfonso de Valdés himself addressed the issue of his motivation in the introduction to this dialogue, when he at first claimed that "The main cause which forced me to write this dialogue was the desire to demonstrate the justice of the Emperor and the iniquity of those, who challenged him",<sup>205</sup> pointing to Francis I as well as the king of England Henry VII, who in that time allied himself with the king of France. But Valdés then also informs the reader that "Because this is a matter which is by itself unpleasant, then while Mercury recounts the differences between these princes [to Charon], there come certain souls, who interrupt the story with some tales and good doctrine."<sup>206</sup> These souls, half of whom are destined to enter heaven, while the rest is condemned to go to hell, are questioned by Mercury and Charon about their life on Earth and their life choices, which determined their fate after death. The purpose of the dialogue is clear – to determine the right way to live one's life and the right way to live in accordance with the Christian doctrine.

More than being just a "propaganda piece", *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* thus turns out to be a philosophical tractate, which deals with one of the most pressing issues with which the Christianity ever grappled – the issue of salvation. The question of salvation was especially important in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, because it was precisely this question which led Martin Luther to form his own theological postulates and eventually challenge the authority of the Catholic church itself. The question of salvation had thus become not just theological issue, but also essentially a political issue, something that might appear strange from a point of view of secular reader of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but something that was perceived as "normal" five centuries ago, in a time when religious, social and political questions were still deeply intertwined.

To which extent were the ideas of Alfonso de Valdés and his brother Juan exactly formed under the influence of alumbrados is difficult to judge, although it is probable that alumbrado philosophy had its impact on the intellectual life of both brothers; the hostility displayed by Alfonso de Valdés towards some external manifestations of the cult as well as his praise of internal piety certainly hints at such. At the same time, it is also possible that Ard Boone may underestimate the influence of Erasmus's ideas on Alfonso de Valdés. Furthermore, there is no need to suppose the existence of some kind dichotomy between the philosophy of alumbrados and the philosophy of

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<sup>205</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 363. "La causa principal que me movió a escribir este diálogo fue deseo de manifestar la justicia del Emperador y la iniquidad de aquellos que lo desafiaron."

<sup>206</sup>Ibidem. "Y por ser la materia en sí desabrida, mientras le cuenta Mercurio las diferencias destes príncipes, venían a passar ciertas ánimas que con algunas gracias y buena doctrina interrumpen la istoria."

Erasmus. After all, as was observed by Friedrich Heer, it was precisely among alumbrados where the ideas of Erasmus strongly resonated.<sup>207</sup> The fact that Valdés was heavily influenced by the great Dutch intellectual was made evident by the fact that it was Valdés himself who in a letter addressed to Erasmus openly claimed that he employed the arguments directly taken from Erasmus' works in his own *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*,<sup>208</sup> thus making it legitimate to consider Alfonso de Valdés as "Erasmian". On the other hand, it remains unclear when did their mutual relationship actually start. Erasmus and Alfonso de Valdés provably corresponded with each other in the first half of 1527, which is attested by a letter of Valdés written from Valladolid in June 1527,<sup>209</sup> and we also know that Alfonso de Valdés wrote on behalf of Erasmus in his feud with theologians of the university of Louvain in February of the same year.<sup>210</sup> These were however not the formative years of Alfonso de Valdés, and although at this point we cannot know with certainty when did their mutual contacts started, it does not seem probable that Erasmus was responsible for the intellectual formation of Alfonso de Valdés. It is also impossible to judge to which extent was Valdés exposed to writings of Erasmus before their mutual contacts began. Thus, we may at least partly agree with Rebecca Ard Boone in stating that Alfonso and presumably also his brother Juan developed their ideas and philosophy independently of Erasmus, although at the same time it seems obvious that the works of Erasmus had its influence on Alfonso de Valdés in the second half of 1520s.

With that being said, we may ask - what was attitude of Alfonso de Valdés towards the universalist ideology of the imperial court of Charles V? Is it possible to really consider Valdés to be "a champion of imperial messianism", as was claimed by John Headley?<sup>211</sup> To answer this question, we must first consider the state of the empire of Charles V at the beginning of the 1520s and general geopolitical context, in which it developed and in which it interacted with other powers. One of the key differences from the past was the fact that in his time, Charles V was the only Christian prince to style himself as the emperor. The agony of eastern-Roman empire was ended several decades ago, more precisely in 1453, with the fall of its capital Constantinople, which after the prolonged struggle against the forces of Ottoman Empire finally succumbed and was captured by the army led by sultan Mehmed II, and later converted, under the new name of Istanbul, into the new capital of the Ottoman Empire.

This clearly contrasted with the situation of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the imperial title was used by not one, but by several monarchs. After the formal dissolution of Holy Roman Empire in 1806, it had been replaced by newly created Austrian empire, which then endured until 1918. Imperial title was however also claimed by Napoleon Bonaparte, who was crowned as the

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<sup>207</sup> Heer, *Evropské duchovní dějiny*, p. 308.

<sup>208</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 159. "[...] multaque his admiscui, quae ex tuis lucubrationibus excerpresram."

<sup>209</sup> Idem, p. 76-79.

<sup>210</sup> Idem, p. 68.

<sup>211</sup> Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 81.

emperor of France in 1804 and who kept the title even in his exile after 1815, and again by his nephew Napoleon III, who ruled France as the emperor from 1852 to 1870. After 1871, the rulers of newly unified Germany had also claimed the imperial title, as did British queen Victoria, who was proclaimed the empress of India in 1877, although she continued to rein in the rest of her dominions as queen.<sup>212</sup> Finally, the imperial title was also used by tsars of Russia, with the very word “tsar” being nothing less than a russified variant of the word “Caesar”. As we can thus see, the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of inflation of imperial titles. Naturally, the existence of so many emperors, who in some cases were even allied to each other, as was the case of emperors of Germany and Austria,<sup>213</sup> excluded the notion of establishment of some kind of universal empire. This development was also observed by Ramón Menéndez Pidal, who was writing in 1940 and who noticed the semantic shift of the term “emperor”, and whose words in this matter just as true today:

“The word *emperor* does not evoke in us today anything that it had evoked in the men before. In the present, there can be an emperor in Germany, another in Austria, another in Mexico or another in Brazil. In the past, this was absurd. The emperor was something more important: it was a unique being, a supreme hierarch of the whole world, at least in the law, if not in fact.”<sup>214</sup>

The notion of the universal empire in its right sense of the word requires singularity, since the existence of various mutually coexisting empires exudes the establishment of true universal hegemony. In a world where multiple emperors exist, the sovereigns claiming the imperial dignity may strive for hegemony in a certain area, which they indeed usually did, but they cannot aspire to act as the emperor in the original sense of its word, that is as the truly supreme sovereign. The proponents of universal empire of Charles V such as Mercurino di Gattinara and Alfonso de Valdés understood the term “emperor” in its original sense, that is as a designation of supreme authority. But in order to enforce their vision, it was necessary for them to present the universal empire of Charles V as legitimate. How did they intend to do it?

It is possible to claim that the active propagation of the universal empire of Charles V began with the celebration of the Cortes of Castille in spring of 1520, which took place in Santiago de Compostela. This moment was also highlighted by Menéndez Pidal, who considered it as one of the four most important moments in the development of the imperial universalism of Charles V.<sup>215</sup> Once the Cortes of Santiago were over, Gattinara ordered a publication of a political pamphlet, written

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<sup>212</sup>Fibiger Bang, Kołodziejczyk, *Universal empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, p. 1.

<sup>213</sup>After 1867, Austrian Empire was officially known as „Austro-Hungarian Empire“.

<sup>214</sup>Menéndez Pidal, *Idea Imperial de Carlos V*, p. 11-12. “La palabra *emperador* no nos sugiere hoy nada de lo que sugería a los hombres de antes. Modernamente, puede haber un emperador en Alemania, otro en Austria, otro en Méjico o en el Brasil. Antes esto era un absurdo. El emperador era algo más importante: era un ser único, un supremo jerarca del mundo todo, en derecho al menos, ya que no de hecho.”

<sup>215</sup>Menéndez Pidal, *Idea Imperial de Carlos V*, p. 14-16.



entirely in Latin and entitled *Caroli Romanorum regis recessuri adlocutio in conventu Hispaniarum*, which can be translated as “The relation of the speech of Charles, the king of Romans, at the convent of Spains”. Gattinara correctly recognized the power of printing press and its potential in propagating the imperial cause and was thus actively trying to use this relatively recent invention in order to spread the imperial ideology all over the European continent, the effort which later culminated in the publication of another pamphlet known as *Pro divo Carolo*. As was observed by Franz Bosbach, pamphlets represent one of the two principal groups of source material, which we have at our disposal while studying the problem of the universal monarchy, claiming that “In early modern Europe pamphlet literature was an obvious and essential part of any politics and therefore of international politics as well.”<sup>216</sup> The pamphlet known as *Adlocutio* presented some key points of imperial universalist ideology to the wide public, when it interpreted the idea of the universal empire as a fulfilment of God’s will:

“After the death of the emperor, my grandfather, the empire became an object of the desire of many, so that I was not able to rule my Spanish kingdoms in peace. Then the empire was, by the consent of the whole Germany, granted to me, and this happened (as I believe) according to God’s will and order. He is wrong, who believes that the empire of the world can be achieved by strength or by works, by unlawful solicitations or stratagems. The empire comes from God alone. I have not undertaken such a thing for my own benefit, since I could be very well content with my Spanish empire with the isles of Balearics and Sardinia, the kingdom of Sicily, the great Italy the great Germany, part of the France and with another, as I might say, gold-bearing world [America].”<sup>217</sup>

The text of *Adlocutio* thus sums the two of the key points on which the universalist ideology of the imperial court was based and which then constantly reappear in the following years. These two points were the assumption that the existence of the empire Charles V was the manifestation of God’s will, as well as the assumption that this empire was created in order to fulfil a special historical purpose, thus interpreting the empire of Charles V as another step on the preordained path to salvation. As we shall see, Alfonso de Valdés frequently incorporated these two points into his writings.

There is no proof that Alfonso de Valdés himself was involved in the preparation of *Adlocutio*, although given the fact that in 1520 he already demonstrably worked as a scribe in the ranks of imperial chancellery, it is not impossible that he took his part in the preparation of the text, despite

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<sup>216</sup> Bosbach, *The European Debate on Universal Monarchy*, p. 82.

<sup>217</sup> *Caroli Rom. Regis recessuri adlocutio in Conventu Hispaniarum*, p.1. „Mortuo namque imperatore avo meo tanta a plerisque contentione petitum est Imperium: Ut quieta Hispania salvis regnis meis imperare non posset. Tandem ad me, uno Germaniae consensu delatum est imperium: volente (ut puto) et iubente Deo. Errat namque qui viribus aut opibus, ambitu aut consilio, Orbis terrarum Imperium cuiquam contingere posse putat. A Deo n. ipso ipsum est Imperium. Nec illud tantum mea causa suscepi. Contentus sane Hispano imperio esse poteram Balearibus et Sardinia insulis, Siculo regno: magna Italiae, magna Germaniae, magna Galliae parte et alio pene orbe aurifero.”

the fact that it cannot be proven. The earliest documents which were undisputedly written by Valdés, which are available to us, are neither official documents nor imperial propaganda, but three letters addressed to Pedro Mártir, written from Brussels, Aachen and Worms in the course of 1520 and 1521. While the main topic of the first and the third of these letters is the religious situation in Germany and the beginnings of Lutheran movement, which we will discuss extensively in the Part III of our work, the second letter is dedicated to the description of Charles's coronation as the king of the Romans, which took place in Aachen in the October 1520.

The way in which Alfonso de Valdés described the whole coronation leaves no doubt that young Habsburg prince was very well conscious about the symbolical value of Aachen, the ancient city of Charlemagne, whose cathedral even preserved – and continues to preserve even today – Charlemagne's own throne. The planned coronation was complicated by the fact that the city of Aachen was in this time affected by a plague could stop Charles, who was advised by some to hold the coronation in another city,<sup>218</sup> but it was decided by Charles that the ceremony must take place in Aachen, a decision which Valdés attributed to his fearlessness in face of the plague.<sup>219</sup>

As Valdés informed Mártir, the glory of the whole ceremony in his mind far surpassed even the great triumphs of Romans:

“It is delightful and felicitous that we have our emperor crowned as the king of Romans, with such a glory and with such an applause of everyone, so that this one (trust me) by far surpassed all the triumphs of the Romans.”<sup>220</sup>

At the beginning, Charles was accompanied by archbishops of Mainz, Cologne and Trier, as well with the representatives of duke of Saxony, marquis of Brandenburg and king of Bohemia, with all of whom he ceremoniously entered the city, but only after he was adorned by a sign of cross and presented a head of Charlemagne at its gates.<sup>221</sup>

During the following ceremony, Charles was solemnly asked by the archbishop of Cologne if he wanted to defend the Catholic faith, uphold the imperial law, revere the Roman pontiff or to defend the poor and orphans, to which he answered “volo” (I want). After this, Charles was led to the altar by the archbishops of Mainz and Trier, while the archbishop of Cologne addressed the ordinary people,

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<sup>218</sup>The outbreaks of plague were rather common occurrence at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Prudencio Sandoval describes how the city of Valladolid was affected by a similar outbreak after the Christmas of 1517: “Despoblóse Valladolid, huyendo la gente de la muerte, que es terrible enemigo.” Sandoval, *La vida y los hechos del emperador Carlos V*, Libro tercero, VI. The outbreak of plague also occurred during the imperial diet in Worms in 1521.

<sup>219</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 15 „Principio rumor erat Aquisgranum, ubi hujusmode solemnna celebrari solent, peste laborare, ob idque agebatur e alio loco ad hoc designando. Caesar vero (ut est animo intrepido) contempta morbi suspitione, noluit alibi quam aquisgranum versus proficiter.“

<sup>220</sup>Idem, p. 15. “Quod faustum felixque sit, habemus Caesarem nostrum in Romanorum Regem coronatum, tanta pompa, tantoque omnium applausu, ut omnes Romanorum triumphos hic unus (crede mihi) quam longissime superavit.“

<sup>221</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p.16. “In ipsa porta civitatis armatus Caesar Crucem adoraturus, caputque Caroli Magni deosculaturus, ex equo descendit, quam custodes portae suo jure capiunt.”

who were attending the ceremony, and asked them: “Do you want to submit to such prince and ruler, to support his kingdom, to be faithful and to obey his laws?” To which the crowd answered “Fiat, fiat, fiat!” (So be it!).<sup>222</sup> Charles was then anointed, led into sacristy, decorated by the ornaments of Charlemagne, then led away and presented with Charlemagne’s sword, golden ring, royal garment, sceptre and finally the golden crown, after which he was led to the throne of Charlemagne, where he sat down and received the obeisance of the nobility.<sup>223</sup>

Valdés’s description of the ceremony attests heavily to the reverence with which the first emperor of the re-established western empire Charlemagne was seen even seven hundred years after his death. It also shows that Alfonso de Valdés, despite being Castilian, was well aware of the depth of western imperial tradition and its spiritual foundations, which were laid in the time of Charlemagne. Considering Valdés’ reflection of the coronation in Aachen, it would be thus obviously wrong to assume that Valdés did not take this western imperial tradition into account while constructing his own concept of empire.

### 2.3.1. Alfonso de Valdés and the imperial chancellery

Even though the ideas of Alfonso de Valdés became notorious within the Spanish society mostly during the second half of the third decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, its first half was nonetheless quite significant for his professional advancement. During the years following his journey to the Netherlands and Germany, Alfonso de Valdés gradually climbed the ranks of imperial administration. This was marked first by the publication of new ordinances of the imperial chancellery, published by Gattinara in Ghent in 1522, which defined the future functioning of this institution. Speaking about ordinances of Ghent, John Headley states that Gattinara “apparently sought to amalgamate the Austrian chancellery with the imperial court chancellery” and that in order to achieve this end, he appointed two vice-chancellors – John Hannart, former *audiencier* in the chancellery of Brussels, whose task was to deal with Austrian business, and Nicolas Ziegler, who was supposed “to handle German imperial business.”<sup>224</sup> Headley also notes the fact that the personnel of the imperial chancellery consisted of men of “multinational and polyglot” origin, among whom we may encounter three permanent secretaries, namely Burgundian Jean Lalemand, German Maximilian Transilvanus and Aragonese Philip de Nicola. Next to those permanent secretaries, the chancellery also employed seven full-time scribes, six of them of German origin, while the seventh, who was none other than Alfonso de Valdés, came from Castile. Headley also adds that after the departure of Hannart, who

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<sup>222</sup>Ibidem. “Tunc Coloniensis ad populum conversus, tum Latine, tum Germanice dixit: Vultis tali Principi ac Rectori vos subicere, ipsiusque Regnum firmare, fide stabilire ac jussionibus illius obtemperare? Clamant omnes: Fiat, fiat, fiat.”

<sup>223</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>224</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 32.

served as the head of the German division of the imperial court and who left it in 1524, the Hispanic element, represented by Valdés, prevailed within the chancellery.<sup>225</sup> This development seems logical, considering the fact that after its departure from Germany, the imperial court spent seven full years in Spain, which naturally favoured the advancement of Spanish courtiers. Two years after its publication, ordinances of Ghent were replaced by the publication of new ordinances in Valladolid, whose Latin text was written by Valdés himself.<sup>226</sup> According to ordinances of Valladolid, Alfonso de Valdés was now entrusted with guarding all documents related to the imperial chancellery, while also naming him its *registrar* as well as *contralerator*.<sup>227</sup>

Unlike his son and successor on the Spanish throne Philip II, Charles V did not rule from one designated capital city, but on the contrary, the style his government has been essentially itinerant. The constant travels between the principal cities of Spain, such as Valladolid, Burgos, Granada and many others, as well as the travels beyond its borders, naturally had an impact on the modus operandi of the imperial chancellery and on the lifestyle of its members, including Alfonso de Valdés, as was described by John M. Headley: “Lacking a firm material base or distinct location, the chancellery followed by necessity the roving habits of the monarch and thereby compelled its staff to an unstable, ambulatory existence. The fact, however, that all documents had to be carried in chests on muleback provided a blessed deterrent to the accumulation of papers.”<sup>228</sup>

It may be also argued that constant travels and necessity to share common lodging helped to forge closed bonds between individual members of the chancellery and its diplomatic associates, such as Johannes Dantiscus, whose relationship to Valdés was certainly more than just professional, as was described by Jan Odyniec: “[...] Alfonso de Valdés was Dantiscus’s closest friend in Spain. These allies worked together and helped each other in diverse circumstances. They also shared an admiration for Erasmus, but they adapted his pacifism to suit their imperial agenda.”<sup>229</sup> Promoting this imperial agenda was exactly that which differentiated Valdés from being relatively unimportant administrative worker within the imperial chancellery.

### 2.3.2. Promoting the universal empire

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<sup>225</sup>Idem, p. 32-33.

<sup>226</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 25-30. For Spanish translation of its Latin text see Caballero, *Alonso y Juan Valdés*, p. 312-316.

<sup>227</sup> Caballero, *Alonso y Juan Valdés*, p. 309. “Item ordinavit Ex<sup>tia</sup> sua huius Cancellarice Registratorem Alphonsum Valdesium, qui habebit quattuor Registra: unum videlicet rerum status, et nigociorum particularium Caes. M<sup>tis</sup>, secundum rerum Imperialium latinum, tertium germanicum, quartum vero primariarum precum, in quibus omnia quae per hanc Imperialem Cancellariam expedientur, postquam ab ipsa Caes. M<sup>te</sup> signata, ac per ipsum Ill. Dñm. Cancellarium admissa, et suo solito caractere signata, et per unum ex praedictis Secretariis subscripta fuerint [...].”

<sup>228</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 78.

<sup>229</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 15.

On the international level, the first years of the third decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were marked by the beginning of armed hostilities between Francis I and Charles V, which signified the first of their four mutual conflicts. In February 1521, Francis authorized the attack led by Robert de la Marck, the lord of Sedan, as well as by the duke of Guelders, directed against Habsburg territories in the Netherlands. At the same time, the French forces invaded Navarre and then continued further into Castilian territory. It is curious to point out that it was precisely during this military campaign that Ignacio of Loyola, who later became the founder of the Company of Jesus, the religious order which played a decisive role in the propagation of the Catholic faith both in America and Europe, was wounded,<sup>230</sup> a development which decisively influenced his future path, which eventually resulted in founding of his order. Meanwhile, the king of France also signed a secret treaty with the pope Leo X, which supposed the fulfilment of old French ambition, that is the conquest of the kingdom of Naples. Moreover, the pope also promised to refuse to crown Charles as the emperor.<sup>231</sup> The emperor was urged to resist the French attacks by Mercurino di Gattinara, who had addressed him a detailed memorandum, dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 1521 in Dunkirk, in which he analysed both advantages and disadvantages of continuing the war against France.<sup>232</sup> Gattinara's sense for symbolism is apparent by the fact that he listed seven reasons for accepting a truce with France, which he linked to "the seven sins", while simultaneously listing ten reasons for continuing the war, which he compared to the Ten Commandments.<sup>233</sup> Eventually, Gattinara presented Charles with conclusion that the right course which the emperor should take was to continue the hostilities, claiming that Charles could not abandon the pope Leo X, who meanwhile changed sides and allied himself with the emperor, and risk losing his allegiance, which could lead to the pope aligning himself once more with France and to the loss of the kingdom of Naples. Gattinara also claimed that the failure to act on part of Charles would damage his reputation among his subjects and assured Charles, that since the hostilities were provoked by the king of France, God will grant Charles victory thanks to the "justice of his cause".<sup>234</sup>

Since it is unnecessary to go into the detailed description of all military actions which took place during the first war between Francis I and Charles V, it suffices to state that this first stage of their conflict came to an abrupt end at the beginning of 1525, more precisely on 24<sup>th</sup> of February, the very date of Charles's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. On this day, the decisive battle at the Italian city of Pavia, which was by then besieged by French forces led by Francis I himself, took place. The result was nothing less than a complete disaster for France and its allies; not only did imperial forces completely routed French army, but they also managed to capture the king of France himself. Writing several decades

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<sup>230</sup>Thomas, *El Señor del Mundo: Felipe II y su imperio*, p. 78.

<sup>231</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 83-84.

<sup>232</sup>The German translation of this memorandum is available in Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.* p. 81-89.

<sup>233</sup>Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.* p. 85. „[...] daß die sieben Gründe, die zugunsten eines Waffenstillstands angeführt werden, die sieben Todsünden sind, die man Ihnen schickt, um Sie zu versuchen und um Sie vom rechten Weg abzubringen, und daß die dagegen angeführten zehn Gegengründe die zehn Gebote Gottes bedeuten [...]“.

<sup>234</sup>Kohler, *Carlos V*, p. 163-169.

later, the Spanish historian Prudencio de Sandoval described this victory over the French almost contemptuously: “And in this year of twenty and five, adding to his strength his royal person, with the authority great and worthy of the empire, the king came forth with some [soldiers] barefooted, poor, hungry and greatly inferior in the number. And with those, we left him broken, devastated and defeated, and what is more, captive.”<sup>235</sup> And although Sandoval was correct that this defeat meant a huge loss of reputation for Francis, its actual impact was more complicated. While the battle at Pavia indeed proved to be decisive for the political development in Italy as well as in the rest of Europe, it was not in a way which could have been reasonably expected immediately following its aftermath.

The role of Alfonso de Valdés as one of the main public promoters of the imperial universalist ideology began exactly in this time, that is during the year 1525, when the first public, and at the same probably one of the most explicit formulations of the ideology of imperial universalism coming from the pen of Alfonso de Valdés, appeared. We are talking about a document entitled *Relación de la batalla de Pavia*,<sup>236</sup> which was written as an official Spanish account of the decisive encounter between the forces of Charles V and Francis I. For our purposes, the actual description of the battle is less important than the conclusion of Alfonso de Valdés, which appeared at the end of the document. Here, Alfonso de Valdés interpreted significance of the battle at Pavia and set it in a wider universalist framework. By doing this, Valdés tried to set the whole event into a wider context of history of the Christendom and present it as a decisive turning point, which according to him could lead to the re-establishment of Christian unity under the rule of Charles V. It is therefore worthwhile to cite this particular passage in its entirety:

“The whole Christendom has to rejoice from this victory, because there seems to be no doubt that God Our Lord wants to put an end to the evils that he for a long time tolerated and does not want to allow his chosen people to be punished by the turk, the enemy of our Christian faith. He, who has grown arrogant with so many victories and who is threatening that this spring and wants to enter Italy with great power and with the intent to subjugate the whole Christendom and put it under his cruel servitude, the same in which he now holds Greece, has sent thirty ships to spy and to probe the whole coast, as well as the ports of Pulla, Calabria and Sicily, where he plans to disembark. In order to prevent this, it seems that God has miraculously granted this victory to the emperor, so that he can not only defend the Christendom and resist the power of the turk, should he dare to assault it, but to extinguish these civil wars, how they should be called, since they are being fought among Christians, and to go in

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<sup>235</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperador Carlos V*, Libro XI, I. “Y en este año de veinte y cinco, añadiendo el rey sus fuerzas con la autoridad grande y digna de imperio, de su real presencia, vino a tomarse con unos descalzos, pobres, hambrientos, inferiores mucho en el número. De los cuales le dejamos roto, deshecho y vencido, y, lo que más es, cautivo.”

<sup>236</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 37. „Relación de las nuevas de Italia, sacadas de las cartas que los capitanes y comisario del Emperador y Rey nuestro señor han escripto a su Magestad assí de la victoria contra el Rey de Francia como de otras cossas allá acaecidas, vista y corregida por el señor Gran Chanciller y consejo de su Magestad.”

search of turks and moors in their lands, and to glorify our holy catholic faith, just like his ancestors did, and to extend his rule over Constantinople and the holy house of Jerusalem, which is now being occupied because of our sins. So that, as had been prophesied by many, under this most Christian prince the whole world will receive our holy Catholic faith, and the world of our savior will be fulfilled: *Fiet unum ovile et unus pastor* [So there shall be one flock and one pastor].”<sup>237</sup>

There no doubt that this particular passage displays the influence of the grand chancellor Gattinara, which Valdés himself after all admitted when he wrote that the text of the relation had been “seen and corrected by the lord grand chancellor and the council of his Majesty”, with which Valdés referred to the council of Castile, the most influential of all councils which formed the core of imperial administration of Charles V.<sup>238</sup> The text itself contains several principals notions, which formed the core of the universalist ideology of the imperial court of Charles V. These include the assumption that the establishment of universal monarchy was ordained by God himself, the notion, which was already present in *Adlocutio* from 1520, further it presented the establishment of the universal empire as a means to achieve a new era of unity and peace among Christians, and finally presenting the establishment of the universal empire as a means of defense against the external menace, which took form of the Ottoman empire. Indeed, the defence against the “infidels” formed an integral part of Charles’s political program basically from the day one, as is apparent from the fact that during his first the session of the Cortes of Aragon held in Zaragoza in 1518, young sovereign expressed his desire to “wage war against the infidel enemies of our saint Catholic faith”.<sup>239</sup>

This perceived need to defend the Christian lands from the Ottoman menace was a part of long-term struggle between the Christendom and the forces of Islam, the struggle which began in the 7<sup>th</sup> century soon after the religion of Islam appeared<sup>240</sup> and which significantly intensified during the

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<sup>237</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 46. “Toda la cristiandad se deve desta vitoria gozar. Porque sin duda parece que Dios Nuestro Señor, quiere poner fin en los males que mucho tiempo ha padesce. Y no permitir que su escogido pueblo sea del turco enemigo de nuestra fe cristiana castigado. El qual ensobervecido con tantas vitorias, amenazando que esta primavera quiere entrar muy poderoso en la Italia, con ánimo de subjuzgar toda la cristiandad, y ponerla debaxo de su tirana y cruel servidumbre, como tiene la Grecia, ha embiado treynta velas a espisar y tentar toda la costa, y puertos de la Pulla, Calabria, y Sicilia donde piensa desembarcar. Y para obviar a esto, parece que Dios milagrosamente a dado esta vitoria al Emperador, para que pueda no solamente defender la cristiandad y resistir a la potencia del turco, si ossare acometerla, mas asosegadas estas guerras ceviles, que así se deben llamar, pues son entre cristianos, yr a buscar los turcos y moros en sus tierras, y ensalzando nuestra sancta fe cathólica, como sus passados hizieron, cobrar el imperio de Constantinopla, y la casa sancta de Jerusalem que por nuestros pecados tiene ocupada. Para que, como de muchos está profetizado, debaxo d’este cristianissimo príncipe, todo el mundo reciba nuestra sancta fe cathólica, y se cumplan las palabras de nuestro redemptor: *Fiet unum ovile et unus pastor*.”

<sup>238</sup>Apart from the Council of Castile (Consejo Real de Castilla, or simply Concejo Real), the emperor relied for example on the Council of war (Consejo de Guerra), the Council of Indies (Consejo de Indias) or the Financial council (Consejo de Hacienda). See Álvarez, *Carlos V, El Cesar y el hombre*, p. 227-249.

<sup>239</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V el César y el Hombre*, p. 104. “[...] hacer la guerra a los infieles enemigos de nuestra santa fe católica”.

<sup>240</sup>One of the first major military confrontations between the Christians and the Muslim took place in August 636 was the battle of Yarmuk, located in modern day Syria, in which the Muslim forces decisively defeated the forces of Eastern-Roman Empire. See Louth, *The Byzantine Empire in the seventh century in The Cambridge New Medieval History, Vol. I c. 500 – c. 700*, p. 297-298.

15<sup>th</sup> century. The warnings regarding the Ottoman danger, calls for unity of Christians and common defence were thus nothing unusual. At the imperial diet of Frankfurt in 1454, one year after the Ottoman victory at Constantinople, humanist scholar Enea Silvio Bartolomeo Piccolomini (1405-1464), who four years later became the new pope under the name of Pius II, tried to warn the nobility of the Holy Roman Empire about the Ottoman danger and to convince them to organise a new crusade,<sup>241</sup> when he claimed that “[...] the Fall of Constantinople was a great victory for the Turks, a total disaster for the Greeks, and a complete disgrace for the Latins, which - I trust - it will pain and hurt each of you, and the more so the more noble and good you are.”<sup>242</sup> The appeals of Piccolomini were however futile, and although after his papal election he attempted to organise a crusade himself, he died in Ancona before the preparations for the crusade could have been finished and the whole project thus was thus abandoned. The urgency of the common defence against the Ottomans was also invoked by the Spanish humanist Luis de Vives, who out of fear of persecution in his homeland spent great part of his life in exile either in the Netherlands or in England, and who formulated his vision in his *Diálogo sobre las disensiones de Europa y la Guerra contra los Turcos*, written in 1526, one year after the imperial victory at Pavia and in the same year, when Ottoman forces decisively defeated the forces of Hungarian and Bohemian king Louis II in the battle of Mohács.

For Alfonso de Valdés, the imperial victory at Pavia was a confirmation that hopes and expectations, which were put into the new emperor Charles V from the very beginning of his reign, and which were explicitly formulated at the Cortes at Santiago de Compostela in 1520, were about to be fulfilled. The victory at Pavia was seen as a confirmation of the grace of God, who predestined Charles to end “civil wars” among Christians and to lead the Christendom into a better future. In the mind of Alfonso de Valdés, the plan that God initiated, when he put so many kingdoms and principalities, including newly discovered New World, was now continuing. As is apparent from the text of his relation, neither Alfonso de Valdés nor those who oversaw the writing of the document expected the conflict between Charles V and Francis I to continue, and the only true enemy which was supposed to matter from now on was the one who controlled Constantinople and Jerusalem. This expectation was not unfounded, because in the immediate aftermath of the battle and with seeming total defeat of France, the prospect of creation of a new imperial hegemony seemed very realistic. As it turned out, these expectations were about to be sorely disappointed.

But what can we say more about the content of the imperial universalist ideology promoted by Alfonso de Valdés? As we have already seen, the universalist ideology of the imperial court was

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<sup>241</sup>Piccolomini’s speech was later published under the title *Oratio Aeneae Silvii Piccolominei episcopi Senensis, qui postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius Secundus appellatus est, habita in conventu Frankfordiensi ad suadendum Germanos bellum contra Turcos*, see Cotta-Schönberg, Oration “Constantinopolitana clades” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (15 October 1454, Frankfurt).

<sup>242</sup>Cotta-Schönberg, *Oration “Constantinopolitana clades” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (15 October 1454, Frankfurt)*, p. 29.



in its essence relatively simple. The main point obviously lay in the fact that presented the unification of the whole Christendom and eventually the whole world under the rule of one monarch as a manifestation of divine will. This assertion was supported by references to various prophecies as well as by quoting a passage from the Gospel of John. The defence of the Christendom against external threats, maintaining of peace and upholding the rule of law were listed as main obligations of the universal ruler. To these was also added the propagation and spreading of Christian faith in hence “pagan” lands, as is apparent from the line “the whole world will receive our holy Catholic faith”, which clearly hints at the evangelization of America, which was just starting. The obligations of the “universal” monarch however hardly differed from what was normally expected from any medieval or early modern age sovereign, who were all at least theoretically supposed to act in the defence of the Christianity, spread the Gospel or uphold the rule of law. The only substantial difference lay in the scope of the authority which the universal monarch was supposed to wield, this difference was however nothing new, but was indeed well established within the European imperial tradition, starting with the emperor Charlemagne.

As we have already argued, the universalist ideology promoted by Mercurino di Gattinara and Alfonso de Valdés was not essentially original but was actually heavily drawing not only on western imperial tradition stretching back to Charlemagne, but also on broader intellectual foundations laid by various intellectuals who over the time favoured the idea of imperial universalism. In his article entitled *The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism*, John M. Headley identifies one of the main possible sources of early modern European universalism, which according to him was Joachim of Flora (or Fiore) (1135-1202), a Cistercian abbot, who at the beginning of the last decade of the 12<sup>th</sup> century founded his own abbey San Giovanni in Fiore.<sup>243</sup> Throughout his life, Joachim of Flora formulated his own distinctive eschatological theology and according to Headley, “Here was to be found the idea of that progressive trinitarian elaboration of world history, culminating in the Age of the Spirit with its profound sense of *renovatio*, renewal. The Joachimite pattern juxtaposed the greatest earthly beatitude and the greatest tribulation, and in its development looked to an outstanding ruler, a monarch of the whole world, a second Charlemagne, repeatedly identified either with a current French Rex Christianissimus or with a German Rex Romanorum who would renew the church, chastise its ministers, conquer the Turk, and—like David—gather all sheep into one fold.”<sup>244</sup>

Some of the main characteristics of Joachim’s work indeed correspond to the main points of imperial ideology established by Mercurino di Gattinara and further developed by Alfonso de Valdés. It is important to note that Joachim of Flora was provably known to Dante Alighieri, who mentioned him in his *Paradiso*, which constitutes the part of his trilogy known as *Divine Comedy*,<sup>245</sup> and who in

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<sup>243</sup>Vauchez, *The Religious Orders in The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 5, c. 1198-1300*, p. 227.

<sup>244</sup>Headley, *The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism*, p. 46.

<sup>245</sup>Alighieri, *Paradiso*, p. 79.

turn influenced Mercurino di Gattinara, as we will yet see. In his work, Joachim of Flora attempted to interpret the history of mankind using analogies between The Old and The New Testament, claiming that The Old Testament contained a key necessary to decoding the hidden meaning of the Apocalypse.<sup>246</sup> When Headley refers to “the progressive trinitarian elaboration of world history”, this means that Joachim divided the history humankind into three distinctive parts, each of whom corresponded to one aspect of the Trinity. And while the age of Old Testament corresponds to the Father and the New Testament to the Son, Joachim stipulates that these two epochs will be followed by the third, the age of Holy Spirit.<sup>247</sup>

As was noted by Schnurbein, despite the fact that the doctrine of Joachim was condemned as heretical at the fourth Lateran council, his influence persisted throughout the rest of Middle Ages.<sup>248</sup> The significance of the work of Joachim from our point of view however does not lie in the fact that he would politically support the emperor in his struggle against the pope, which in fact he did not,<sup>249</sup> but rather in his eschatological concept, which supposed the progress of mankind into “the Age of the Spirit”, a concept which supposed a certain transformation of the world, a concept which is obviously present in Gattinara’s thinking and through him also in the ideas of Alfonso de Valdés. Despite the fact that Joachim himself politically supported the pope, his ideas laid basis for the prophecies announcing the unification of the world under the rule of one emperor.<sup>250</sup> Vladimir Schnurbein recognized this in his dissertation dedicated to the topic of the idea of the universal monarchy and its impact on the politics of Mercurino di Gattinara, when he considers Joachim of Flora to be one of the most important pioneers of the “idea of imperial global domination” (kaiserlichen Weltherrschaftsidee), who also influenced Dante’s *Monarchia*,<sup>251</sup> an assessment which we have no reason to dispute.

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<sup>246</sup>Riedl, *Joachim of Fiore as Political Thinker in Joachim of Fiore and the Influence of Inspiration*, p. 58.

<sup>247</sup>Idem, p. 65. “Just as the Son proceeds from the Father, the letter of the New Testament proceeds from the letter of the Old Testament. Just as the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, spiritual understanding (*intellectus spiritualis*) proceeds from the Old and the New Testaments. The Father reveals himself particularly in the Old Testament and the Son in the New Testament. The Spirit, however, will have its own time, in which human understanding will transcend the letter of the Bible.”

<sup>248</sup>Schnurbein, *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V*, p. 41. “Obwohl die Lehre Joachims von Fiore schon vom vierten Laterankonzil 1215 als Häresie verurteilt worden war, hatte sie besonders seit den 1240er Jahren einen sehr starken Einfluss auf die mittelalterliche Geschichtsidee und wurde schließlich immer stärker mit der Idee des universalen Endzeitkaisers verquickt.“

<sup>249</sup>Riedl, *Joachim of Fiore as Political Thinker in Joachim of Fiore and the Influence of Inspiration*, p. 60. “[...] Joachim’s early interpretation of the Bible and church history has a clear political agenda: It provides an exegetical basis for the legitimation of papal leadership and the downgrading of the earthly rulers in the charismatic order of the *corpus Christi*. Joachim clearly takes sides in the symbolical struggle between emperor and pope.”

<sup>250</sup>Schnurbein, *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V*, p. 41. „Dieser prophezeite Endzeitkaiser sollte dann im 16. Jh. als Sohn eines Herrschers, dessen Name mit P. beginnen sollte, mit großer Macht kommen und die Welt unter einem Hirten und Herrn anführen.“

<sup>251</sup>Schnurbein, *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V*, p. 42. „Auch in der „Monarchia“ von Dante Alighieri, die die spätmittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Diskussion über das Kaisertum maßgeblich geprägt hat, lässt sich der Einfluss des immer wieder umgedeuteten joachitischen Gedankenguts nachweisen.<sup>141</sup> So wurde Joachim von Fiore – vermutlich ohne es zu wollen – zu einem der wichtigsten Vordenker der kaiserlichen Weltherrschaftsidee in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit.“

## 2.4. Ramón Menéndez Pidal and “The Imperial Idea of Charles V”

At this place, it is important that we pay attention to the problem we have already mentioned in the introduction to our work, which is the thesis regarding the exact nature of the idea of the universal empire formulated by Spanish historian Ramón Menéndez Pidal. In his essay entitled *Idea Imperial de Carlos V* (The Imperial Idea of Charles V), which was published in 1940, Ramón Menéndez Pidal summarized his own views regarding the nature and development of universalist ideology of the imperial court of Charles V. The work of Ramón Menéndez Pidal is very important from our point of view, because as we have already mentioned, the stance of Pidal differed significantly not only from that of German historian Karl Brandt, the author of one of the most influential biographies of Charles V so far, but from the opinions of some other researchers as well. The core argument of Ramón Menéndez Pidal lies in the distinction between two different concepts. The first of these concepts is called *monarquía universal* (universal monarchy) and Menéndez Pidal attributes its creation to Mercurino di Gattinara, while the other concept is called *imperio cristiano* (Christian empire) and its creation is ascribed to a group of Spanish advisers and courtiers of Charles V, the group which included Pedro Ruiz de la Mota, Antonio de Guevara and Alfonso de Valdés. As for Gattinara’s *monarquía universal*, Pidal states that:

“Gattinara was a humanist, captivated by the reading of the dantesque work *De Monarchia*. From it he draws the principle that the empire is a legal title for the [acquisition] of the whole world; so that Charles should not just *preserve* his hereditary kingdoms and dominions, but he should *acquire more*, aspire to [the establishment of] the worldwide monarchy.”<sup>252</sup>

Menéndez Pidal then continues to explain that according to him, Gattinara was pushing his ideas forward since 1519, when he urged Charles to present his imperial candidature and to recover not just the dominions previously lost by Habsburgs to France, but also those in Italy and other countries, while claiming that the rule of one sovereign was the only viable way for the establishment of the true peace. As for the concept of *imperio cristiano*, Menéndez Pidal states:

“On the contrary, what proposes the doctor Mota is a very distinct thing; it is, simply the *imperio cristiano*, which does not consist of the ambitions of conquest, but of fulfilment of a high moral duty of [achieving] harmony among the Catholic princes. The principal effect of such empire is not to subjugate other kings, but to coordinate and lead the forces of them all against the infidels, to achieve

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<sup>252</sup> Pidal, *Idea Imperial de Carlos V*, p. 18. “Gattinara era un humanista, cautivado por la lectura de la obra dantesca *De Monarchia*. De ella saca el principio de que el imperio es título jurídico para el mundo todo; así que Carlos, no sólo había de *conservar* los reinos y dominios hereditarios, sino *adquirir más*, aspirando a la monarquía del orbe.”

the universality of the European culture. Gattinara, the *monarquía universal*; Mota, the direction of the *universitas christiana*.”<sup>253</sup>

Apart from Alfonso de Valdés and Pedro Ruiz de la Mota, whom we have already mentioned in the context of the Cortés held in Santiago de Compostela in 1520, Menéndez Pidal mentions the person of Antonio de Guevara, a bishop of Guadix, who served not only as a preacher in the royal chapel but was also active as a historian, while among his most significant works were *El reloj de príncipes* (The Mirror of Princes) and *Libro aureo del emperador Marco Aurelio* (The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius). Menéndez Pidal claims that it was precisely this work that influenced Charles V when he was making his speech in Madrid in December 1528, in which he announced his intention to sail to Italy in order to receive the imperial crown in the following year. Menéndez Pidal also specifically mentions the claims of Charles V that his intentions were not to take from others what is theirs, but solely to preserve that which he inherited, while claiming that the prince who conquers what is not his is nothing more than a tyrant. According to Menéndez Pidal, these ideas have their origin in *El reloj de príncipes* and are contrary to the ideas of the grand chancellor Gattinara,<sup>254</sup> whose aim allegedly was to convince Charles V to attempt to conquer foreign countries and forcibly unite them all into one “universal monarchy”.

As for the role of Alfonso de Valdés, Menéndez Pidal mentions the significance of his two dialogues, which he calls to be among “the most beautiful monuments of the clean, smooth and natural language of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and of the Spanish language of all the time.”<sup>255</sup>

The opinions of Menéndez Pidal were also at least partly shared by José Antonio Maravall, another Spanish historian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who claimed that

“With the arrival of Charles I to Spain, there is an attempt to revitalize the traditional concept of the Holy Empire, as has been demonstrated by Menéndez Pidal. The idea is neither Spanish nor Italian, as claims Brandi, but European, although Spaniards are those who in this epoch [are trying to] achieve it, just like the means with which it was attempted to accomplish it were Spanish. But either way, it is an ephemeral episode in Spain of the Renaissance of the second Habsburg, although it had awakened a lively illusion in the mind of educated Spaniards.”<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Pidal, *Idea Imperial de Carlos V*, p.18-19. “Por el contrario, lo que propone el doctor Mota es cosa muy distinta; es, simplemente, el *imperio cristiano*, que no es ambición de conquistas, sino cumplimiento de un alto deber moral de armonía entre los príncipes católicos. La efectividad principal de tal imperio no es someter a los demás reyes, sino coordinar y dirigir los esfuerzos de todos ellos contra los infieles, para lograr la universalidad de la cultura europea. Gattinara, la *monarquía universal*; Mota, la dirección de la *universitas christiana*.”

<sup>254</sup> Idem, p. 26-27.

<sup>255</sup> Idem, p. 24. “[...] se cuentan entre los monumentos más hermosos del limpio, terso y natural lenguaje del siglo XVI y del habla española de todos los tiempos.”

<sup>256</sup> Maravall, *Teoría Española del Estado en el Siglo XVII*, p. 90. „Con la llegada de Carlos I a España hay un intento de revitalizar la concepción tradicional del Sacro Imperio, como Menéndez Pidal ha demostrado. La idea no es española, como tampoco italiana, según pretende Brandi, sino europea, aunque sí son españoles el empeño de realizarla en aquella

The possible discrepancy between the ideas of Mercurino di Gattinara and Alfonso de Valdés is also mentioned by Ángel Angalá, who however claimed it to be “unnecessary to take sides in the polemical theory of Pidal”, which he then described to be “as nationalist as all his other theories”.<sup>257</sup>

The claim of Maravall that Menéndez Pidal “has demonstrated” that the universalist ideology of the imperial court of Charles V was actually “an attempt to revitalize the traditional concept of Holy Roman Empire” is not wrong. After all, the imperial dignity that Charles possessed was exactly the same dignity that was also possessed by all other emperors since the time of Charlemagne, the only substantial difference was that Charles had at his disposal significantly greater means of backing it up with economic as well as military resources than most of his medieval predecessors. It is uncertain to which degree is it possible to call the empire of Charles “European”, since in a strict sense of the word, the authors of the 16<sup>th</sup> century usually did not employ this term very frequently.<sup>258</sup> Instead of being grounded in some exclusively European identity, the empire of Charles V was essentially Christian. It is nonetheless obvious that in the context of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Christendom was already for a long time pushed from the north-African shore, just as it has lost its holdings in the Palestine and with the fall of eastern-Roman empire, it was pushed from Anatolia as well. Describing the imperial project of Charles V as “European” thus may not be completely wrong, but it is nonetheless necessary to emphasize the fact that identity of Europeans of that time was not rooted in some secular notion of common European mutuality as it is today, but it was instead deeply rooted in Christian religion. It is telling that in his dialogues, Alfonso de Valdés himself repeatedly talks about “cristianidad” (Christendom), but he never uses the term “Europe”. But putting aside the question of terminology, what can we say about the fundamental difference between the two supposedly different concepts promoted by Gattinara on one side and Spaniards like Valdés, Mota and Guevara on the other?

By speaking about the differences between *monarquía universal* of Gattinara and the Spanish concept of *imperio cristiano*, Menéndez Pidal implicitly suggests that there exists a certain fundamental difference between these two concepts regarding their relationship to the Christian religion. The Christian doctrine is thus supposedly either completely absent or at least is not a defining factor in Gattinara’s vision of *monarquía universal*, but at the same time it defines the Spanish concept of *imperio cristiano*. As we have already seen, Mercurino di Gattinara is instead accused by Menéndez Pidal of striving to create the world empire by force, that is by conquering or

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época y los medios con que se la quiere llevar a cabo. Pero de todos modos, es un episodio efímero en la España renacentista del segundo Austria, aunque haya despertado viva ilusión en los ánimos de los españoles cultos.”

<sup>257</sup> Alcalá in Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. XVI. „No importa ahora terciar, quién pudiera, en la polémica teoría pidaliana, tan nacionalista como todas las suyas [...]“

<sup>258</sup> This does not mean, however, that the term „Europe“ was not used at all. Enea Silvio Piccolomini, the future pope Pius II invoked the term “Europe” in his already mentioned speech in Frankfurt in 1454.

subduing independent Christian as well as other kingdoms and incorporating them into one universal empire.

It is however necessary to state that the existence of dichotomy between these two concepts, suggested by Menéndez Pidal, is unfounded. Firstly, the ideas of Gattinara were just as rooted in the Christian religion as those of Alfonso de Valdés and other Spanish authors mentioned by Menéndez Pidal. These ideas were already explicitly formulated in Gattinara's pamphlet *Oratio Supplicatoria*, written in 1516, to whose content we will pay closer attention further in our work. Unfortunately, this document was never published by Gattinara and its manuscripts had been lost for several centuries, until one of them was finally rediscovered by John M. Headley in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>259</sup> The ignorance of this document by Menéndez Pidal, who published his essay *Idea Imperial de Carlos V* in 1940, thus may at least partly explain his assumption that Mercurino di Gattinara did not base his imperial vision mainly in the Christian religion, although the very opposite is true, because it was Gattinara who regarded the establishment of the universal empire as the fulfilment of God's plan for the salvation of mankind, which according to him was foretold by numerous prophecies and was also foreshadowed by the Holy Scripture itself. On the other hand, besides *Oratio supplicatoria*, the ideas of Gattinara were also elaborated in various memoranda addressed to Charles V, such as the one written in Barcelona on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1519. While it is true that in this memorandum, Gattinara explicitly writes about the unification of the whole world under the rule of one ruler, or more precisely under the rule of one "shepherd",<sup>260</sup> it is not specified that this needs to be done necessarily by force. On the contrary, the employment of the term "shepherd" by Gattinara seems to suggest care and protection rather than direct rule by force, and as we will yet see, the similar distinction was also employed by Alfonso de Valdés in his dialogues. In his Barcelona memorandum, Gattinara also explicitly states that the universal empire of Charles should serve to the benefit of the Catholic faith and the whole Christendom,<sup>261</sup> making the claim that Gattinara's vision was not based in Christianity obsolete. The fact that Gattinara's ideas were fully established within the Christian religious framework is corroborated also by Rebecca Ard Boone, who claimed that "Religiously, he used the metaphor of the flock under the good shepherd. Individuals were encouraged to see themselves as elements of a larger, cosmic harmony. Readers were drawn into a narrative of linear history." This history was supposed to begin with the birth of Jesus Christ and culminate in the future, in which "Charles would unite all of Christendom and initiate an era of peace and harmony."<sup>262</sup>

Despite the claims made by Menéndez Pidal, both Gattinara as well as Spaniards such as Mota and Valdés often used the same material in order to advance their cause. Thus, Gattinara for example

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<sup>259</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 141. "It had been lost for centuries until John Headley found it in the British Library in the 1990s."

<sup>260</sup>Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.*, p. 59. „[...] um den ganzen Erdkreis unter einem Hirten zu vereinigen [...]“.

<sup>261</sup>Ibidem. „[...] zur Erhöhung Seines heiligen katholischen Glaubens, und zur Förderung der gesamten Christenheit [...]“.

<sup>262</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 36.

used the speech made by Mota at the Cortes of Santiago in 1520 as a base for the publication of the pamphlet entitled *Regis recessuri adlocutio in Conventu Hispaniarum*, about which we have already talked previously and about which Headley says that it constitutes “Latin reworking of the heart of the famous speech by Pedro Ruiz de la Mota, bishop of Badajoz, to the cortes of Santiago de Compostela on the early afternoon of 31 March 1520”,<sup>263</sup> which is however not compatible with the opinion of Menéndez Pidal, according to whom both men worked with a substantially different concept of the empire.

Furthermore, there is nothing in Gattinara’s autobiography which would suggest that he was in favour of dominating the entire world by force. Gattinara certainly did not shun from using the force against the enemies of the emperor, when this use of force seem necessary or highly beneficial, as is obvious from his already cited Dunkirk memorandum from 1521, in which he urged the emperor to pursue the war against the king of France Francis I, this force was however supposed to be used either in self-defence or as a means of regaining the dominions, which according to Gattinara lawfully belonged to Charles V, such as Burgundian lands annexed by France after the death of Charles the Bold.

In the light of “charges” levelled by Ramón Menéndez Pidal, we may also let speak the grand chancellor of the emperor for himself. In his autobiography, Gattinara recalled his contribution to the discussion, which followed the victory of Pavia in 1525 and which pertained to future imperial strategy in Italy. Gattinara recalled that:

“He said that they [Italians] needed to be won over to Caesar’s wishes not by force but by human kindness. Caesar knew that if he tried to use force to do it, he would have perpetual war on his hands. Nor could he ever look after the peace or tranquillity of Christendom. He would also encounter the same difficulty that the Romans had experienced for so many years, who spent more time and energy to acquire Italy than to obtain the monarchy of the rest of the whole world. Finally, he concluded that Italy, if possible, should be held together by love rather than by force. He would press for peace, if it could be gained, but a peace entirely negotiated and accepted by everyone, the French as well as the Italians. Rather than inciting new wars, he would arrange everything to promote tranquillity and universal peace.”<sup>264</sup>

Although written by Gattinara himself and thus naturally not truly objective, the grand chancellor’s autobiography tells as at least as much that he did not openly call for forced unification or conquests, but rather for an establishment of some kind of looser hegemony, at least in the context of Italy. Given the complexity of Italian geopolitical landscape, with which he was naturally quite

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<sup>263</sup>Headley, *The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism*, p. 52.

<sup>264</sup>Gattinara, *Autobiography, Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 104.

familiar, we see no reason to dispute this statement made by Gattinara, since it is relatively safe to assume that the grand chancellor was very well aware that the forced unification of Italy would consume unmeasurable amount of imperial funds and energy and that results of this attempt would be still uncertain.

The proposal of Menéndez Pidal that Gattinara's concept of *monarquía universal* is fundamentally different from *imperio cristiano* promoted by Alfonso de Valdés and other Spaniards is thus unsustainable. In fact, these two terms can be regarded more or less interchangeable, because both Gattinara and Valdés sought the establishment of the universal Christian empire and they both operated in the same framework, which is only logical considering the fact, that Valdés worked as a personal secretary of Gattinara. The assumption that Gattinara did not strive to expand the empire of Charles V violently is also confirmed by John M. Headley in his study of Gattinara, in which he draws the exact opposite conclusion from that of Ramón Menéndez Pidal, by saying that "Consequently *monarchia* neither connoted nor aspired to a uniformly organized empire but intended rather a looser hegemony which gave room to the local privileges, provincial customs and native institutions of the various lands."<sup>265</sup> It is also illuminating to note that the terminology suggesting the creation of "Christian world empire" was also utilized by Odyniec in his work dedicated to Johannes Dantiscus, who in the discussion of development after 1526 claimed:

"After he was released by Charles [in 1526], Francis resumed hostilities and dispatched Antonio de Rincón<sup>266</sup> to Constantinople to pursue a Franco-Turkish Alliance in 1527. While this was no problem for [the Polish king] Sigismund, it was abhorrent to Dantiscus, his ambassador, who by that time had developed a philosophy of Christian world empire out of his collaboration with Gattinara and his secretary, Alfonso de Valdés."<sup>267</sup>

Interestingly, unlike Menéndez Pidal, Odyniec suggests "Christian world empire" to be a singular concept created by Gattinara in collaboration with Alfonso de Valdés, instead of being some kind of alternative program created in opposition to Gattinara's ideas. This is not to say that the ideas of Gattinara and Alfonso de Valdés were identical. It is undeniable that Gattinara focused more on the question related to the statecraft and the geopolitical considerations, while Alfonso de Valdés was also deeply concerned with the problems of public morality and religious reform. This could be the result both of different personalities of these two men as well as the fact that Alfonso de Valdés was personally more influenced by the ideas of Erasmus, while Gattinara was formed by his studies of law as well as by his experiences collected while serving in the ranks of Habsburg diplomacy.

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<sup>265</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 12.

<sup>266</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 147., Antonio de Rincón, a Spanish exile who had been on the wrong side of the *Comuneros* Revolt. Rincón entered French service and was later envoy to Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania."

<sup>267</sup>*Ibidem*.



It is also not wrong to brand the theory of Menéndez Pidal as nationalist, as was done by Alcalá. After all, the essay *Idea imperial de Carlos V* was published shortly after the end of the Spanish civil war (1936-1939), which saw the victory of Spanish nationalist forces led by Francisco Franco (1892-1975) over their republican, socialist and communist enemies, which in turn meant that in the time where Menéndez Pidal wrote his essay, there existed a strong official demand for asserting the historical role of Spain as one of the great European powers. While this in itself in no way disproves theories presented by Pidal, it may help us understand the background of their author and the context of their creation.

While it would be erroneous to claim that Alfonso de Valdés helped to create a concept of *imperio cristiano*, which would somehow compete with the concept of the *monarquía universal* of Gattinara, as is suggested by Menéndez Pidal, it is obviously also erroneous to claim Alfonso de Valdés to be completely subservient to Gattinara, as was done by Manuel Rivero Rodríguez in his article *Alfonso de Valdés y el Gran Canciller Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara: El erasmismo en la Cancillería imperial (1527-1530)*, where he claims that the thoughts of Valdés expressed in his *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* cannot be regarded as the “properly” thoughts of Valdés himself, because he lacked the necessary liberty to develop them, but instead are only “complementary to the thoughts of his patron”, that is to the ideas Mercurino di Gattinara.<sup>268</sup> As an evidence for his claim, Rodríguez mentions the painting of Alfonso de Valdés made by Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, currently displayed at the National Gallery in London, which shows Alfonso de Valdés holding a miniature of Gattinara. While this painting certainly may suggest Valdés’s loyalty towards Gattinara, it is by itself completely insufficient to support the claims made by Rodríguez. According to the letter written by Valdés and addressed to Erasmus, which we have already mentioned previously, the initiative to write the dialogue dedicated to the Sack of Rome came from the group of his friends, who precise identity Valdés does not disclose. Furthermore, in his letter to Castiglione from August 1528, Valdés claimed that while he indeed approached the grand chancellor Gattinara for advice when writing *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, he was however only one of several men whose assistance Valdés requested, also claiming that the changes he made as a result of these consultations were not substantial, but amounted only to removing or altering a few passages, and what is even more important, Valdés did not even suggest that this was done on the advice of Mercurino di Gattinara.<sup>269</sup> It is naturally true that Alfonso de Valdés held similar opinions to those of Gattinara

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<sup>268</sup>Rodríguez, *Alfonso de Valdés y el Gran Canciller Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara: El erasmismo en la Cancillería imperial (1527-1530)*; 13. “[...] hemos de señalar que el pensamiento de Valdés, expresado en su *Diálogo de las cosas sucedidas en Roma*, no era propiamente suyo sino complementario del de su patrono. No disponía de la libertad individual que la crítica suele atribuir a literatos y artistas, pues por su oficio era ejecutor de la mente de otro.”

<sup>269</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 109. “Y porque VS. no me tenga por tan temerario como quizá me han pintado, es bien que sepa, que antes que yo mostrase este *Diálogo*, lo vio el señor Jo. Alemán el primero, después Juan Manuel, y después el canciller, porque como personas prudentes, y que entendían los negocios, me pudieron corregir y emendar lo que mal les pareciesse. Por consejo de D. Juan emendé dos cosas. No contento con esto porque había casos que tocaban a la religión,

regarding the conflict with the pope Clement VII or the nature of the imperial power in general, but this similarity was above all the result of the fact that both men were a part of the imperial court and thus naturally held opinions favourable to the emperor, and both of them were naturally trying to influence the public opinion in his favour. Thus, although it is undeniable that in the hierarchy of the imperial court, Alfonso de Valdés was subordinated to Gattinara, there is no real basis to affirm that the thoughts expressed in his dialogues – Rodríguez mentions only the first of the two, while ignoring *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* – are not “properly his”.

## 2.5. Dante Alighieri and his Monarchia

As we have already seen in our discussion of the thesis of Ramón Menéndez Pidal, it is generally accepted that one of the main sources of inspiration for Mercurino di Gattinara was the work of famous Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), entitled *Monarchia*. Unlike some other famous works of this author, which were written in vernacular, Dante’s *Monarchia* was written in Latin. It presented a relatively comprehensive formulation of universalist ideology and it called for the establishment of one universal empire and the elimination of temporal power of the church and the papacy. The fact that this work was known at the imperial court of Charles V is easily attested by the fact that in 1527, Mercurino di Gattinara himself had requested Erasmus of Rotterdam to prepare a modern edition of this work, undoubtedly in order to further bolster the imperial pretensions of Charles V in the eyes of European public. While Odyniec mentions that the reply of Erasmus to this request is unknown,<sup>270</sup> Ard Boone claims that Erasmus “tactfully refused the offer”.<sup>271</sup> Whether Erasmus directly refused or not, it is obvious that Gattinara’s attempts to secure a publication of *Monarchia* were clearly unsuccessful. But why was this work so important in the first place?

Considering the Italian origin of Gattinara as well as his erudition, it is more than likely that he had already known the content of *Monarchia* when he wrote his tractate *Oratio Supplicatoria* in 1516; it is also likely that Alfonso de Valdés, who belonged to the grand chancellor’s close circle, was familiar with the ideas of Dante as well. The significance of Dante’s ideas is also attested by the fact certain attempts to suppress it were made. It was noted by Prue Shaw, the author of a modern English edition of *Monarchia*, that despite the criticism this work had received, it was judged by containing thoughts dangerous enough to warrant its censorship:

„Dante’s treatise, so often described by later historians as back-ward looking and hopelessly unrealistic as a solution to the problems of his age – an age when the restoration of an empire was

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y yo no soy, ny presumo de ser teólogo, lo mostré al dottor Coronel, el qual después de haverlo passado dos veces, me amonestó que emendasse algunas cosas, que aunque no fuessen impías, podáan ser de algunos coluniadas.”

<sup>270</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 167.

<sup>271</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 49.

becoming an increasingly remote likelihood as perceptions of national identity and state boundaries were hardening – was nonetheless judged sufficiently dangerous by his immediate and near contemporaries to merit a detailed rebuttal by a Dominican friar (c. 1327) a ritual burning on the orders of a higher prelate in 1329 [...] and a place on the Vatican's index of prohibited books (1554)".<sup>272</sup>

This attitude does not seem surprising if we consider the fact that the thing for which Dante called was nothing less than the elimination of temporal power of the papacy and the reduction of its competences exclusively to the spiritual sphere, while the historical development of papal power in the medieval and early modern period took exactly the opposite direction, that is the direction towards the consolidation of not just spiritual, but the temporal power as well. It is necessary to note that Dante Alighieri was by no means the only late medieval author who criticized the temporal power of the Roman church and the papacy. The similar attitudes were also developed for example by William Ockham (1285-1347), a supporter of the emperor Louis IV the Bavarian (r. 1327-1347), who argued for the divine origin of the secular power and who stated that the Roman empire was sanctioned by Christ himself, the argument which was utilized by Dante Alighieri himself. On top of this, Ockham also denied the right of papacy to interfere in secular matters. The similar concept was also developed by medieval thinker Marsilius of Padua (1275-1342), another partisan of the emperor Louis IV and the author of the work *Defensor Pacis* (Defender of the Peace), who not only rejected the papal primacy, but who was also a great proponent of the idea of conciliarism, since he regarded the council, and not the pope, to represent the highest Christian authority,<sup>273</sup> an idea which was very actual in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as well. John M. Headley also mentions that the ideas outlined by Dante at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century were further developed by another Italian author Bartolus de Saxoferrato (1313-1357).<sup>274</sup>

Dante Alighieri himself wrote his *Monarchia* towards the end of his life, that is during the second decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in a time when Italian peninsula was politically fragmented into several more or less powerful city states such as Florence, Venice or Milan. In this aspect, the Italian reality of the 13<sup>th</sup> century to some degree resembled the political reality of early 16<sup>th</sup> century, although the precise distribution of the power among various city states as well as external powers such as France or Spain naturally changed. In the last two decades of his life, Dante Alighieri was forced to observe this political reality from the exile, to which he was forced from his native city of Florence, since he was expelled when his native city was taken over by the Black Guelphs party, while Dante Alighieri belonged to the party of the White Guelphs.<sup>275</sup> During the time of his exile, Dante put his

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<sup>272</sup>Shaw in Alighieri, *Monarchy*, p. XXXII – XXXIII.

<sup>273</sup>Drška, Picková, *Dějiny středověké Evropy*, p. 287-288.

<sup>274</sup>Headley, *The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism*, p. 51.

<sup>275</sup>Davies, *Evropa*, p. 416.

hopes in the person of Henry of Luxembourg, who was elected the new King of Romans in 1308 and who then realized his journey to Italy, where he was crowned the new emperor in 1312. Dante Alighieri even went so far as to hail the emperor's journey to Italy as "the beginning of the new golden age",<sup>276</sup> his hopes were however marred by the sudden death of Henry in 1313.

What is, then, the exact content of Dante's philosophy, what was his vision of for humanity and how did it contribute to the ideology of imperial universalism of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century? At the very beginning of his *Monarchia*, Dante begins by explaining his view on the potential of humankind:

„The activity proper to mankind considered as a whole is constantly to actualize the full intellectual potential of humanity, primarily through thought and secondarily through action (as a function and extension of thought).“<sup>277</sup>

In order to accordingly fulfil this potential, it is crucial to achieve the establishment of universal peace, as Dante explains:

„From the arguments developed so far, it is clear what is the better, indeed the best, way of enabling mankind to engage in the activity proper to humanity; and consequently we see the most direct means of achieving the goal to which all our human actions are directed as to their final end. That means is universal peace, which is to be taken as the first principle for the arguments which follow.“<sup>278</sup>

The calls for the establishment of peace as a necessary precondition for the "well-being of the commonwealth" resounded heavily at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, just as they did three hundred years later, when Alfonso de Valdés and like-minded humanist spirits addressed the state of the Christendom and as we will yet see, it formed the key component of the universalist ideology of the imperial court.

After establishing this premise, Dante Alighieri continues by describing the hierarchical principles, which according to him naturally exists within every social institution, be it in a family, a neighbourhood, a city or a kingdom. According to Dante, all of these institutions are, in one way or another, led by persons who take upon themselves the responsibility to lead the others. Dante then extends this argument by proposing that similar hierarchical principle should be applied on a worldwide scale:

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<sup>276</sup>Schnurbein, *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V*, p. 44.

<sup>277</sup>Alighieri, *Monarchy*, p. 8.

<sup>278</sup>Idem, p. 9.

„Now it is agreed that the whole mankind is ordered to one goal, as has already been demonstrated: there must therefore be one person who directs and rules mankind, and he is properly called „Monarch or „Emperor“. And thus it is apparent that the well-being of the world requires that there be a monarchy or empire.“<sup>279</sup>

Once established, the supreme ruler of this empire then could act as the highest judicial authority. However, in order to be able to do that, it is necessary for him to be universally recognized as such. The existence of some alternative power, which would lie outside of the emperor’s jurisdiction, would negate this principle,<sup>280</sup> and it could prevent fulfilling of the true potential of mankind.

After having his position secured, the supreme monarch could then act as a guarantor of the justice, since his supreme power would arguably free him of any remaining ambitions, which normally tend to plague other rulers:

„But there is nothing the monarch *could* covet, for his jurisdiction is bounded only by the ocean; whereas this is not the case with other rules, whose sovereignty extends only as far as the neighbouring kingdom, as is the case, for instance, with the kings of Castille and of Aragon.“<sup>281</sup>

In this way, Dante Alighieri thus anticipates one of the logical counterarguments against the establishment of the universal empire, which is that its ruler could easily become a tyrant, whose absolute power would be completely unchecked. Dante considers tyranny to be one of the three forms of bad government, while the other two are oligarchy and democracy, which he calls the “rule of the mob”. The existence of tyranny is however seen more as an argument for the establishment of the universal empire than other way around, since the supreme emperor would be able to keep individual “bad” kings and tyrants in check and thus actually preventing tyranny.<sup>282</sup> To judge whether Dante’s reasoning that universal monarch would be so powerful to the point that he could not “covet” anything is correct or not is difficult, since no ruler ever has actually achieved the universal and undisputed rule over the whole world, therefore this hypothesis could not have been tested, although the dictatorships of the 20<sup>th</sup> century certainly cast doubt on Dante’s theory.

One of the strongest arguments that Dante Alighieri uses, at least in late medieval context, is the one, according to which the universal empire was sanctioned by God himself. This allegedly already happened in the case of Roman empire, whose success and political dominance would be, according to Dante, impossible without the God’s grace.<sup>283</sup> As an evidence, Dante mentions miracles,

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<sup>279</sup>Alighieri, *Monarchy*, p. 10-11.

<sup>280</sup>Idem, p. 14.

<sup>281</sup>Idem, p. 18.

<sup>282</sup>Idem, p. 21.

<sup>283</sup>Idem, p. 30-31.

divine grace as well as virtues of Romans themselves, which allowed Romans to achieve their empire and which can be granted, according to Dante, by God alone.<sup>284</sup>

The legitimacy of Roman power was then allegedly further sanctioned by Jesus himself, who not only chose to be born as a Roman citizen, but who also recognized the legitimacy of Roman judicial system.<sup>285</sup> If we consider the fact that medieval Holy Roman Empire, established by Charlemagne in 800, theoretically constituted a successor of ancient Roman Empire and according to Dante's reasoning, it enjoyed the divine favour as well, it is not surprising that this argument was indeed heavily utilized by the imperial court of Charles V.

Dante Alighieri further rejects the idea of papal supremacy over secular princes, including the emperor himself. His main argument is that since the existence of the empire historically precedes the existence of the church, the church cannot be the source of its power or legitimacy.<sup>286</sup> This argument is historically true, as long as we are going to suppose the direct continuity between the Holy Roman Empire and the ancient Roman Empire. According to Dante, the papal claims of sovereignty over emperors also cannot be based on the fact that it was the pope himself who crowned Charlemagne as the emperor, since the usurpation of the right does not grant it legitimacy. The popes thus do not possess the right to bestow an imperial title on anyone, since the very act upon which they base this right was not legitimate in the first place. Dante adds that in the similar manner, it was also emperors themselves who in the past sometimes interfered in the papal elections, and as an example mentions the fact that the emperor Otto I expelled the pope Benedict V and replaced him with Leo VIII.<sup>287</sup>

Unfortunately, Dante Alighieri does not address the problem of the existence of two Christian empires. Even though the Eastern-Roman Empire was past its zenith by the time Dante wrote his *Monarchia*, not only facing every increasing Ottoman pressure, but also suffering the effects of the sack of its capital Constantinople by western crusaders in 1204,<sup>288</sup> it nonetheless continued to exist and unlike its western counterpart, it could actually boast of uninterrupted continuity with ancient Roman Empire.

Dante Alighieri also refused the legitimacy of Constantine's donation, upon which, as we have already mentioned, the papacy based its claim to secular rule over the territory of central Italy, also known as "the Patrimony of Saint Peter". Dante, however, does not consider Constantine's donation to be false, because its falsehood was proven only more than two hundred years after his death by Lorenzo Valla. But even as a genuine document, Constantine's donation was not considered to be

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<sup>284</sup>Alighieri, *Monarchy*, p. 37-50.

<sup>285</sup>Idem, p. 58-60.

<sup>286</sup>Idem, p. 86-87.

<sup>287</sup>Idem, p. 83-84.

<sup>288</sup>Schnurbein, *Mercurino Gattinara, die Idee der Monarchia Universalis und ihre Wirkung auf die Politik Kaiser Karls V.*, p. 41-42.

legitimate by Dante, because according to him the emperor Constantine did not have the right to diminish the imperial territory by granting any part of it to the pope or the church. The empire, as the highest secular institution of the world, did not have a “right to destroy itself”, nor did it have the right to voluntarily conceding part of its territory.<sup>289</sup>

What is uttermost relevant from our point of view is Dante’s take on the definition of papal power. In a stark contrast with the policy pursued by various popes in the course of the medieval epoch, Dante Alighieri calls for nothing less than complete abolition of secular power of the church, whose authority should be confined exclusively into the spiritual sphere, while the secular affairs should be left exclusively to the secular power and to the empire as the highest instance. Dante argues that this duality mirrors human nature itself, since it is in human nature to seek both happiness in this life as well as salvation in the next one. Dante thus concludes that the emperor is bound to accept papal authority in spiritual matters, but nowhere else:

„Let Caesar therefore show that reverence towards Peter which a firstborn son should show his father, so that, illumined by the light of paternal grace, he may the more effectively light up the world, over which he has been placed by Him alone who is ruler over all things spiritual and temporal.”<sup>290</sup>

The imperial rule in Dante’s philosophy is sanctioned by God’s approval and the princes-electors, whose task was to elect the new emperor, were regarded as a director tool of divine providence.<sup>291</sup>

The concept of *Dei gratia rex*, that is “The king by the grace of God”, by which the highest secular representatives legitimized their power was traditionally firmly established within the European political culture from the medieval epoch until the modern age. The Dante’s concept is however different since its author supposes that in the case of the universal empire, God’s grace indeed legitimizes the rule over the whole world. This, according to Dante, can be induced from the natural law, which was created by divine provenience and is a necessary precondition for the establishment of worldwide peace. The world as Dante and his contemporaries knew it was significantly “smaller” than the world of later generations, because the knowledge about the American continent, Australia and great part of Africa was not available to the inhabitants of Europe of the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Even then, Dante makes a mistake when he claims that the Roman Empire, as the only empire in history, was able to dominate the entire world,<sup>292</sup> since even by the standards of antiquity of medieval epoch, the Roman Empire never actually managed to control the whole known world.

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<sup>289</sup>Alighieri, *Monarchy*, p. 80-83.

<sup>290</sup>Idem, p. 91-94.

<sup>291</sup>Idem, p. 93.

<sup>292</sup>Idem, p. 50-53.

## 2.6. The kingdom of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire

Before we continue our discussion about the nature of the imperial universalism, it is fitting to address the issue of the nature of the institutional power with which Charles V ruled his vast and quite heterogeneous dominions. Some contemporary critiques, such as Spanish theologian and a representative of so-called school of Salamanca Francisco de Victoria (1483-1546), argued that the notion of the universal empire was impossible, since Charles did not rule Spain and its overseas possessions as the emperor, but only as a king.<sup>293</sup> Factually, this argument was certainly true, because Spain itself had indeed not been institutionally connected with the Holy Roman Empire in any way. As Alfred Kohler noted, the distinction between Charles's regal authority, which applied to Spain with its territories in Italy or America and his imperial authority, which applied to Holy Roman Empire, was officially recognized by an edict published in Barcelona in September 1519, that means a few months after Charles's imperial election.<sup>294</sup> This distinction, however, did not seem to bother the members of the imperial court very much. Alfonso de Valdés, a Spaniard who wrote his two polemical dialogues principally mainly for Spanish audience,<sup>295</sup> preferred to refer to Charles V as "the emperor", and although he occasionally lapsed into calling Charles "the king of Spain", there is no indication that the fact that imperial title applied only to a part of Charles's dominions presented a theoretical problem either for him or for Mercurino di Gattinara. After all, Gattinara began to advocate for the establishment of the universal empire even before Charles's imperial election in spring 1519 and according to his vision, the acquisition of the imperial title for Charles served as one of the steps in achieving the plan formulated several years ago, not the other way around.

Even many other Spaniards did not see any contradiction between royal and imperial dignity of Charles V. We have already quoted the bishop of Badajoz Pedro Ruiz de la Mota, who in 1520 hailed Charles as the future "emperor of the world". While doing so, Mota invoked the ancient bond between Roman Empire and Spain, which under the name of "Hispania" formed one of its principal parts. But there were other Spaniards who lauded the universal empire of Charles V, such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, the official historian of Spanish empire,<sup>296</sup> who in his *Historial general y natural de las Indias* wrote:

"He [Charles] has been worthy, thanks to the divine clemency (which made him deserving of his good fortune, as well as ours), to be the lord of such valiant nation, so that in the present, as can be seen, we may see the flag of Spain to be celebrated as the most victorious, respected as the most glorious,

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<sup>293</sup>Fibiger Bang, Kołodziejczyk, *Universal empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, p. 7

<sup>294</sup>Kohler, *Carlos V*, p. 237.

<sup>295</sup>The fact that his targeted audience were other Spaniards was openly admitted by Valdés himself. See Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 283.

<sup>296</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 520.



and loved as the one most worthy to be loved in the universe. And so, the time teaches us and we can palpably see that, which has not been seen under the sky, in the power and noble majesty of any Christian prince; and so it must be expected that our Caesar is going to acquire and reach the summit of the universal monarchy, and in a short time we are going to see it under his yoke and obedience. And I am not saying this just about infidels, but also about those who call themselves Christians, if they recognize our Caesar as superior, as they are ought and as God has ordained.”<sup>297</sup>

In one of his letters addressed to the emperor, support for the universal empire was expressed also by a conquistador and founder of Santiago de Chile, Pedro de Valdivia (1497-1553):

“I do not wish anything else but to discover and populate lands for Your Highness, and for no other interest, but just for the honour and favours that will be deem appropriate to grant me, so that I will bequeath memory of me and my fame, which I won through was as a poor soldier, while serving so distinguished monarch, who every hour puts his most holy person in the battle against the common enemy of the Christianity and his allies, and with his unbeatable arm defends the honour of the Christianity and our God.”<sup>298</sup>

Valdivia thus employs the similar reasoning as did the imperial court itself – the universal rule of Charles V should be recognized, because it is he who sacrifices his very person in order to protect the Christendom from external threats. The discovery and the conquest of hence unknown American lands could be seen as a contribution to this cause, not only because it greatly increased the prestige of Charles V, but mainly because it had secured for him an additional source of income, which could be used in order to protect the Christians from the Ottoman power. One of the first Spanish conquistadors, who fully realized the potential of the New world and the prestige it could bring to the emperor Charles V, was none other than the conqueror of Mexico, Hernán Cortés (1485-1547). At the beginning of the second of his total five letters to Charles, Cortés claimed that

“I have wished Your Highness to know about the things [pertaining to] this land, which are so numerous and of such nature that, as I have already written in the other relation, [Your Highness] can

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<sup>297</sup>Fernández de Oviedo, *Sumario de la Natural Historia de las Indias*, p. 9-10. “Ha sido digno [Carlos I], mediante la divina clemencia (que le hizo merecedor de sus buenas venturas y nuestras) de ser señor de tan valerosa nación, para que veamos al presente, como se ve, la bandera española celebrada por la más victoriosa, acatada por la más gloriosa, y amada por la más digna de ser querida en el universo. Y así nos enseña el tiempo y vemos palpable lo que nunca bajo el cielo se vió hasta ahora en el poderío y alta majestad de algún príncipe cristiano; y así se debe esperar que está por adquirir y venir al colmo de la monarquía universal de nuestro César, lo veremos en breve tiempo bajo su yugo y obediencia. Y no digo esto sólo por los infieles; pero ni de los que se llaman cristianos, si dejaren de reconocer por superior, como deben y Dios tiene ordenado, a nuestro César.”

<sup>298</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 377. “No deseo sino descubrir y poblar tierras a V.M., y no otro interés, junto con la honra y mercedes que será servido de me hacer por ello, para dejar memoria y fama de mí, y que la gané por la guerra como un pobre soldado, sirviendo a un tan esclarecido monarca, que poniendo su sacratísima persona cada hora en batallas contra el común enemigo de la Cristiandad y sus aliados, ha sustentado con su invictísimo brazo y sustenta la honra della y de nuestro Dios.”

take the title of its new Emperor, and this title would not be worth any less than that of Germany, which by the grace of God Your Holy Majesty holds.”<sup>299</sup>

In this way, Cortés obviously tried to present his own achievements in the most positive light possible, but despite his evident self-interest, he was not exaggerating. The power and wealth of the rulers of Tenochtitlán indeed rivalled that of the most powerful European princes of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and unlike the emperors of Holy Roman Empire, the *huey tlatoani* of Aztec empire was not dependent on the consent of the nobility which would rule various parts of his empire, but on the contrary, most of the lands making up the Aztec Empire were held within the empire by force. By equalizing the greatness of the Aztec Empire with that of the Holy Roman Empire, Cortés recognized the greatness of Charles V himself. Later, by launching a successful military campaign against Tenochtitlán, Cortés indeed managed to incorporate the lands of the Aztec Empire into the empire of Charles V,<sup>300</sup> thus seemingly helping to fulfil the prophecy regarding the universal rule of Charles V, which now wasn't limited just to the European continent.

## 2.7. The universal monarchy of Mercurino di Gattinara

As we have already mentioned in our discussion of thesis of Menéndez Pidal, Mercurino di Gattinara at first formulated his vision of the humanity unified under the rule of one monarch in a document written in 1516, known as *Oratio Supplicatoria*. The purpose of this document, which was never officially published and thus was not probably very well-known even in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was to instil the idea of universal monarchy into the mind of the new king of Spain, Charles I, soon to become the emperor Charles V. As Parker noted, “Although written in Latin, and therefore beyond the recipient's comfort zone, Gattinara took the precaution of giving the treatise to his countryman Luigi Marliano, Charles's physician as well as his councillor, in the hope that it would reach ‘the ears of a certain adolescent’.”<sup>301</sup> Gattinara wrote his tractate during his “exile” in the monastery, in which he spent several months after his departure from Burgundy, but as we have already seen, soon afterwards he was called to re-enter into the service to Habsburg dynasty and he was sent to join the court of Charles in Spain.

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<sup>299</sup>Cortés, *Cartas de relación*, p. 161. “[...] he deseado que Vuestra Alteza supiese las cosas desta tierra, que son tantas y tales que, como ya en la otra relación escribí, se puede intitular de nuevo Emperador della y con título y no menos mérito que el de Alemaña que por la gracia de Dios Vuestra Sacra Majestad pose.”

<sup>300</sup> The military campaign conducted by Cortés officially ended on 13<sup>th</sup> of August 1521, when the last Aztec huey tlatoani Cuahtemoc capitulated. It is imperative to mention that this military campaign could succeed only because of support Cortés received from various native communities, either from independent enemies of Aztecs such as the Tlaxcallan confederacy, or from those who had been previously subjugated by Aztecs and incorporated into their empire. For military aspect of the conquest of Mexico see Sucharda, *Role násilí v životě obyvatel tzv. aztécké říše* or Hassig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest*.

<sup>301</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 60.

Once there, Gattinara never stopped working on turning the project of the universal monarchy, which he had outlined in *Oratio Supplicatoria*, into the reality. The first step in achieving his vision was to make sure that Charles successfully gains the imperial dignity, which became vacant at the beginning of 1519 after the death of Maximilian I. Letting this opportunity to pass was out of question. In his autobiography, composed in 1529, that means one year before his own death, Gattinara recounted his reasoning as to why should Charles attempt to secure the imperial election in 1519:

“He [Gattinara] argued one point: that the title of empire legitimizes the acquisition of the entire globe, as was ordained by God himself, foreseen by the prophets, predicted by the apostles, and approved in word and deed by Christ our Saviour by his birth, life and death. It is true that the empire had sometimes been given to weak princes and had been damaged by these. Nevertheless, it would be cause for hope if the title of emperor were joined to a powerful king, propped up with so many and so great kingdoms and dominions. Under the shadow of the imperial title, not only could he serve his own hereditary lands and kingdoms, but he could also gain greater ones, enlarging the empire until it encompassed the monarchy of the whole world. However, if he rejected it, the empire might go to the French, who would certainly not let the opportunity slip by them. No, they would pant for it with all of their strength. If they held the empire after the death of Maximilian, Charles would not be able to maintain his hereditary lands in Austria and Burgundy, nor even the kingdom of Spain itself.”<sup>302</sup>

Gattinara thus makes the argument, though which he stipulates that the magnitude of Charles’s power and the number of territories under his control served as an indicator of God’s grace, which in turn legitimized the acquisition of the imperial title and eventually gaining the ascendancy over the entire world, the same argument which had been later present at the Cortes of Santiago de Compostela and subsequently on the pages of *Adlocutio*.

It is always imperative to remind ourselves about the geopolitical context, in which the imperial election of 1519 took place, and which Gattinara correctly described in his autobiography, and that is the fact that Habsburg dynasty actually did not have other choice than to try to secure the imperial title for itself. If we put aside the question of prestige – after all, Habsburgs already controlled the empire for almost eighty years, that is from the year 1440, when Friedrich III was elected the emperor – the acquisition of the imperial title was basically a must in order to prevent the decisive shift in the balance of power in favour of France and its ruling dynasty of Valois, who’s king sought the imperial title as well. The failure to acquire the imperial title would result into the French control of the Holy Roman Empire, which would present a historically unique situation, because since the 9<sup>th</sup> century, no emperor had ruled over the territory of France as well as the German speaking area east of Rhine. Young French monarch Francis I had already showed his willingness to take control of the

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<sup>302</sup>Gattinara, *The Autobiography, Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 92.

duchy of Milan and it is very likely, that with the control over the Holy Roman Empire itself, French expansionist policy would continue even further, possibly threatening Spanish possessions in Italy, such as kingdom of Naples and Sicily, which his predecessor Charles VIII (r. 1483-1498) already tried to capture at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as well as Habsburg territory in the rest of former duchy of Burgundy, whose southern part was already captured by France after the death of its last duke Charles the Bold in 1477. Eventually, Habsburg dynasty indeed managed to secure the imperial rule for Charles V,<sup>303</sup> thus eliminating the menace of French control over the Holy Roman Empire.

The imperial court naturally tried to portray the election of Charles as a result of God's grace. This is apparent from the text of *Pro divo Carolo*, according to which the electors were guided by the Holy Spirit itself, which helped them overcome the supposed treachery of the French king. In this matter, *Pro divo Carolo* echoed the text of *Adlocutio* from 1520, when it described how the attempts of the French party to influence the electors proved to be futile:

„And these attempts proved to be useless, and they were defeated by the virtue of the Electors of the Holy Empire, who could not be moved neither by strength, nor by fear, nor by any other stratagem, but inspired by the Holy spirit and liberated from any previous promises, by unanimous consent and without anyone's disagreement, they all as one gave their votes to us, and according to the custom they designated us the Emperor [...].<sup>304</sup>

The reality of the imperial election was however far more prosaic. Instead of being guided by the Holy Spirit, the electors were swaying to Habsburg side by more mundane means, that is by large quantities of money, and possibly also by the presence of Habsburg army, which was camping outside of the city of Frankfurt, where the election was taking place. As for the financial cost, the imperial treasurer Carlos Johann Lukas claimed that the overall cost of the bribes as well as military expenditures exceeded 1 600 000 florins.<sup>305</sup>

Charles V thus now possessed the imperial sceptre, which he added to his already vast possessions. The number of titles, with which Charles V could boast was indeed impressive, as is apparent from the document, through which Charles V in October 1524 confirmed the investiture of the duke of Milan, Francisco Sforza, five years after Charles gained the imperial title, as it was captured by Alfonso de Valdés:

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<sup>303</sup> Brandi, *Carlo V*, p. 99.

<sup>304</sup> *Pro Divo Carolo*, fol. 15. “Et quum huiusmodi conatus irriti facti forent, vicissetque ipsius Sacri Imperii Electorum virtus, qui nec vi, nec metu, nec ullis artibus dimoveri potuerunt, quin Sancto afflante spiritu, ab omni praeambula promissione prius liberati, unanimi omnium consensu, ac nemini discrepante, eorum electionis vota uniformiter in nos contulerint, nosque Imperatorem solito more designaverint [...].”

<sup>305</sup> Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V*. p. 63-70.

“Charles the Fifth, by Divine grace Elected Emperor of the Romans, always Augustus and the king of Germany, Spains, both Sicilies, Jerusalem, Hungary, Dalmatia, Croatia, Balearic Islands, Sardinia, Canary Islands, etc, Archduke of Austria, Burgundy, Lotharingia, Brabant, Limburg, Luxembourg, Count of Habsburg, Flanders, Arthesia and Burgundy, Count palatine of Hanau, Holland, Zealand, Ferret, Limburg, Namur, Zutphen, etc., Landgrave of Alsace, Marquis of Holy Roman Empire and Burgundy, Lord of Frisia, Portus Neonis, Salinarum, Tripoli and Mechelen, etc.”<sup>306</sup>

Naturally, the list includes some territories, the claim over which was strictly formal, such as Jerusalem. But even despite this, the concentration of the power in the young emperor’s hands was indeed enormous, especially if we consider the fact, that the list of titles makes no mention of the American territory, which was then considered as an integral part of Castile. But for Gattinara, the successful imperial election was not an end, but rather the beginning. The control of the Holy Roman Empire, if it is really possible to talk about the “control” in the context of this vast conglomerate of diverse and quasi-independent territories, did not yet make Charles the “universal monarch”. It was obvious that more work was needed to be done. On the other hand, as was observed by Franz Bosbach, this concentration of power in the hands of Charles V effectively meant that “The debate on Universal Monarchy of the early modern period differs remarkably from that of the Middle Ages”, because it ceased to be a theoretical question and started to be a political one.<sup>307</sup>

Shortly after the successful imperial election in June, Gattinara addressed several memorandums to the new emperor-elect, in which he further elaborated his vision of the universal empire, for which Charles V now should be striving. In a document dated to 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1519 in Barcelona, from which we have already briefly quoted, Gattinara addressed Charles in this way:

“Sire! Since God, the Creator has shown you the grace by raising your dignity above all Christian kings and princes, when he made you the biggest emperor and king since the dividing of the empire of Charlemagne, your ancestor, he had shown you the way for the establishment of a rightful world monarchy, so the whole world shall unite under one pastor [...]”<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 32. „Carolus Quintus Divina favente Clementia Electus Romanorum Imperator semper Augustus, ac Germaniae, Hispaniarum, utriusque Siciliae, Hierusalem, Hungariae, Dalmatiae, Croatiae, Insularum Balearium, Sardiniae, Insularum Canariae, etc. Rex. Archidux Austriae, Burgundiae, Lotharingiae, Brabantiae, Limburgiae, Lucemburgiae. Comes Habsburgi, Flandriae, Arthesii, et Burgundiae, Palatinus Hannoniae, Holandiae, Seelandiae, Ferreti, Liburgi, Namurci, Zutphamiae, etc. Lantgravius Alsatiae, Marchio Sacri Romani Imperii, et Burgoniae, Dominus Frisiae, Portus Neonis, Salinarum, Tripolis, et Mechliniae, etc.“

<sup>307</sup> Bosbach, *The European Debate on Universal Monarchy*, p. 83-84.

<sup>308</sup> Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.*, p. 59. „Sire! Da Gott, der Schöpfer, Euch die Gnade erwiesen hat, Eure Würde über alle christlichen Könige und Fürsten zu erhöhen, indem Er Euch zum größten Kaiser und König seit der Teilung des Reiches Karls des Großen, Eures Vorgängers, machte und Euch auf den Weg der rechtmäßigen Weltherrschaft (monarchie) verwies, um den ganzem Erdkreis unter einem Hirten zu vereinigen [...]“

Again, we can observe that the empire of Charlemagne served as a point of reference and his person was viewed as the prototype of the ideal Christian emperor, as well as the reassurance that every success which Charles experienced so far was a result of divine grace, and thus was also binding. Gattinara then continued by claiming that God has chosen Charles to:

„[...] serve his divine majesty, for the elevation of his holy Catholic faith and for the promotion of the entire Christendom (république chrétienne), so that you will be able, with the help and assistance of holy Apostolic See, to spread the blessing of universal peace (paix universelle), which cannot be achieved by any other means than through the universal empire.”<sup>309</sup>

This line of thinking was already well established in Gattinara's *Oratio Supplicatoria*, which heavily emphasized the divine origin of the empire of Charles and its place in God's plan for the salvation of mankind:

“When our omnipotent saviour Jesus Christ descended to this earth in order to secure the salvation of mankind, he sent only one predecessor [named] John the Baptist to prepare the way for himself, and to help you secure this new Christian salvation, so that the sheep will be led to Christ and so there shall be one flock and one pastor, he had given you predecessors from two orders, so they would prepare this monarchy for you: your paternal and maternal grandparents.”<sup>310</sup>

Unlike Charles's parents, his grandparents were indeed the ones who laid down fundamentals of his own power. In Spain, it was Isabella of Castile and Fernando of Aragon, generally referred to as the Catholic kings, who not only unified their two respective countries into a personal union,<sup>311</sup> but who had also greatly strengthened royal authority, and at the beginning of the fateful year 1492, they finished the centuries long task of so called *reconquista* by capturing the emirate of Granada, the last remaining Muslim outpost on the Iberian Peninsula. They also successfully resisted French pretensions to gain control over Italy, which began with the invasion to Naples by the French king Charles VIII in 1494, and oversaw the discovery of the American continent, as well as the beginning of its conquest. On the other side of Europe, Charles's paternal grandparent, the emperor Maximilian I of the Habsburg dynasty, found himself in a different position. Always pursued by debts and

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<sup>309</sup>Ibidem. „[...]...zum Dienst Seiner Göttlichen Majestät, zur Erhöhung Seines heiligen katholischen Glaubens, und zur Förderung der gesamten Christenheit (république chrétienne), auf daß Ihr mit Hilfe und Beistand des Heiligen Apostolischen Stuhles das Gut des allgemeinen Friedens (paix universelle) erlangen möget, der nicht anders als durch die Kaiserliche Herrschaft (monarchie) erreicht werden kann.“

<sup>310</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 143. “Quum omnipotens Saluator noster Iesus Christus, pro humani generis salute in hoc ipso terrestri globo descendens, unum duntaxat praecursorem Ioannem Baptistam ad parandas vias eius praemiserit, tuae tamen Catholicae Maiestae ad hanc novam Christianorum salute, ad reducendas oves Christi, ut fiat unum ovile, et unus pastor, duos ordine successive praecursores dedit, qui tibi huiusmodi monarchiae pararent: avos scilicet paternum, et maternum.”

<sup>311</sup>While Ferdinand and Isabella used to rule Castile directly, they ruled their other dominions such as Aragon or Naples through viceroys. See Álvarez, *Carlos V el César y el Hombre*, p. 226.

financial problems, Maximilian's rule was characteristic by never-ending manoeuvring and negotiations with various creditors, which sometimes led to bizarre situations, such as the occasion when the emperor was forced to leave his empress Bianca Maria Sforza, with whom he married after the death of his first wife Mary of Burgundy, as a pledge.<sup>312</sup> Moreover, thanks to a heterogeneous nature of Holy Roman Empire, Maximilian's position had never been exactly secure. Nonetheless, Maximilian played an important role in solidification of the power of Habsburg dynasty, the process, which was already commenced by his father Friedrich III, as well as by his positive stance to the new cultural movement of the Renaissance.

What was important from Gattinara's point of view was that it was possible to interpret Charles's lineage as well as the concentration of power in his hands, which was further enhanced by the discovery of hence unknown continent in the west, as an unmistakable sign of divine favour. Gattinara was right in his claim that Charles's power was so great that the Christendom had not seen such powerful sovereign since the division of old Frankish empire, which was parted by the treaty of Verdun signed in 843; no other medieval emperor, not even Friedrich I Barbarossa or Friedrich II of Hohenstaufen dynasty, was indeed able to concentrate such a vast power under his dominion.

Gattinara further bolstered his claims about divine origin of universal empire by quoting the Scripture itself, more precisely the passage from the Gospel of John (10:16), which in its Latin version says "Et alias oves habeo quae non sunt ex hoc ovili et illas oportet me adducere et vocem meam audient et fiet unum ovile unus pastor".<sup>313</sup> As we have already seen, the ending of this passage was also included in the Relation of the battle at Pavia, written by Alfonso de Valdés in 1525. In King James Bible, this particular verse is translated as "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

However, as is clear from the previous passage (John, 10:14,15), the shepherd in question does not refer to any temporal authority, but to Jesus Christ himself: "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."<sup>314</sup> An attempt to justify the establishment of the universal empire by quoting this passage thus seems at least dubious, since the future unification of all "sheep", to which the text points, is actually nothing less than the prophecy of the final triumph of Christianity and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Nonetheless, Gattinara could have interpreted the unification of all Christians under the rule of one monarch as a prerequisite for their unification under Christ after his second coming.

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<sup>312</sup>Weissensteiner, *Velcí panovníci rodu Habsburského*, p. 81.

<sup>313</sup>Quoted from Bible Study Tools, see: <https://www.biblestudytools.com>. Some other versions of Latin Vulgate, including an online version of Nova Vulgata published by Vatican offer a slightly different wording: "Et alias oves habeo, quae non sunt ex hoc ovili, et illas oportet me adducere, et vocem meam audient et fiet unus grex, unus pastor." See: [https://www.vatican.va/archive/bible/nova\\_vulgata/documents/nova-vulgata\\_nt\\_evangelio-ioannem\\_lt.html#10](https://www.vatican.va/archive/bible/nova_vulgata/documents/nova-vulgata_nt_evangelio-ioannem_lt.html#10)

<sup>314</sup>In Latin according to Nova Vulgata: „Ego sum pastor bonus et cognosco meas, et cognoscunt me meae, sicut cognoscit me Pater, et ego cognosco Patrem; et animam meam pono pro ovibus.

## 2.8. The emperor as archetypal Christian prince

As we have already seen, the biblical passage promising the unification of all people under the rule of “one pastor” was utilized by Alfonso de Valdés himself at the end of his relation of the battle of Pavia, which tries to present Charles V as a chosen ruler who would not only defend the Christendom against all external as well as internal threats, but who would also spread the Catholic faith around the whole globe, thus obviously pointing to the Christianisation which was already taking place on the American continent. The fact that Valdés has chosen to end his relation in this way was most likely a product of Gattinara’s supervision or advice, because as we have already seen, this particular text had been examined and corrected by the gran chancellor,<sup>315</sup> and we also have evidence of Gattinara himself making the same argument and using the same expression invoking the advent of “one shepherd”.<sup>316</sup> In this sense, Valdés’s philosophy operates within a general framework laid down by the grand chancellor himself.

Valdés stuck to this framework introduced by Gattinara when he himself developed the notion, according to which the king was supposed to act as “the pastor” of his subject, instead of their “lord”, even in his later works, more specifically in his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*. There, the two main protagonists encounter a soul of a dead king, who is on his way to heaven, but stops in order to satisfy Mercury’s curiosity regarding his life in on Earth. The king agrees to explain what kind of life allowed him to ascend to the heaven and gives a lengthy monologue, in which he describes how he at first tried to expand his power and the extension of his kingdom by constantly waging wars against his neighbours, while neglecting his other responsibilities and well-being of his own subjects. Even though the king eventually realized his errors, he did not see the way in which he could change his life and to become a better king: “I had been so perplexed; I had been so distraught, that I often found life itself to be bothersome. I was aware that I was not doing what I should for God nor for my subjects.”<sup>317</sup> The king was eventually saved from this state by one of his servants, who one day approached him and advised him to “turn to himself” and then told him: “Behold, don’t you realize that you are a pastor and not a lord, and that you will have to give account of these sheep to the lord of the flock, who is God himself?”<sup>318</sup> This admonition initially shocked the king, but after some reflection, he is said to realize the truth of his servant’s words. The next day, the king solemnly

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<sup>315</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 46.

<sup>316</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 27.

<sup>317</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 473. „Hallávame tan perplexo, hállavame tan turbado, que muchas vezes me era enojo el vivir. Veía que no hazía lo que devía para con Dios ni para con mis súbditos.”

<sup>318</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 473. “Veamos, ¿tú no sabes que eres pastor y no señor y que has de dar cuenta destas ovejas al señor del ganado que es Dios?”



confessed his sins and wrongdoings before God and pledged to reform his life as well as his style of governance from now on, thus becoming a good pastor instead of being a maleficent ruler.<sup>319</sup>

Valdés's insistence of defining the king's role as a "pastor" rather than as a "lord" has deep political as well as philosophical implications. One of the greatest challenges of European political philosophy had always been the question of how to properly define regal or imperial power, and more pressingly, how to effectively constrain it in order to prevent arbitrary or even despotic rule. As we have already seen earlier, Dante Alighieri proposed that despotism or tyranny would be eliminated with the establishment of the universal monarchy, whose ruler would lack the motivation to act as a tyrant, while at the same time he would be powerful enough to act against those princes who would renegade and abuse their power. In real political practice, one of the possible answers to this question was the introduction of constitutionalism, which forced sovereigns to respect certain codified norms and limitations of their own power. The famous document known as *Magna Carta Libertatum*, which was forced upon the king John of England (1199-1216) by a group of rebellious nobles in 1215,<sup>320</sup> is traditionally considered to be the first document of this type to effectively curb the regal power in this way. Although Alfonso de Valdés does not address this particular piece of political theory directly, he nonetheless had to deal with the question of how to prevent a potential misuse of regal power, which could endanger the peace and well-being of regular subjects. What exactly is then Valdés's answer to this problem? Before we answer this question, we must realize the historical context and political situation in Spain in the third decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As we have already mentioned, Spain was heavily affected by two simultaneous inner conflicts, both of which began in 1520. The first and less important one was the revolt of Germanías, which took place in the kingdom of Aragon. The second and the way more significant conflict took place in Castile, which was heavily hit by so called revolt of comuneros, which began shortly after Charles's departure to the northern Europe in 1520, and which was caused mostly by widespread dissatisfaction of several Castilian cities with the regime of their new king and his advisers.<sup>321</sup> The insurgents eventually managed to gain control over Tordesillas, where Charles's mother Joanna was still held and relocated their supreme *junta* there. Luckily for Charles, Joanna declined to openly collaborate with the insurgents, thus marring the possibility that they could gain the legitimacy by shielding themselves by her person. What was equally important was the fact that certain factions of insurgents eventually began to target the properties and members of the highest nobility, known as *grandes*, which in turn forced the high nobility to decisively shift their full support to loyalist forces.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Idem p. 475.

<sup>320</sup> Carpenter, *The Plantagenet kings in The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume V, c. 1198—c.1300*, p. 319-320.

<sup>321</sup> Álvarez, *Carlos V, El Cesar y el Hombre*, p. 131.

<sup>322</sup> Álvarez, *Carlos V, El Cesar y el Hombre*, p. 159-160. "Y de ese modo, la alta nobleza, que hasta entonces parecía mirar con simpatía al movimiento comunero, participando sin duda de sus sentimientos nacionalistas frente al gobierno

The revolt then ended in April 1521 with the victory of loyalist forces in the battle of Villalar. The victory of royalist forces representing Charles V naturally strengthened the position of young Habsburg sovereign and paved the way for introduction of royal absolutism. By talking about absolutism, we naturally do not want to claim that Charles's power in his Spanish kingdoms was "absolute" in a literal sense of this word; on the contrary, several legal as well as factual constraints which were limiting regal power always remained in place. Nonetheless, the memories of turmoil brought by a civil war and the danger of disruption caused by uprising of members of nobility as well as by representatives of towns was still fresh several years later, when Valdés wrote his polemical dialogues.

As a loyal member of the emperor's court, Valdés was inclined to favour strong royal position over the system, which would force the sovereign to share large amounts of power with the estates of his kingdoms. On the other hand, as his dialogues attest, Valdés was more than aware of the threat of potential corruption and resulting tyranny, which could follow if the position of sovereign was held by a person who would neglect his duties and who would pursue his private interests instead of taking care of "common good". In order to prevent this threat, it was necessary, according to Valdés, to ensure that the sovereign himself fully understands his role, his responsibilities and his accountability to the true lord of the flock, who is none other than God himself.

There is also evidence to suggest that Valdés was not an absolutist in a sense that he would support the right of sovereign to rule in any circumstances, that is even in the case that he grossly abused his power. It could be further argued that Valdés operated with an idea of certain social contract between the sovereign and his people. In *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, Valdés, speaking through Lactancio, elaborates this point when he says:

"Lactancio: [...] and I grant you that the natural law permits everyone to defend what is theirs, but tell me, do you think that the princes have the same authority over their subjects as you do over your mule?"

Archdeacon: Why not?

Lactancio: Because the animals were created so that they would serve the man, and the man [was created] so that he would serve only God. Let us see, were the princes created for love of the people, or were the people created for love of princes?"

Archdeacon: I believe that the princes were created for love of people.

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extranjero impuesto por los consejeros flamencos de Carlos V, empezó a preguntarse si no estaban yendo las cosas demasiado lejos. Que el joven Emperador recibiera una buena lección era una cosa hasta encomiable; pero que se subvertiese el orden establecido y que ellos fueran despojados de sus señoríos, era otra harta fuerte e intolerable."

Lactancio: Then the good prince, without taking into account his personal interests, will be obliged to heed only the good of the people, since he was instituted for them.”<sup>323</sup>

What exactly was the attitude of Alfonso de Valdés to the problem of potential rogue ruler, who would abuse his subjects and rejected his obligations, something which was in reality rather common? In the context of the empire, Valdés gives no clear answer. This is easily explained by the fact that while the emperor acted as an ultimate highest temporal authority, there was no one who could theoretically punish him, at least in theory, or deprive him of his lands and authority, naturally save God himself. Furthermore, Valdés also wrote his dialogues while keeping in mind the particular person of the contemporary emperor Charles V, whom he considered to be ultimately good and acting according to the will of God himself. Valdés also obviously believed that the descendants of Charles V would arguably be as good and as capable rulers as Charles himself, although the problem of imperial succession was not directly addressed in his dialogues.<sup>324</sup> Valdés certainly did not present any possible “constitutional checks”, which would somehow limit the authority of the emperor. This can be explained by several factors, one of which is that memory of the revolt of comuneros was just too alive, and Valdés could have seen the pretences of cities or nobility to limit the royal authority as a factor of destabilization rather than something which would prevent tyranny. The second explanation is that Charles V did in fact rule over vast conjunct of various kingdoms and dominions, and this heterogeneous empire lacked common institutions. His imperial authority was thus perceived to be rather encompassing and in a certain way stood above ordinary human institutions, which could under normal circumstances limit “regular” kings and princes, but not the emperor who was responsible to God alone.

However, this does not mean that Valdés have forsaken the possibility to influence the sovereign's actions. On the contrary, Valdés put strong emphasis on the vital role of royal councillors and other persons surrounding the sovereign, whose role should be mostly advisory, but who should nonetheless exercise certain influence over the actions of the emperor. Valdés asserted that it was one of the prince's main responsibilities to surround himself with “good and virtuous persons”, who would not only advise him, but who would also eventually reprimand him in case that he neglected his duties or acted inappropriately. This is illustrated in the conversation with heaven-bound king in *Diálogo de*

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<sup>323</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 304. “Lactancio: [...] e yo os conceda que el derecho natural permite a cada uno que defienda lo suyo, mas dezidme, ¿entendéis vos que los príncipes tienen el mesmo señorío sobre sus súbditos que vos sobre vuestra mula?”

Arcidiano: ¿Por qué no?

Lactancio: Porque las bestias son criadas para el servicio del hombre, y el hombre para el servicio de solo Dios. Veamos, ¿fueron hechos los príncipes por amor del pueblo o el pueblo por amor de los príncipes?

Arcidiano: Creo yo que los príncipes por amor del pueblo.

Lactancio: Luego el buen príncipe, sin tener respecto a su interesse particular, será obligado a procurar solamente el bien del pueblo, pues fue instituido por su causa.”

<sup>324</sup>We have to keep in mind that Charles's successor, future Philip II of Spain, who was born in 1527, was just a new-born in a time when Valdés wrote his dialogues.

*Mercurio y Carón*. The king describes to Mercury and Charon how after his “conversion”, he got rid of all unworthy or malignant members of his court:

“[...] knowing how harmful it is for the prince to be surrounded by vicious men, especially those who are known for their avarice and ambitions, and how it is more detrimental to republic when the king relies on bad council, even if he himself was good, than when the bad king surround himself with good persons, and thus before I set to order anything else, I removed from my presence those who were vicious, avaricious and ambitious.”<sup>325</sup>

After this, the king decided to surround himself exclusively by those who exhibited necessary virtues:

“Then I chose persons who were virtuous and lived a good life and I put them in positions of those [who were removed earlier], and I have informed them, that as soon as I see in them ambition or avarice or that if they are going to counsel me because of this or some other passion or desire something that does not contribute to the good of my kingdoms or something that will be contrary to the justice, I will immediately dishonourably remove them from my company.”<sup>326</sup>

The emphasis on moral righteousness of the ruler and his councillors is thus seen by Alfonso de Valdés as a key point in preventing the tyranny and despotism. This is also closely connected to the delimitation of roles between temporal and spiritual power, since according to Valdés, one of the main responsibilities of the church should be to monitor the behaviour of elites, including the rulers, and to admonish and reprimand them when necessary. This was demonstrated by another conversation that Mercury and Charon held, this time with a soul of a former preacher, whose godly life has earned him a reward in a form of admission to the heaven. The preacher declares that he did not hesitate to reprimand even those who were in positions of power, but he nonetheless preferred to do so discretely in order not to foment some unwanted social unrest:

“I preferred to reprimand the princes, prelates and judges in their homes in secret, rather than publicly from the pulpit, so that the people would not stop showing them reverence, obedience and compliance, which is their duty, because I knew that this could cause many and very big inconveniences, but if I

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<sup>325</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 476. “[...] conociendo cuán pernicioso es al príncipe tener cabe sí hombres viciosos, especialmente de avaricia y ambición notados, y cómo es más dañoso a la República que el rey tenga mal consejo, aunque él sea bueno, que no ser el rey malo, aunque los que están cabe él sean buenos, antes que cosa alguna otra començase a ordenar, aparté primero de mi compañía viciosos, avaros y ambiciosos.”

<sup>326</sup>Ibidem. “Luego escogí personas virtuosas y de buena vida y los puse en lugar de aquéllos, declarándoles que todas las vezes que conociese en ellos ambición o avaricia, o que por este respecto o por cualquiera otra pasión o afición particular me aconsejasen cosa alguna que no cumpliese al bien de mis reinos o que fuese contra justicia, a la mesma hora los apartaría vergonçosamente de mi compañía.”

saw that they persisted in following their particular interests, passions or desires and that they stopped doing what they were obliged to do, I did not hesitate to publicly reprimand and condemn what they were doing and show them what they were supposed to do, so that the shame would force them to do what they were not willing to do voluntarily, while keeping in mind that Saint Paul dared to publicly reprimand Saint Peter, as he himself writes [in the epistle] to Galatians.”<sup>327</sup>

This passage thus sheds the light on the role which Alfonso de Valdés considered to be appropriate for the church, which should act as a guardian of public morality, conserve the values of the society and admonish or correct those, who somehow deviated from the norms of Christian life. In the case of rulers and other high dignitaries, the church could thus act as one of the necessary checks on possible abuse of secular power. The activity of the church should be nonetheless restricted strictly in the spiritual area and could only have effect if the church itself followed its own rules, which in Valdés’s times it often did not, at least not according to its critics, as is apparent from the criticism Alfonso de Valdés had levelled on the Catholic church mainly in his *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*. The fear of possible social unrest motivated by preachers was not entirely unfounded. Alfonso de Valdés, who visited Germany in 1520 and 1521, was probably aware of the unrest and disturbances, by which certain German cities were affected in early 1520s and which involved disruption of traditional religious ceremonies and masses as well as seizure of public space by Protestant radicals, most of whom were students.<sup>328</sup>

It should be however noted that Alfonso de Valdés was very selective in employing his criticism. This is obvious from the fact that Charles V himself was guilty of certain vices which Valdés attacked or condemned. The emperor was for example notorious by his promiscuity, which resulted in birth of his several illegitimate children, some of whom even played their own significant role in the history.<sup>329</sup> It has been also suggested by Odyniec that in reality, the moral regarding the relationship towards the female sex was rather loose within the circle of Alfonso de Valdés and his friends.<sup>330</sup> After all, Johannes Dantiscus, a friend of Valdés, fathered two illegitimate children with a

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<sup>327</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 508-509. “A los príncipes, perlados y justicias holgava más de reprender en sus casas en secreto que desde los púlpitos en público, porque el vulgo no les perdiese la reverencia, obediencia y acatamiento que les deve tener, de que conocía seguirse muchos y muy grandes inconvenientes, pero cuando los veía obstinados y que por sus particulares intereses, pasiones o aficiones dexaban de hazer lo que devían y eran obligados, no dexava yo de reprenderlos y afezar públicamente lo que hazían e mostrarles lo que debían hazer, porque de vergüença viniesen a hazer lo que no querían de grado, acordándome que San Pablo bien osó en público reprehender a Sanct Pedro, como él mismo escribe a los gálathas.”

<sup>328</sup>Scribner, *The Reformation movements in Germany*, p. 79-80.

<sup>329</sup>The most significant illegitimate child of Charles was Juan d’Austria (1547-1578), who in 1571 led Spanish naval forces in a victorious battle against Ottoman navy at Lepanto. Another illegitimate child of Charles V was Margarita of Parma (1522-1586), who was wed to Alessandro de’ Medici (1511-1537) duke of Florence and a nephew of the pope Clement VII in 1536. After the death of her husband, Margarita was wed again, this time to Octavio Farnese in 1538 and later she also served as the governor of the Netherlands from 1559. Charles V also father two less known illegitimate daughter, Juana and Tadea, who were born in 1522 and 1523. See Kohler, *Carlos V*, p. 81-86.

<sup>330</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 156. “They also referred sometimes to the liberties that they allowed themselves to take in the company of women; such letters are a look into the privileged club of sixteenth-century courtiers.”

Spanish woman named Isabel Delgada, about whose existence Alfonso de Valdés provably knew.<sup>331</sup> Valdés nonetheless took a moralizing stance and reprimanded the promiscuity in his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, using an example of a tyrant king who was on his way to hell, who claimed that he used to entertain himself by “playing, hunting, laughing and chasing women” and that despite being married, if he “sometimes fell into love, it did not matter if it was a maiden or married woman, [he] had to take her, willingly or by force”.<sup>332</sup>

What was probably more important, the emperor obviously displayed way too much big enthusiasm for war, than would be appropriate for a virtuous Christian prince. This was noted for example by the ambassador of Venice Contarini, who claimed that Charles “does not seem to be ambitious [when it comes to] the state, but he has a great desire to fight, and he wishes a lot to get involved in a war; he also displays a great desire to venture against the infidels.”<sup>333</sup>

Whereas the desire to wage war against the “infidels” could have been viewed as acceptable, the wish to fight other Christian princes was certainly not, at least not in theory. Yet this was exactly what according to Parker Charles displayed once he received the news about the beginning of hostilities on the part of France in 1521, which he openly welcomed.<sup>334</sup>

At the beginning of his reign, Charles also definitely surrounded himself by people, who were generally viewed as “bad councillors” by the public and even granted them many lucrative positions, including the archbishopric of Toledo, which was bestowed upon William de Croÿ, the nephew of the Lord of Chièvres,<sup>335</sup> this was however not mentioned by Alfonso de Valdés at all. Whether he simply attributed these shortcomings to the youth of the emperor, or whether he simply did not want to mention it in order not to taint the image of archetypal Christian prince, personified by Charles V, is thus impossible to judge.

Valdés’s views about the nature of princely power can be very well illustrated thanks to the continuation of already quoted passage, in which the soul of a tyrant king confesses his immoral life:

“Charon: Oh, what a shame! And there is no law to punish those who do that?”

Soul: Yes, there is, but the law does not apply to the king.

Charon: You are right, because the King must be so just, so clean and so saint and so devoid of vices that he does not break a law even with one hair. That is why they say that it does not apply to the

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<sup>331</sup> Idem, p. 157-160.

<sup>332</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 425. „[...] si alguna vez me enamorava, fuesse de donzella o de casada, por fuerça o de grado avía de gozar della.“

<sup>333</sup> Álvarez, *Carlos V: el César y el Hombre*, p. 185. “[...] no demuestra ser ambicioso de Estado, pero tiene gran ambición de combatir, y desea mucho encontrarse en una jornada de guerra; demuestra también tener gran deseo de hacer la empresa contra los infieles.”

<sup>334</sup> Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 84. Parker claims that upon hearing the news of the hostilities started by Francis I in 1521, “he raised his hands to Heaven and said: ‘Praise to You, Lord God, for granting that I did not begin this war, and because the king of France is likely to make me greater than I am! Thanks always to You, who have given me the means to defend myself. I hope that soon either I shall be an impoverished emperor, or he an impoverished king.’”

<sup>335</sup> Álvarez, *Carlos V: El Cesar y el hombre*, p. 88-89.

king, but he who lives the way you did, should be punished more severely than the law prescribes, because just as the good King does a lot of good with his example, and for this he should be greatly loved by his subjects and even more honoured and appreciated, so the bad one caused great damage with his example, and for that he should be abhorred, punished and even stripped of the kingdom by his subjects.”<sup>336</sup>

The king-tyrant then replies that he protected himself from suffering consequences of his immoral life by “keeping his subjects in such a great fear and so frightened that they did not dare to rise up”.<sup>337</sup> This of course constitutes the essence of tyranny, which Valdés, using the voice of Charon, immediately points out. Alfonso de Valdés thus essentially evokes the right to resistance to the bad government, something that was actually done by the rebellious Castilian cities of 1520 and 1521.

How can we interpret this? Can this and other passages blasting “vices of princes” be viewed as a veiled warning to Charles in order to prevent him from repeating the same mistakes from the beginning of his reign? It is certainly possible, although difficult to prove. While Alfonso de Valdés was not present in Castile during the civil war, he was nonetheless no doubt well informed about its unfolding and he was certainly aware of the discontent, which reigned in Castile as a result of the activity of so-called *flamencos*. Unfortunately, the only available correspondence of Valdés from this time, which was written from Flanders and Germany, makes no mention about the revolt against Charles V, but deals mainly with religious crisis in Germany and with the emperor’s coronation in Aachen. In his dialogues, Valdés refers to the strife in Castile only superficially, while claiming that it ended mainly as a result of French invasion of 1521, in face of which Spaniards “left the civil strife and united to resist the attack of the French”.<sup>338</sup>

It is conceivable that Valdés wanted to avoid deeper discussion over the topic of the revolt of comuneros, since he did not want to address the discontent with royal administration, which was prevalent in Castile in the first years of Charles’s rule, but which would also require to admit that the first years of the reign of Charles were filled with many of the errors and vices which Valdés himself criticized in his dialogues. It is obvious that in his dialogues, Valdés presented an idealised image of Charles V, which however in certain aspects did not correspond to the reality. Valdés could not even entirely excuse Charles on the grounds of responsibility of “bad councillors”, since as he himself explicitly stated at the beginning of *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, that the prince was

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<sup>336</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 425. Carón: ¡O qué vergüença! Y para los que eso hazen ¿no ay ley que los castigue? Anima: Sí ay, mas la ley no comprehende al Rey.

Carón: Dizes la verdad, porque el Rey havia de ser tan justo, tan limpio y tan sancto y tan apartado de vicios que ni aun en un cabello rompiese la ley. Por esto dizen que ella no le comprehende, mas el que bive como tú hazías, muy más gravamente debe ser castigado de lo que la ley manda, porque así como el buen Rey haze mucho fruto con su exemplo, y por tanto debe ser de sus súbditos muy amado y en más tenido y estimado, así el malo haze mucho daño con el exemplo, y deve por tanto ser de los suyos aborresçido, castigado y aun del reyno privado.”

<sup>337</sup>Ibidem. “Tenía mis súbditos en tanto temor y tan amedrentados que no osavan rebollirse”.

<sup>338</sup>Idem, p. 377. “[...] dexadas las armas ceviles, se juntaron a resistir el ímpeto de los franceses [...]”.

responsible for the choices he made regarding selection of his councillors.<sup>339</sup> Instead of trying to interpret the roots of the domestic conflict which took place in Castile, Valdés concentrated mainly on foreign affairs, that is on the conflict with the papacy of Clement VII, France of Francis I and England of Henry VIII, which allowed him to fully blast supposed moral deficiency and corruption of emperor's enemies and their servants, such as the cardinal Thomas Wolsey.

If we turn back to the political theory present in Valdés's dialogues, his statement that the bad king could, and perhaps even should be "stripped of his kingdom" touched the subject, which became extremely relevant in early modern Europe and which dealt with the key issues such as the nature of royal power, natural law and the relationship between the state and society. Both England in the 17<sup>th</sup> and France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century experienced the violent overthrowing the monarchy and even the execution of its kings, only to see the monarchy restored several decades later.<sup>340</sup>

If, according to Valdés, bad king could have been stripped of his power, we may safely conclude that Valdés did not believe in divinely sanctioned right to rule. The prince certainly could receive grace from God, which would then help him to fulfil his obligations, and Valdés makes it clear that he regarded Charles V to be the prince who enjoyed God's grace and his approval. However, this divine grace was not seen as neither absolute nor unconditional by Valdés. In case that the prince acted contrary to the will of God and became a tyrant, it was morally permissible for his subjects to resist him and overthrow him. In this way, the philosophy of Valdés goes directly against that of Englishman Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), who formulated his conception in the work entitled *Leviathan*.<sup>341</sup> In short, Hobbes, as a proponent of absolutism, advocated for basically unlimited temporal power of the sovereign over his subjects. In his mind, this was the only way to prevent the regress to the natural state of man, which would mean the collapse of human civilisation and return to primordial barbarity or even bestiality. The political philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés on the contrary seems in certain aspects correspond more with that of another Englishman John Locke, one of the "founding fathers" of western liberal tradition.<sup>342</sup>

Valdés explicitly recognized the existence of natural law, when he claimed that "natural law allows everyone to defend, what is his".<sup>343</sup> Alfonso de Valdés also operated with an idea we can describe as the concept of social contract, although he obviously does not use this particular term, when he claims that "princes were instituted for the love of the people", while simultaneously recognizing their obligations to God as well as their own subjects. Failure to honour these obligations,

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<sup>339</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 293.

<sup>340</sup> The king of England and Scotland Charles I (r. 1626-1649) was deposed and after his loss in a civil war executed in 1649, while the form of government was changed to the republic, which was then in 1660 replaced by restored monarchy ruled by Charles II (r. 1660-1685). In France, the monarchy was overthrown during the notorious French revolution, which started in 1789, while the French king Louis XVI was executed in 1792. The monarchy was then restored after the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1814, with the new king Louis XVIII (r. 1814-1824).

<sup>341</sup> The full title of this work is *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*.

<sup>342</sup>For more regarding the philosophy of John Locke, see Foster, *John Locke's Politics of Moral Consensus*.

<sup>343</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 304.



as we have already mentioned, could result into deposition of the prince, albeit we may assume that this was regarded only as an uttermost measure by Alfonso de Valdés. In the mind of Alfonso de Valdés, this social contract does not have the two sides, but rather three – the prince, his subjects and God himself, who does not act as some kind of distant presence, but instead takes an active part in human history, supporting those who act in accordance with his will and punishing those who do not, something which Valdés believed happened when the emperor defeated the king of France in the battle at Pavia. The contract between God, the ruler and his subjects naturally binds even the emperor himself, who's responsibility is even greater than that of "regular" kings or princes. Not only he has to take care of his own subjects, but he also may be forced to, if the necessity arises, to take action against other princes. This is precisely what Charles V done in case of his former ally Francisco Sforza, whom Charles V striped of his duchy of Milan, an act which Alfonso de Valdés justified in his *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*.<sup>344</sup> In general terms, Alfonso de Valdés was rather sceptical towards the ability of most rulers to administer their dominions well and to act accordingly to the Christian doctrine. In this way, the existence of universal empire encompassing the whole world, or at least its substantial part, can be seen as a possible counterweight against those princes, who would act against the "peace and well-being of Christian commonwealth", provided that the empire is being led by moral and virtuous leader. The reliance of the virtue of one ruler and his ministers and councillors can naturally be seen as a huge potential disadvantage, yet Alfonso de Valdés has shown to be reluctant to discuss this topic.

## 2.9. Sacral character of the universal empire

One of the defining features of the universal empire conceived by Mercurino di Gattinara and promoted by Alfonso de Valdés is its sacral character, which was directly derived from the authority of the Holy Scripture itself. At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the assertions of sacral character of the Holy Roman Empire were certainly no rhetorical figures but were presented as serious claims, the feature which clearly separates the early-modern age Europe from later more secularly minded centuries. From the time of *Oratio Supplicatoria* written in 1516, the claims regarding the sacral character of the universal empire were invoked at the Cortés of Castile in 1520 as well as in the *Relación de la batalla de Pavia* written in 1525, which as we have already seen, invoked the authority of the Holy Scripture in order to support the universalist claims of Charles V, and continued to be pressed even during the period that followed. The fact that Holy Roman Empire was at least theoretically regarded not as a mere human institution, but rather as an institution sanctioned by God himself helped the imperial court in reinforcing the notion of the special role of Charles V as divinely

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<sup>344</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 302.

favoured emperor. In order to do that, however, it was necessary to reawaken the very notion of sacral character of the Holy Roman Empire, which was now supposed to fulfil its historical role, which has been dormant through most of the Middle Ages and become truly “universal”.

At the beginning of 1526, that means some eleven months after the victorious battle of Pavia, Valdés repeated the claims for the universal rule in a letter written in the name of Charles V to Agustín de Grimaldi (1482-1532), the bishop of Monaco, which can serve us as a clear example of how the imperial court tried to project its ideology while dealing with other imperial princes, whose cooperation was needed. The letter began with the recapitulation of basic foundations of the ideology of universal empire: “Our deeds clearly testify to the devotion with which we have administered the great care for peace, liberty and stability not only of Italy, but also of the whole Christian word.”<sup>345</sup>

The letter then continued with explanation that the victory over Francis I was granted to Charles V by God himself in order to deliver the entire Christendom from its civil wars, thus following the same argument which has been continuously employed by Gattinara from 1516:

“And since, according to our opinion, this Christian commonwealth and especially Italy (not without great pain it caused to our own soul) has suffered so many horrifying disasters, it was also seen by the most excellent and greatest God, who in his benevolence decided to put an end to these wretched adversities, so much that last year, he granted us from his heaven a notable victory at Ticino over the most Christian king, our dearest brother.”<sup>346</sup>

Valdés here basically repeated the same sentiment, that he already expressed in his *Relación de la batalla de Pavia*, where he interpreted the victory at Pavia as a part of divine plan for the reform and deliverance of the Christendom. The same notion was latter even more strongly expressed in *Pro divo Carolo*, whose text was referring to “the Holy Roman Empire, which was established by God, foretold by the prophets, foretold by the Apostles, and by which was endorsed by the Lord himself, who was born, lived and died in it.”<sup>347</sup>

The argument suggesting that the existence of Roman Empire was approved by Jesus Christ himself, who decided to be born as a Roman citizen, appears to be directly taken from Dante’s *Monarchia* and it further confirms how influential this work of Florentine poet actually was at the

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<sup>345</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 47. “Quo studio non solum Italiae, sed universi christiani orbis quietem, libertatem et tranquillitatem pro viribus procuraverimus, actiones ipsae nostrae perfacile testantur.”

<sup>346</sup>Ibidem. “Et licet, praeter opinionem nostram, ipsa christiana res publica et praesertim Italia (non sine magno animi nostri dolore) tot miserandas calamitates passa sit, visum est tandem Deo Optimo Maximo, pro sua benignitate, aerumnosis his adversitatibus diu optatum finem imponere, tanta tamque insigni victoria apud Ticinum de Christianissimo Gallorum Rege, fratre nostro charissimo, superiori anno coelitus nobis concessa.”

<sup>347</sup>*Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 37. “[...] Sacrum Romanum Imperium a Deo institutum, a prophetis preadictum, ab Apostolis praedicatum, et ab ipso Domino nascente, vivente, et moriente approbatum.”

imperial court of Charles V. Furthermore, as we have also already seen, the same notion was also invoked in Gattinara's *Oratio Supplicatoria*.

The claim asserting the sacral character of Holy Roman Empire may not appear to be surprising if we consider that it was implied by its very name. This designation however meant very little unless it was backed by sufficient resolve to actually manifest this supposed sacral character of the empire in the arena of political reality. After all, without actively projecting sacral aspect of the empire, its claim to "holiness" remained an empty slogan, and eventually even could become an easy target for mockery, as was done by well-known French philosopher Voltaire, who claimed the Holy Roman Empire to be "neither holy, nor Roman, nor empire",<sup>348</sup> a riposte which John Headley called "trivial witticism".<sup>349</sup>

The sacral character of the empire was closely tied to the notion of divine favour granted to Charles V and which allegedly enabled Charles V to triumph over Francis I at the battle of Pavia. This supposed divine favour was mentioned by Alfonso de Valdés also in his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, where he recounted the words, which Charles V allegedly said to his French rival after the signing of treaty of Madrid and shortly before Francis's departure for France:

"[...] when they were once travelling together on the road and they were already about to depart from each other, the Emperor told him these words: Brother, you already see the evils that the Christendom has suffered because of our discords, as well as those that it will suffer if will continue in them; and because of this it seems that as a remedy for so much evil, God allowed you to come to power."<sup>350</sup>

If true, these words certainly did not make an impression on Francis I, who after his release refused to honour the treaty of Madrid, the refusal which plunged the Christendom into a new round of "civil wars", how they were sometimes referred to by the members of the imperial court.

In *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, Alfonso de Valdés also reaffirmed his conviction that the ascendancy of Charles has been prophesized and heralded by God:

"Charon: It seems to me that it cannot be this emperor who does so many things about which you have told me here.

Mercury: Why not?

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<sup>348</sup> Wallace, *The Presence of Rome in Medieval and Early Modern Britain*, p. 18. "Ce corps qui s'appelait et qui s'appelle encore le saint empire romain n'était en aucune manière ni saint, ni romain, ni empire".

<sup>349</sup> Headley, *Habsburg World Empire and Ghibellinism*, p. 68.

<sup>350</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 395. "[...] yendo una vez juntos camino, ya que se avían de apartar el uno del otro, el Emperador le dixo estas palabras: Hermano, ya vedes los males que la cristiandad ha padescido a causa de nuestras discordias, y las que padescería si las oviésemos de continuar; por donde paresçe que para remedio de tantos males permitiô Dios que vos viniédeses en mi poder."

Charon: Because it is obvious that it is God who does them for him. Just look at that summons and the protestation that he made before he took up arms. Doesn't it seem to you that God himself showed him through a prophecy what should be done?"<sup>351</sup>

The belief in prophecies was nothing unusual at the beginning of the modern era, so the fact that the imperial court tried to legitimize the rule of Charles V in this way is not surprising. The fact that this belief in prophecies had been prevalent in Spain at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century is attested by words of the regent of Castile in 1516 and 1517, cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros:

“Among other things, very powerful lord, it should be mainly believed that Our Lord protected you and made you such a great prince in order to achieve the preservation of his Church and the universal peace among the Christendom, as well as the perpetual destruction of heretics and infidels. Because of this, Your Highness needs to come to take in one hand the yoke which the Catholic King, your grandfather, left you, and by which so many fierce and proud [men] were subjugated, and in the other the arrows of your grandmother unequalled lady Isabel, with which she drove the maurs so far away, so that it is necessary that at the age of sixteen years you will start the journey to arrive to Jerusalem, to return to God his holy house.”<sup>352</sup>

The belief that Charles V has been predestined to achieve greatness, expressed by Cisneros, was indeed abundant in Spanish society of this time. This attitude has been also displayed for example by representatives of the city of Valladolid, who after the death of Ferdinand of Aragon in 1516 sent a letter to Charles, in which they urged him to travel to Spain as soon as possible and attracted him with the prospect of achieving the rule over the whole world:

“Let [your highness] come as fast as possible, since with [the presence] of your royal person, you will make Spain the ruler of many lands and it will make Your Highness the ruler of the world.”<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>351</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 417. “Carón: Paréceme que no debe ser ese Emperador el que hace tantas cosas como aquí me has contado.

Mercurio: ¿Cómo no?

Carón: Porque averiguadamente se conoce ser Dios el que las hace por él. Mirad, por vuestra vida, aquel requerimiento y aquella protestación que hizo antes que tomase las armas. ¿No parece que el mismo Dios le profetizaba lo que había de ser?”

<sup>352</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos de Carlos V*, Libro segundo, XIX. „Entre las otras cosas, muy poderoso señor, para a donde principalmente se debe creer que Nuestro Señor os guardó e hizo tan gran príncipe, que para conservación de su Iglesia y paz universal de la cristiandad y para perpetua destrucción de los herejes e infieles. Para lo cual Vuestra Alteza debe venir a tomar en la una mano aquel yugo que el Católico Rey vuestro abuelo os dejó, con que tantos bravos y soberbios se domaron; y en la otra las flechas de aquella reina sin par vuestra abuela doña Isabel, con que puso los moros tan lejos, que es menester que de diez y seis años comencéis a caminar para llegar a Jerusalén, para restituir su santa casa a Dios.”

<sup>353</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V el César y el Hombre*, p. 65. “Venga lo más presto que ser pueda, pues con vuestra real persona haréis a España señora de muchas tierras y ella a Vuestra Alteza señora del mundo.”

Apart from the emperor's role as consolidator and defender of the Christendom, the common topic present in Valdés's writings is the emperor's role as a supreme lawmaker. Keeping of peace and upholding law are naturally intertwined, because the functional justice system helps to maintain social stability and to avoid turmoil such as the war of comuneros. The accent of the judicial role of the emperor was already present in the writings of Gattinara, who emphasised the role that Charles V should be fulfilling in his already quoted memorandum from July of 1519, where he stated:

“Since God granted you the title of an emperor and a lawmaker and it is only your duty to explain, interpret, change and preserve the imperial laws, it is wholly right and reasonable that your imperial majesty follows the steps of the good emperor Justinian and in fitting time chooses the greatest scholars of law who can be found, so that they would council you with the said reform, to use all conceivable means to shorten the legal proceedings and to make comprehensible laws, so that the whole world willingly obeys them and one can rightly claim that there is one emperor and one valid law for all.”<sup>354</sup>

With a legal background of his own, it is hardly surprising that Gattinara emphasised the role of emperor as the highest lawmaker. It is also probable that he considered himself to be among those scholars, who according to him should counsel emperor with his proposed legal reform. By stating that imperial law should apply to the whole world, Gattinara suggests that the role of emperor in future universal empire should not be merely symbolic, but on the contrary, it should be Charles V, and presumably also his descendants, who should actively remodel and standardize legal norms for the whole world. This vision also supposes an establishment of more than a mere “symbolic” universal empire but would naturally demand the emperor to possess a sufficient power to enforce this new standardized law, valid for the entire world. Whether Gattinara really envisaged, that Charles V could be realistically expected to be able to enforce justice literally worldwide, is not clear.

As a model, Gattinara invoked the emperor of eastern Roman empire Justinian I “the Great” (r. 527-565), who is known mostly for his ambitious campaign of *renovatio imperii*, but also for his monumental legislative reform, which resulted in a publication of an extensive codex of law denominated *Corpus Iuris Civilis*.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>354</sup>Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.*, p. 59-60. “Da Gott Euch den Titel eines Kaisers und Gebetzgebers gegeben hat und es Euch allein zukommt, die kaiserlichen Gesetze zu erklären, zu interpretieren, zu ändern, zu wahren, so ist es wohl recht und vernünftig, daß Eure Kaiserliche Majestät den Spuren des guten Kaisers Justinian folge und zu guter Zeit die größten Rechtsgelehrten auswähle, die man finden kann, um über die Reform der erwähnten kaiserlichen Gesetze zu beraten, alle erdenklichen Mittel zur Verkürzung der Prozeßverfahren anzuraten und so klare Gesetze zu machen, daß die ganze Welt sich ihrer gern bedient und man mit Recht sagen kann, man habe einen Kaiser und ein für alle gültiges Gesetz.“

<sup>355</sup>Wormald, *Kings and kingship in The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 1, c. 500 – c. 700*, p. 578.

The question of emperor's obligation was addressed by Alfonso de Valdés himself at the beginning of his *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*. Here, Valdés puts the definition of the office of the emperor into the mouth of Archdeacon, one of the two characters discussing this issue:

“Lactancio: [...] Just so we understand each other better, since the quarrel is between the pope and the emperor, I want you first to tell me what the obligations of the pope and the emperor are and to what purpose were these offices instituted.

Archdeacon: In my mind, the obligation of the emperor is to defend his subjects and to preserve them in abundant peace and justice, while favouring the good and punishing the bad.”<sup>356</sup>

Valdés's definition of the duties of the emperor is thus quite simple: the emperor's main task is to preserve peace, defend all of his subjects and to maintain the rule of law. In order to do that, the emperor may sometimes use force, but this use of force must not be arbitrary, but always has to serve its just purpose. Unlike Gattinara, Valdés makes no allusion here to the universal validity of imperial law, but instead prefers to talk about “emperor's subjects”. We further see that the question of upholding of justice was closely related to the need to maintain the peace, especially among the Christians. This notion was also included in a letter written to the college of cardinals in October 1526, in which Charles V officially demanded the convocation of the general council, while blaming the pope Clement VII for deteriorating situation in Italy and highlighting his own merits in trying to secure the peace:

“Since we deem that we had been constituted as the head of our Empire, which was established by perfect and most illustrious God, not to try to extend the borders of this empire by spilling Christian blood, but so that our imperial dignity would be decorated by the authority and the power, and it would be revered by many and despised only by a few, so that the Christian commonwealth, which had been plunged into the danger by unjust wars, could, thanks to the imperial dignity, enjoy the lasting peace.”<sup>357</sup>

It is worth noting that this particular document explicitly mentions the fact that the empire should not be expanded by spilling of Christian blood. It is unclear whether this distinction was made

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<sup>356</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 291. “Lactancio: [...]Y porque mejor nos entendamos, pues la diferencia es entre el Papa y el Emperador, quiero que me digáis primero qué oficio es el del Papa y qué oficio es el del Emperador, e a qué fin estas dignidades fueron instituidas. Arcediano: A mi parecer, el oficio del Emperador es defender sus súbditos y mantenerlos en mucha paz y justicia, favoreciendo los buenos y castigando los malos.”

<sup>357</sup> *Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 57. “Quum enim in ipso Imperii nostri initio a Deo Opt. Max. in tanti Principatus culmine constitutos arbitraremur, non ut Imperii limites cum Christiani sanguinis iactura extendere, propagareve studeremus, sed quo Imperialis dignitas autoritate, et potentia decorata, et observaretur a multis, et contemneretur a paucis, indeq. Christiana Respub, bellorum iniuriis in extremum fere discrimen adducta, sempiterna tandem Caesarea dignitatis beneficio pace frueretur.”

on purpose in order to justify the acquisition of newly discovered lands overseas or not, since the document itself was written in a time when the empire actually was already violently expanding on the American continent on the expense of its indigenous inhabitants, who were however not Christians.<sup>358</sup> But the question of suitability of spreading of Christian faith and conquering the “pagan” lands was far from resolved in this time; after all, this exact question formed the core of famous Valladolid debate between Bartolomé de las Casas and Ginés de Sepulveda, which took place quarter of century after Alfonso de Valdés composed a letter to the cardinals in the name of Charles V.<sup>359</sup> It is obvious, that Alfonso de Valdés was more concerned about the peace in Europe than about the situation in America, which is virtually absent in his work. Alfonso de Valdés referred to America only indirectly at the beginning of his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, when he, through the mouth of Mercury, voiced a litany over the bad state of Christendom at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In his speech, Mercury claimed that he visited a kingdom, which was recently conquered by the Christians, a probable allusion to the Aztec Empire, but once there, he allegedly heard “thousands of complaints” from those who were recently converted, while the only thing these new converts allegedly learned from Christians was “to steal, to rob, to litigate and to cheat”.<sup>360</sup> It is however also possible that this recently conquered kingdom was an allusion to the Emirate of Granada, which the Christians conquered in 1492.

Alfonso de Valdés also addressed the importance of a legislative function of the ruler also in his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, through already mentioned figure of a former king, whom Valdés presented as an example of regal virtues. In his speech, this king mentioned the efforts he made while upholding the law: “Then I reformed the laws, so that only a few disputes would last longer than one year. I instituted that those lawyers, who used defend obviously unjust cases, should be punished.”<sup>361</sup>

On his deathbed, the king gave a series of instructions to his son and his heir regarding the administering of the justice:

“Grant posts in justice system only to those who are uncorrupted, good and who will accept them [only if] you beg them for it. Aristotle says that a judge should not receive from his post anything

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<sup>358</sup> On a theoretical level, this expansion was justified by the document called *requerimiento*, written by Juan López Palacios, which summarized the right of the Catholic kings of Spain to spread the Catholic faith in the newly discovered lands, which was legitimized by the concession made by the pope Alexander VI (1492-1503). Spanish conquistadors were supposed to read this document to native inhabitants of America and demand them to peacefully submit, become the subjects of the Spanish crown and accept the Christianity. In case that the natives refused, conquistadors could then wage a “just” war in order to make them comply, while the captives taken in the course of this “just” war could be taken into slavery. In reality, *requerimiento* was often read in its original form without the presence of translators, thus effectively preventing the natives to comply with its demands even if they would be willing to do so. See Thomas, *El Imperio español, de Colón a Magallanes*, p. 355-356.

<sup>359</sup> Thomas, *El Imperio español de Carlos V*, p. 545-556.

<sup>360</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 374. “Fuime a un reyno que diz que nuevamente avín los cristianos conquistado, e diéronme dellos mil queexas los nuevamente convertidos, diciendo que dellos avían aprendido a hurtar, a robar, a pleitear y a trampear; ove compasión de los unos y de los otros.”

<sup>361</sup> Idem, p. 477. “Reformé luego las leyes, de suerte que muy pocos pleitos duraban más de un año. Hazía castigar los abogados que defendían causas manifestamente injustas.”

else other than his salary, because there is nothing more harmful than when the judge can expect profit if he condemns a lot of people. Submit all judges to residencia and do not hesitate to oversee it. Reward good judges and punish bad ones with all severity. In this case, I do not want you to employ any clemency. Neither should you give clemency to your servants who do not do what they are supposed to do, but you should punish them more severely than others because if they are work in your presence, they have a bigger duty to be good, so that their infamy will not reach you. You should punish false witnesses and accusers exactly with that punishment, which they tried to inflict on somebody else.

While passing laws, always have an eye on the common good instead of your particular profit. If you see something that will be profitable to your subjects, do it and do not wait for them to beg you or bribe you to do it.”<sup>362</sup>

Valdés’s insistence on upholding justice and passing clear and comprehensible laws is hardly innovatory, but the fact that he had felt the need to mention this topic several times, as well as the fact that his mentor Gattinara urged Charles V to pay particular attention to the legal reform, signifies the commonly felt need to reform the laws and to uphold the justice. It is possible that this stance was influenced by general insecurity and high crime rates, which Spain experienced especially in the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but which were then at least partially curbed by the effort of the Catholic kings and particularly Isabel of Castile, who among other things created the organization known as *Santa Hermandad* (literally “Holy Brotherhood”), whose main task was to ensure security especially at the Spanish countryside.<sup>363</sup> Manuel Fernández Álvarez recounts how in the course of the first session of Cortes during the reign of Charles, which took place in Valladolid in 1518, the young king was reminded by the representatives of the Castilian nobility, that his foremost duty lay exactly in upholding the justice. This reminder came as a reaction to the speech of archbishop de Mota, one of the most important Castilian partisans of Charles during the first years of his reign, who two years later exalted the imperial mission of Charles at Santiago de Compostela:

“In the name of the entire assembly, the *procurador* of Burgos Zumel would reply to this speech of de Mota, and it was pointed to an ancient political concept, which was distinct from the thesis of the divine origin of regal power: and that is of the unspoken contract between kingdom and its king, which meant that the kingdom would serve the king with its tributes and would helped him by

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<sup>362</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 488. „No encomiendes cargos de justicia sino a personas incorruptas y buenas que los acepten rogados. No quiere Aristóteles que el juez tenga emolumentos de su oficio más del salario, porque no ay cosa más perniciosa que cuando el juez espera ganancia si ay muchos culpados. Hagan todos los juezes residencia y no dexes tú de ocuparte en verla, y al buen juez dale muy buen galardón, y al malo castígalo con todo rigor. En esto no quiero que admitas clemencia. Tampoco la debes usar con tus criados que no hazen lo que deben, mas castigarlos con más rigor que los otros, así porque estando cabe ti tienen más obligación a ser buenos, como porque de su infamia te alcanza a ti parte. A los testigos y acusadores falsos harás siempre castigar por la pena del talión. En las leyes que hizieres, ten siempre ojo al bien público, y no al tuyo particular. Lo que vieres ser provechoso a tus súbditos hazlo sin esperar que te lo rueguen ni que te lo compren.“

<sup>363</sup>Lynch, *Los Austrias (1516-1598)*, p. 13.



supplying its people in the case of war, while the king was obliged to grant a good justice. Therefore, the king would serve the kingdom.”<sup>364</sup>

The *procurador* of Burgos then added what was nothing less than a warning, when he said:

“Let then Your Highness heed that it is obliged by the said contract to keep and preserve justice...”<sup>365</sup>

Álvarez then continues to stress the way in which Charles was urged to choose the members of his administration with care:

“The best alcalde, the king; the best judge, the king. It was a popular wish that was captured by the literature. To achieve this, it was important that the king chooses his ministers well, according to the biblical saying: *Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.* [Exodus 18:21]”<sup>366</sup>

The insistence of the members of the imperial court as well as those who stood outside of it on the need to administer justice and to provide the internal security thus clearly illustrates what was seen as one of the major issues of early-modern Europe, although in reality, European continent has been affected by security issues throughout the entire medieval epoch, where different strategies to curb the high levels of violence, which were often caused by the members of nobility, were attempted. Among those was for example so-called Peace of God movement, introduced in the course of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, whose purpose was to ensure that warring sides “respect the lives and property of churchmen and the livelihood of non-combatants.”<sup>367</sup> As is evident from the revolt of knights led by Franz von Sickingen in 1520s in Germany,<sup>368</sup> the issue of uncontrolled violence caused by the members of the nobility was however present even five centuries later. As we will yet see in Part III of our work, the security issues were often related to the various social as well as religious movement, as happened so-called peasant revolt which occurred in large parts of Germany shortly after the Sickingen’s revolts of knights.

## 2.10. General council as a means of imperial policy

One of the recurring themes of the universalist ideology was without a doubt the demand for convocation of the general council. From a long-term historical perspective, this was nothing new.

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<sup>364</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V: el Cesar y el hombre*, p. 92-93. „A ese discurso de Mota contestaría el procurador burgalés Zumel, en nombre de toda la corporación. Y se hace eco de una antigua concepción política, distinta a la tesis del origen divino del poder regio: la del contrato tácito entre Reino y Rey, por el cual se entendía que el Reino servía al Rey con sus tributos y le ayudaba con sus gentes en caso de guerra, mientras que el Rey se obligaba a una buena justicia. Por lo tanto, el Rey al servicio del Reino.”

<sup>365</sup>Idem, p. 93. “Pues mire Vuestra Alteza si es obligado por contrato callado a los tener e guardar justicia...”

<sup>366</sup>Idem, p. 93.. “El mejor alcalde, el rey; el mejor juez, el rey. Era un deseo popular que recogería la literatura. Para lo cual, era preciso que el rey eligiera bien a sus ministros, conforme a la sentencia bíblica: *Juzgarás a mi pueblo y escogerás varones prudentes, temerosos de Dios que tengan sabiduría e aborrezcan la codicia.*”

<sup>367</sup> Hamilton, *Religion and the laity in The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 4, c. 1024- c. 1198 (Part 1)*, p. 511.

<sup>368</sup> Brady, *German Histories in the Age of Reformation, 1400-1650*, p. 96.

Throughout the history of the Christendom, councils played a vital role in outlining the basic theological doctrine of Christian faith, in dealing with various theological problems and unorthodox doctrines, which were sometimes condemned as “heresies”. The first Christian general council took place in Nicaea in 325, that means shortly after the Christians of the Roman Empire were officially granted religious toleration by the edict of Milan in 313. The first council of Nicaea was then followed by six other councils, which are all today known as ecumenical, and which took place in Constantinople in 381, Ephesus in 431, Chalcedon in 451, again in Constantinople in 551 and 680-381, and finally once again in Nicaea in 737. The councils also played an important role even during the High Middle Ages and after the great schism of 1054, as well as during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with its councils of Constance, which lasted from 1414 to 1418<sup>369</sup> and Basel, which took place from 1431 to 1445. The idea of the necessity of the new convocation of the general council became relevant again during the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Alfonso de Valdés himself captured this sentiment while informing his friend Pedro Mártir about the development in Germany and the beginnings of Lutheran movement, when he claimed that among other things, dissatisfied Germans were demanding the convocation of the general council.<sup>370</sup>

This discussion over the possibility of convocation of the general council formed part of broader discussion regarding the reform of the church in general. This reform, as well as the question over who should be the one to execute or to oversee it, brought again to the fore one of the most pressing issues of the renaissance world, that is, the relationship between temporal and spiritual power and their respective representatives, that is, the pope and the emperor.

The criticism of the church and popes in particular was indeed abundant and it was employed by political rivals of the papacy as well as by humanists and other religious reformers, such as Martin Luther and his followers, who desired to see a throughout reform of the whole institution of the church. The papacy also became a target of some dissatisfied humanists, including none other than Erasmus de Rotterdam himself, to whom is generally attributed the authorship of a dialogue *Julius exclusus de coelis*, although Erasmus himself never confirmed that he actually wrote it.<sup>371</sup> The dialogue itself was written either in 1513 or 1514 and was directed again then recently dead pope Julius II (1503-1513), who was seen by many as a symbol of corruption affecting papal curia, especially in the light of his financially demanding construction projects in the city of Rome, which included the building of the new Basilica of Saint Peter.

This critical and reformist sentiment was however also shared by the imperial court, which continued to lobby for the convocation of the council throughout the whole decade, but especially

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<sup>369</sup>The council of Constance was significant mainly because it ended a papal schism, which involved three would be popes. According to Brady, this result of this council was also one of the biggest successes of the emperor Sigismund of the Luxembourg dynasty. See Brady, *German Histories in the Age of Reformation*, 1400-1650, p. 71-88.

<sup>370</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 13. “[...] petereque ut generalis Christianorum omnium conventus indiceretur”.

<sup>371</sup>Erasmus, *Collected works of Erasmus, Literary and educational writings, volume 27 and volume 28*, p. XII.

after the election of Clement VII as the new pope in 1523. The demand for the convocation of the general council was explicitly stated towards the end of the introduction to *Pro divo Carolo*, presumably written by Alfonso de Valdés himself. The passage in question begins with an appeal to various Christian princes:

“Hence all the princes of the Christendom, united by the glory of Christ and by the name of Christians, by which we all pride ourselves, united by their magnificent titles, why, if their piety is true, if they prefer to restore their perfect titles, if they are the most saint, the most blessed, the Catholic, if they are protectors of the church and of all Christian people, if they truly want to be called defenders of faith, once that the Caesar opens the way, we pray that they will honour their obligations, they will honour the requirements of their offices and with the consent of the whole world they will forsake all their quarrels and they will obey the universal council of the Christians.”<sup>372</sup>

The choice of words in this text is extremely important. The text makes it clear that it is the emperor himself who “opens the way” (à Caesare iter apertum) to the convocation of the council, which is not just any council, but the *universal* council of all Christians, the claim clearly intended to present the council as the highest Christian authority and thus as a direct challenge to the pope Clement VII. But this is not all, because the text then continues:

“It would not be difficult, if they would employ Christian diligence, if they would come together and most sincerely opened their hearts: the convent would be presided by Christ, and all would freely spoke their minds, and all the opinions would be brought together into one light of Evangelia, so that we would clearly saw Christ’s truth, to which we had until now most disgracefully closed our eyes. No one would be able to deceit this convent, which would be presided by Christ himself: and who would then doubt the coming of Christ, if he saw everyone flock together in order to improve the Christian Commonwealth?”<sup>373</sup>

Besides the introduction of *Pro divo Carolo*, the demand for the convocation of the general council was also explicitly formulated in the letter to the collegium of cardinals, written in October 1526. This document is particularly interesting especially because it marks a shift from previous

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<sup>372</sup> *Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 5. “Quare universos Principes Christianos per communem Christi gloriam, per que nomen Christianum, quo toties gloriamur, per magnificos titulos, si quae vera pietas est, si malint perfectiores reddere titulos, si Sanctissimi, si Beatissimi, si Christianissimi, si Catholici, si Ecclesiae, hoc est totius Christiani populi defensores, si fidei protectores verè dici volunt, quando haec in rem sunt Christianam, ad idque à Caesare iter apertum est, precamur, ut quod eorum est muneris ac officii, quàm accuratissimè praestent, et unico orbis consensu antiquatis omnibus controversiis, universalem conventum parent Christianorum.”

<sup>373</sup> *Ibidem* „Quod nullo fiet negocio, si Christianam adhibuerint diligentiam, si id in pectore euorum sincerissimo insederit: huic conventui praeserit Christus Opt. Max. dicentur liberrimae sententiae, collatis omnium iudiciis ad unum lumen envangelicum, fiet tandem ut oculatius rem Christi prospiciamus, qui hactenus ad eandem foedissime connivebamus. Nemini poterit esse fraudi senatus, cui Christus ipse praecerit: at quis dubitat affuturum Christum si viderit huc omnes confluere optimo incremento Reipub. Christianae.”

idealistic, yet somewhat vague proclamations regarding the unification of the whole world under the rule of “one pastor”, present in *Oratio Supplicatiae, Adlocutio* or *Relación de la batalla de Pavia*, to something resembling an actual political program. The intent of the imperial court had been to bypass the authority of the pope, who openly allied with the enemies of the emperor such as Francis I, and to execute the reform of the church independently of him. The assertion that during the session of the future council of all Christians, Christ himself would be present was clearly intended as a guarantee of the legitimacy of the council, because if the premise of Christ’s presence would be accepted, no Christian would be able to reject its decision. We may only assume that if the council for which imperial court, and especially men like Gattinara and Alfonso de Valdés called took place, its decisions would be favourable to the emperor, and it would have likely greatly strengthened his authority in all temporal as well as in religious matters. It is probable that besides reaching some kind of compromise with the Lutherans, Mercurino di Gattinara would seize this opportunity to limit the temporal power of the papacy and possibly even try to dispose it of its secular holdings known as Patrimony of Saint Peter, whose existence was also heavily criticized by Alfonso de Valdés. The idea of depriving the pope of secular control over the central Italy was indeed already formulated by Dante Alighieri and it forms one of the central axioms presented in his *Monarchia*. In his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, Valdés directly attacked papal sovereignty over the territory which formed this so-called Patrimony of Saint Peter patrimony, whose existence he regarded to be in a direct contradiction with the legacy of Saint Peter himself:

“Charon: I will tell you, Mercury, that this is a strange thing. I remember seeing a certain Peter, when he was climbing that mountain, who said that he was the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and he told me that not only he did not have a patrimony in the world, but also that in order to be the Vicar of Christ, it was necessary to give up the misery that he owned. And now you are telling me that they have such a great patrimony.

Mercury: You have a good memory, but look, Charon, how do you know that it wasn’t fitting for Saint Peter to leave what he had but now, it is fitting for his successors to take from others what they have?

Charon: Do you want me to tell you the truth, Mercury? As much as it pleases me that they do it the way you describe it, it seems to me that it would be more convenient for them and for everyone if they did the opposite.”<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 385. “Carón.- Ésa te digo yo, Mercurio, que es una gentil invinçión. Yo me acuerdo de ver subir por aquella montaña un Pedro que dezía aver sido Vicario de Jesu Cristo, e me dixo que no solamente no tuvo patrimonio en el mundo Sant Pedro, mas que para ser Vicario de Jesu Cristo fue menester que dexase essa miseria que tenía. ¿Ahora dizesme tú que tienen ésos tan gran patrimonio.

Mercurio: Buena memoria tienes, pero mira, Carón, ¿qué sabes tú si entonces convenía que Sant Pedro dexase lo que tenía y agora conviene que sus sucessores tomen a los otros lo que tienen?

Carón: ¿Quieres que te diga, Mercurio, la verdad ? Ansí como yo me huelgo que ellos lo hagan como tu dizes, ansí me paresçe que convenía a ellos y a todos que lo hiziesen por el contrario.”

While the letter to the collegium of cardinals goes nowhere near enough to suggest the infringement on secular holdings of the church in Italy, which would naturally heavily affected cardinals themselves, it is obvious that it was written at the height of controversy between Charles V and Clement VII, which followed the establishment of the league of Cognac, about which we are going to talk in the next chapter, which may explain its relatively harsh language as well as the demands it presented. In the end, however, the calls for the convocation of the council remained unanswered, if for nothing else, then because of the renewed hostilities, which engulfed Italy in 1527 and which eventually led to the Sack of Rome.

But the attitude demanding the emperor to be the one to execute the reform of the Church lived on and it survived even Alfonso de Valdés himself. In 1535, three years after Alfonso's death, his brother Juan still held to the conviction that it was the emperor, and not the pope, in whom the hopes for pacification of the world and reform of the Church should be placed.<sup>375</sup> But eventually, it took another ten years before the council finally met in the city of Trent, located in the northern Italy.

## 2.11. The fight for Italy: the empire of Charles V against the League of Cognac

*“In the heart of holy see  
In the home of Christianity  
The seat of power is in danger  
There's a foe of a thousand swords  
They've been abandoned by their lords  
Their fall from grace will pave their path to damnation  
Then the 189  
In the service of heaven  
They're protecting the holy line  
It was 1527  
Gave their lives on the steps to heaven  
Thy will be done!”*

*Sabaton – The Last Stand<sup>376</sup>*

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<sup>375</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 83.

<sup>376</sup>The topic of the song written by a Swedish band Sabaton is the performance of 189 members of papal Swiss guard, who defended the pope Clement VII during the Sack of Rome and from whom only 42 survived. The Swiss guard, which acts as the armed force of Vatican even today, was established by the pope Julius II in 1506.

The years following 1526 project a starkly different image in contrast with the optimism, which ruled the imperial court at the beginning of the imperial reign of Charles V and especially after the victory over the French forces at Pavia in 1525. Although the overall situation from the point of view of the imperial court initially looked favourable, it quickly deteriorated so much, that Geoffrey Parker described the performance of Charles V during the period between 1525 and 1528 as “snatching defeat from the jaws of victory”.<sup>377</sup> This period is subsequently also the time when Alfonso de Valdés fully entered the fray and became fully active in promoting the universal empire of Charles V, as was noted by John M. Headley, who claimed that: “For the present [1526] Alfonso de Valdés stood on the threshold of his most fateful collaboration with the chancellor [Gattinara]. And in the ensuing months the Castilian would be given ever greater responsibilities in trumpeting a Habsburg imperial worldview that surpassed any regional conception of empire.”<sup>378</sup>

After the battle of Pavia, in which imperial forces triumphed over their French adversaries, the captured French king Francis I was transported to Spain by the viceroy of Naples Charles de Lannoy and then imprisoned in Madrid, where he remained despite several failed attempts to escape his captivity and despite being at one point affected by an illness, which allegedly threatened his life, causing great alarm on the part of the emperor, who rushed to the bed to his adversary in order to speak with him before his death, which then seemed approaching.<sup>379</sup> But Francis recovered and eventually, the two sovereigns agreed on the treaty, hence known as the treaty of Madrid, which was officially signed 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1526. In theory, this marked a huge success for Charles, because by its virtue Francis promised to return the whole territory of duchy of Burgundy, including its capital Dijon, which was annexed by France of Louis XI after the death of the duke Charles the Bold in 1477. Fulfilling the stipulations of this treaty and regaining the entire territory of former duchy of Burgundy would have enormously boosted the power of Habsburg dynasty while simultaneously significantly weakening France. However, Francis I was not prepared to allow this to happen. While still in captivity, he signed a secret protestation, in which he promised “that he would not honour any concessions made under duress compromising the integrity of France”.<sup>380</sup> Many saw the danger which the content of the treaty, or more precisely the decision made by Charles V to allow Francis I to return to France without first delivering the promised territory, presented. One of those was the grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara himself, who went as far as openly defying the emperor and refusing to sign the document.<sup>381</sup> In *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, Alfonso de Valdés himself recognized that Charles’s faith in Francis had been misplaced, by claiming that only “very few hoped

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<sup>377</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 93.

<sup>378</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 83.

<sup>379</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 96-97.

<sup>380</sup>Idem, p. 98.

<sup>381</sup>Kohler, *Carlos V*, p. 185. “La Paz de Madrid ya estaba superada cuando se concluye con grandes festejos el 14 de enero de 1526. En la corte imperial provocó el aislamiento de Gattinara, que se negó a aprobar este acuerdo.”

that the King of France will honour or uphold that which he had promised to the Emperor, because they knew his nature”,<sup>382</sup> although while writing these lines, Valdés had an undeniable advantage of retrospect. Ramón Menéndez Pidal explained the decision of Charles V, which seemed naïve even to some of his contemporaries, as the result of idealism of the emperor, who decided to neglect the advice of his grand chancellor and rather heed that of some of his Spanish councillors such as Hugo de Moncada or marquis of Pescara, who advised the emperor to seek the reconciliation with France.<sup>383</sup> The fact that the approach chosen by Charles failed and eventually led to another war is then explained by Menéndez Pidal by pointing to the “nobility of the winner”, who sincerely strove to maintain Europe in peace and fraternal concord.<sup>384</sup>

Whether we are going to agree with Menéndez Pidal or not and whether we are going to interpret the decision made by Charles V as a sign of the nobility of his spirit rather than his gross political miscalculation, a miscalculation which threatened to undo all successes which the emperor achieved during the first years of his rule, we have to state the fact that the Gattinara’s fears came true as soon as Francis I crossed the French territory, leaving in Spain his two sons as hostages, because the French king indeed refused to deliver Burgundian territories while claiming that the treaty of Madrid to be invalid, since he did not sign it voluntarily. What was even more serious, after his return to France, Francis I immediately started the diplomatic activity, whose aim was the establishment of wide anti-imperial coalition, which eventually materialized in the form of League of Cognac, formally established 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 1526, which apart from France included the papacy of Clement VII, Venice and Florence,<sup>385</sup> and whose establishment thus started a new round of war in Italian peninsula.

The failure to honour the treaty of Madrid on the part of Francis I was soon fiercely criticised by Alfonso de Valdés, who dedicated the great part of his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* to the political development which followed the resumption of hostilities after the release of the French king, whom he openly accused of treachery and breaking his faith:

“Since the king of France gave his word to do this, and it is proven and shown by a document signed by his own hand, so much that he cannot deny it, and then, not only that he does not honour it, but openly says that he does not want to honour it, isn’t it clear that he is breaking his faith? And if he

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<sup>382</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 394 “[...] muy pocos heran los que tenían esperanza que el Rey de Francia cumpliría ni guardaría lo que al Emperador avía prometido, porque conoçían su condiçión.”

<sup>383</sup> Pidal, *Idea Imperial de Carlos V*, p. 20. „En el otro partido del Consejo sobresalían los españoles Hugo de Moncada y el marqués de Pescara (éste, a pesar de su título italiano, no hablaba sino español), los cuales aconsejaban un tratado de clemencias, de reconciliación con Francia, de confianza en el rey prisionere; es decir, nada de tendencia a la monarquía universal, sino el *imperio de paz cristiana*.”

<sup>384</sup> Idem, p. 21. “Quizá en esto se equivocó, porque el vencido no correspondió bien a la nobleza del vencedor; equivocación que honra un carácter consagrado a mantener una Europa fraterna y concorde.”

<sup>385</sup> Kohler, *Carlos V*, p. 187.

who does this commits vileness and treachery, it is certain that he himself is vile and treacherous, and it can be rightly said that he acted treacherously by breaking his faith.”<sup>386</sup>

In his dialogue, Valdés however did not mention the secret protestation made by Francis, according to which any eventual signature made by him was forced and therefore invalid. Valdés either did not have a precise knowledge about this particular document, or in case he did, he nonetheless wanted to paint the French king in a worst way possible and thus omitted its existence. The attitude of Valdés thus stands on the premise that not only did Francis willingly sign the treaty, but that he also made an oath to the emperor and repeatedly confirmed his desire to fulfil its stipulations, and what is more and what could not have been missed by Valdés, Francis I expressed his will to return to captivity, should he fail to honour the stipulations of the treaty.<sup>387</sup>

The failure of the treaty of Madrid as well formation of the League of Cognac thus plunged the empire as well as the whole Italian peninsula into a new round of conflict. This conflict was not being fought only by firearms or artillery, but with words and printing press as well, which consequently brought men such as Valdés to its forefront. We have already partly discussed the publication of *Pro divo Carolo*, which represents the peak of what John Headley described as “the imperial propaganda campaign”,<sup>388</sup> and which consists of an exchange of letters between the papal curia and the imperial court, which was taking place in the course of 1526. During this time, the imperial court was located in Granada, where Charles V was spending honeymoon after his wedding with his new wife, Isabel of Portugal.

*Pro divo Carolo*, however, does not capture the whole exchange between Charles V and Clement VII, since it does not contain all letters emerging from the pen of Alfonso de Valdés and directed to Clement VII. Such as the case of a letter dated to 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1526, that means the same date as the previous imperial reply to the pope, which was included to *Pro divo Carolo*. The second letter stands out by the very fact that this time, instead of referring to the pope as *vestra sanctitas*, meaning “your holiness”, the head of the Catholic church is addressed by casual, and in this context maybe even contemptuous, pronoun “tu”.<sup>389</sup> Towards the end of the letter, the pope is nonetheless implored to make peace with Charles and to join him in fulfilling God’s plan for humanity:

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<sup>386</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 517. “Pues si el Rey de Francia dió su fe de hacer esto, y lo prueba y muestra por escritura firmada de su propria mano talmente que no lo puede negar, y después, no solamente no lo cumple, mas claramente dize que no lo quiere cumplir, ¿no está claro que rompe su fee? Y si el que ésta rompe haze vileza y ruynad, cosa averiguada es que él queda por vil y ruyn, y que con verdad se puede dezir haberlo hecho ruynamente en romper su fe.”

<sup>387</sup>Idem, p. 516. “

<sup>388</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and His Chancellor*, p. 86.

<sup>389</sup>In this context, however, Headley notes that possibly overused address „vestra sanctitas“, present in other letters to Clement VII, might have been indeed employed rather in an ironic sense. See Headley, *The Emperor and His Chancellor*, p. 96.



„Since it is in this way, and since I have not given you any cause for offence, I vehemently implore you to lay down your arms. I will do the same, and since we were both chosen by God to be two great sources of light, let's work together, so that the whole globe will be illuminated by us and so that our discords will not cause any eclipse, and let's ponder about the whole commonwealth, about routing of barbarians and crushing the sects and [their] errors.”<sup>390</sup>

It is not difficult to guess who “barbarians” and “the sects”, who needed to be routed or crushed, were supposed to be. While the first term describes Ottomans and other Muslims, the second term is directed towards the Lutherans and other Protestant groups. Despite not forming an official part of *Pro divo Carolo*, this letter nonetheless reaffirms the central part of imperial universalist ideology which *Pro divo Carolo* expresses, and which was characterized by John M. Headley in this way:

“In its effort to de-politicize the pope or at least to call him to account before his flock for having entered into armed leagues and become overly involved in the power politics of the moment, the imperial response seems to partake of a widespread notion current among Charles' generals and diplomatic agents in Italy that the political pretensions of the papacy must be annihilated and the pope reduced to his properly pastoral function. Nevertheless, in emphasizing the preeminence of the moral and spiritual role for the pope, the response together with associated materials constituting Book I [of *Pro divo Carolo*] of a larger polemic reveals itself to be informed by an Erasmian tone that asserts the moral performance and internal disposition of a person conformable to Christ to be true measure of the Christian.”<sup>391</sup>

On a theoretical level, the problem of relationship between the pope and the emperor represented one the main questions of political theory throughout the Middle Ages, especially since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. As was noted by Franz Bosbach, the main point of the debate was the question of supreme jurisdiction, that is “whether the universal government of the emperor was independent from the pope or whether the emperor could exercise his universal jurisdiction only by order of the pope.”<sup>392</sup> Bosbach further mentions that as a reaction to this theoretical problem, two main concepts eventually emerged. While the first concept, called hierocratic, supposed papal superiority over the emperor in all, including temporal matters, the other concept, which Bosbach called dualistic, meant that the pope and the emperor operates in “two totally independent fields of action”.<sup>393</sup> It is obvious

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<sup>390</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 54. „Quod cum ita sit, et quoniam offensionis tibi causam nullam dedi, vehementer abs te peto, ut ab armis descedas. Idem ego faciam; et cum a Deo simus ambo constituti veluti luminaria duo magna, demus operam, ut per nos illustretur orbis terrarum, neque per nostrum dissidium oriatur eclipsis, cogitemus de universe republica, de profligandis barbaris, de sectis et erroribus comprimendis.”

<sup>391</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 98.

<sup>392</sup>Bosbach, *The European Debate on Universal Monarchy*, p. 83.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibidem*.

that the ideology of the imperial court of Charles V is the pure example of this dualistic approach, since it supposed the clear delimitation of the roles of the emperor and the pope, or the church in general, and while using the words of Headley, reducing it to its “pastoral function”, leaving the entire world of earthly politics to the emperor. This attitude towards the papacy was nowhere better formulated than in *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, where Valdés, speaking through Lactancio, claimed:

“Regarding the pope, I am amazed that while he should be a mirror of all Christian virtues and an example, to which we all should look up to, while he should keep everybody in peace and concord, even if that meant danger to his own life, he [rather] wants to wage war to in order to gain the things, which Jesus Christ ordered [us] to scorn, and that there is someone among the Christians who helps him in a work so abominable, execrable and prejudicial to the honour of Jesus Christ.”<sup>394</sup>

Alfonso de Valdés here presents a clear example of dualistic thinking. The pope is supposed to act certainly within the spiritual sphere and should not engage the world of politics and he certainly must not get involved in armed conflicts, because this goes directly against the mandates of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, since the role of the pope is to represent Jesus Christ himself, his responsibilities are clearly different from those of secular princes, who can, if the situation requires it, use force, for example to defend their own subjects.

We can get another idea of what exactly the pastoral function of the church supposed to mean in practice thanks to the passage in *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, where Mercury and Charon encounter a soul of a bishop, who is on his way to heaven, and who thus serves an idealized example of how high officials of the Catholic church were supposed to act according to Valdés. At first, it is stated by the soul of a bishop that he never actually strove to gain his position, but that he was chosen and even persuaded to take up the office before finally accepting it.<sup>395</sup> By this, Valdés lauded the humility which according to him was largely absent from the church of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The bishop then states that because he wanted to act as an example for others, he was forced to “to put myself and my house in order”,<sup>396</sup> because otherwise he would not be able to reprehend others for their sins and shortcomings. Valdés thus emphasize the need for the ecclesiastical authorities to lead other Christians by their own example, something which according to him the popes as well as many bishops failed to do. The bishop’s soul then continues to explain that he “tried to teach everyone the

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<sup>394</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 296. “Del Papa me maravillo, que debería de ser espejo de todas las virtudes cristianas y dechado en quien todos nos habíamos de mirar, que habiendo de meter y mantener a todos en paz y concordia, aunque fuese con peligro de su vida, quiera hacer guerra por adquirir y mantener cosas que Jesucristo mandó menospreciar, y que halle entre cristianos quien le ayude a una obra tan nefanda, execrable y perjudicial a la honra de Cristo.”

<sup>395</sup> Idem, p. 495. “Digo elegido, porque ni yo jamás pedí, ni aun me pasó por pensamiento desearlo, conociéndome tan inábil e insuficiente para ello que en ninguna manera lo osara desear [...]”.

<sup>396</sup> Idem, p. 496. “trabajé de ordenarme a mí y a mi casa”.

Christian doctrine, pure and clean, without the mixing it with vanities or superstitions”, as well as trying to convince the people to stay free from vices and sins, whether through persuasion or with the help of punishments and threats.<sup>397</sup> The bishop also actively tried to suppress socially problematic behaviour, when he tried to prevent unruly people from shouting the obscenities in the streets at night, because this could upset young women as well as nuns.<sup>398</sup> Furthermore, the bishop initiated a program whose aim was to control the literature read by the population, something that in modern terms could not be described as anything else than censorship. It was banned to sell not only the books containing “profane things and fictional stories”,<sup>399</sup> but in addition to that, bishop also strove to censor religious literature which could contain material “that seemed in some way contrary not only to the faith, but [also] to the Christian doctrine.”<sup>400</sup>

Apart from prohibitions, the bishop tried to instil the correct attitude in the people by actively promoting the literature which seemed beneficial, and he also ordered the New Testament and “other things in Latin” translated into vernacular and distributed among the people.<sup>401</sup>

The fact that Valdés mentioned the translations of the Holy Scripture into vernacular can be attributed to the influence of Erasmus, who himself also advocated for the translations of the Bible in order to make it more accessible to the wider population,<sup>402</sup> but it can be also interpreted as a sign of his conviction that even general population was able improve its morality by autonomous study of sacral texts, without the necessary mediation of church officials.

Generally speaking, the role of the church presented in *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* thus corresponded to the framework outlined in the official correspondence of Charles V with the pope Clement VII, which supposed mutual collaboration of temporal and spiritual power, but only in a sense when both sides acted accordingly to their own mission. In this context, the imperial court often utilized the phrase *duo magna luminaria*, meaning “two great lights”, symbolizing the ideal state in which both the emperor and the pope “illuminate” the world.

This phrase, employed in the letter to Clement VII from 18<sup>th</sup> of September, echoes the concept already presented by Dante Alighieri, in whose philosophy both highest representatives of temporal and spiritual power, that is the emperor and the pope, should cooperate with each, under the condition that the pope’s power remains strictly restricted to the spiritual domain. This particular phrase also

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<sup>397</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 496-497. “[...] trabajava de enseñar a todos la doctrina christiana, pura y limpia, sin mezcla de vanidades ni supersticiones, y de apartarlos de vicios y pecados, atrayendo unos con dádivas y halagos y a otros con castigos y amenazas [...]”.

<sup>398</sup>Idem, p. 497. “Especialmente usava mucho rigor contra una manera de gente infernal que de noche se anda echando pullas por las calles con mucho daño de las tiernas donzellas y de las religioas que lo oyen.”

<sup>399</sup>Ibidem “[...] vedé que no se vendiesen libros de cosas prophanas e historias fingidas [...]”.

<sup>400</sup>Idem, p. 498. “[...] todo aquello que parecía ser en alguna manera contrario no solamente a la fe, mas a la doctrina christiana.”.

<sup>401</sup>Ibidem, “[...] hize trasladar el Testamento Nuevo y otras cosas latinas que me parecieron provechosas para el vulgo [...]”.

<sup>402</sup>Heer, *Evropské duchovní dějiny*, p. 308.

appears in Gattinara's writings,<sup>403</sup> once again proving that when it came to the official correspondence, the content of Valdés's texts written by Valdés was directly influenced by the grand chancellor, from whom Valdés frequently borrowed terminology as well as various intellectual concepts.

We may naturally ask, to which extent was the stance of the imperial court influenced by mere opportunism, that is by the fact, that it was France, and not the empire, with whom Clement VII chose to align himself. Was the relatively strong stance against the papacy really just product of momentary political situation?

It is interesting to note that at the beginning of his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, Alfonso de Valdés recounts how the pope Leo X made the exact opposite of what was later done by his successor Clement VII, when despite previous being an allied with the French king, he switched sides and after Spanish victory over invading French force, which was trying to capture Navarra, he aligned himself with the emperor against the French:

“When the pope Leo X saw this, then because he on the one hand recognized the justice of the Emperor and on the other the malice of the King of France, he declared himself as his enemy and joined the emperor's side, and during the same year [1521], their armies in Italy together expelled the French from the State of Milan, which they held under tyrannical occupation, and returned it to the duke Francesco Maria Sforza.”<sup>404</sup>

The actions of Leo X did not earn any reprimand on the part of Valdés, who otherwise fiercely criticized his successor Clement VII for engaging in wars and for disturbing the peace. This should not be surprising, if we consider the fact that both Valdés's dialogues are heavily partisan and present exclusively the imperial point of view. The armed interference on the part of emperor is thus not explicitly interpreted as something which went against the nature of the papal office but is rather tacitly overlooked, if not condoned. We might naturally ask to which extent were the appeals of Charles V, formulated by Alfonso de Valdés, through which he called Clement VII to abandon the mutual hostility and instead seek peace, sincere. It is nonetheless likely that Charles V indeed wished to come to some sort of arrangement with Clement VII during the crisis of 1526 and 1527, because after all, this is what in the end eventually happened by their mutual treaty signed in 1529, which paved way for future imperial coronation in Bologna in 1530. Above all, from a geopolitical

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<sup>403</sup> The phrase „duo magna luminaria“ appears for example in Gattinara's autobiography, see Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of Spanish Empire*, p. 140. “Renuit Mercurinus munus oblatum, cum mentis sue nunquam fuisset se magis ecclesie devincire, eo quod pro comperto haberet ecclesiasticorum persecutionem ob illorum corruptos mores brevi fiendam, seque potius operam daturum, ut ecclesia ipsa reformaretur ... ut inter pontificem et Cesarem, tamquam duo magna orbis luminaria, tanta esset conformitas ad christianam religionem instaurandam, ut inde totus terrarum orbis illustraretur, fieretque, iuxta divinam sententiam, unum ovile et unus pastor.”

<sup>404</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 377. „Quando esto vio el papa León Déçimo, consiendolo por una parte la justicia del Emperador y por otra la malicia del Rey de Françia, declaróse por su enemigo en favor del Emperador, y juntos sus exércitos en Ytalia, ese mismo año echaron los françeses del Estado de Milán que tiránicamente tenían ocupado, restituyendo en él al duque Françisco Maria Esforçia.”

perspective, Charles V wanted to secure the Italian peninsula in order to protect his own dominions in Naples and Sicily as well as to keep a reliable connection with Habsburg dominions in Austria and with Holy Roman Empire in general. Charles V also wanted to counter the French expansionist policy, which regarded Italy as its main target since 1494, when the French king Charles VIII made the first attempt to gain control over Naples. Depriving France of control over Italy was in vital interest of Charles V, because the French king Francis I was essentially the only European prince who could have threatened Charles's position as the most powerful Christian sovereign of his time. The obstinacy of Clement VII, his pro-French attitude and his willingness to enter an open military conflict nonetheless pushed the imperial court to adopt more aggressive rhetoric as well as to start to prepare the theoretical ground for stripping the pope of his secular power and influence. In this regard, the dialogues of Alfonso de Valdés expressed the radical version of views held the imperial court, untampered by diplomatic restraint, although they were most likely written from his own initiative and without direct command of the emperor or his grand chancellor. How did these theoretical ground for redefining the role of the papacy looked like?

In *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, Lactancio, who represents Valdés himself, asks his opponent in a discussion to define the institution of the papacy and its obligations:

“Lactancio: When I ask you for which purpose was this dignity instituted, it means that you are supposed to tell me the wish and the intentions of the one, who instituted it.

Archdeacon: It seems to me that it was instituted so that the Highest Pontiff has the authority to declare the Holy Bible, and so that he may educate the people in the Christian doctrine, not only with words, but also with the example of his life, so that he with his tears and prayers continuously begs God for his Christian people, and so that he has the ultimate power to absolve those who had sinned and want to repent, to condemn those who would persist in their bad way of life, and so that he continuously tries to keep the Christians in great peace and concord [...]”<sup>405</sup>

Archdeacon then finishes with what seems to be the most important point of all, which is the statement that the highest duty of the pope is to “represent the life and saint customs of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer [...]”<sup>406</sup> Valdés subsequently used this axiom, according to which the obligation of

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<sup>405</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 291. „Latancio: Quando yo os pregunto para qué fue instituida esta dignidad, entiéndese que me havéis de dezir la voluntad e intención del que la instituyó.

Arcidiano: A mi parecer, fue instituida para quel Sumo Pontífice toviessa autctoridad de declarar la Sagrada Scriptura, y para que enseñasse al pueblo la doctrina cristiana, no solamente con palabras, mas con exemplo de vida, para que con lágrimas e oraciones continuamente rogasse a Dios por su pueblo cristino, y para que este toviessa el supremo poder de absolver a los que oviessen peccado e se quisiessen convertir, y para declarar por condenados a los que en su mal vivir estuviessen obstinados, y para que con continuo cuidado procurasse de mantener los cristianos en mucha paz y concordia [...]”

<sup>406</sup>Ibidem. “[...] para que [...] representasse la vida y sanctas costumbres de Jesu Cristo nuestro Redemptor [...]”

popes should always be to strive to follow the archetypal figure of Jesus Christ, to criticise the secular pretensions and most importantly the pursue of war by the popes, namely by Clement VII:

“Lactancio: Tell me now, then: since you are saying that the pope was instituted so that he imitates Jesus Christ, what do you think that Jesus Christ would want more, to keep the peace between his own, or to stir them and lead them to war?

Archdeacon: It is clear that the Author of the peace considers nothing to be as abominable as war.

Lactancio: Let’s see then, how can he, who wages the war and destroys the peace, can be the imitator of Jesus Christ?”<sup>407</sup>

Alfonso de Valdés then continues to defend the imperial position by stating that while the emperor had the right to take up arms because he was defending his subjects, the pope violated the duties of his office by doing exactly the same. This position was undoubtedly motivated by geopolitical circumstances. After all, if Alfonso de Valdés wanted to be actually objective, he would have to condemn the late pope Leo X, who took up arms alongside the emperor against France, in the same way in which he did condemn Clement VII for taking up arms against the emperor alongside the French king. But considering the fact that the alliance between the pope and Francis I indeed meant the great danger for the imperial party and threatened the imperial control over Italy, it is thus not surprising that it provoked such a strong reaction from the imperial court. Not only did this alliance threaten the kingdom of Naples, which was contested between Spain and France since the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but its eventual success would have also severed the communication between Spain and Austria and the rest of Holy Roman Empire respectively, as we have already explained.

Does this however mean that the stance of the imperial court and its wish to, using Headley’s words, “reduce the pope to his pastoral function”, was motivated exclusively by geopolitical opportunism? In answering this question, we must remind ourselves that Italy itself was considered as something what could be called “the heart of the imperial project” by Charles’s grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara. This is attested for example in Gattinara’s undated memorandum addressed to the emperor, which according to Kohler was written sometimes in 1521, and in which the grand chancellor reminded the emperor that Italy constitutes the foundation of his empire and urged Charles to pay special attention to it before turning to other enterprises.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>407</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 292. “Lactancio: De zidme, pues, agora vos: pues dezís que el Papa fue instituido para que imitasse a Jesu Cristo, ¿quál pensáis que Jesu Cristo quisiera más, mantener paz entre los suyos, o levantarlos y revolverlos en guerra?

Arcidiano: Claro está quel Auctor de la paz ninguna cosa tiene por más abominable que la guerra.

Lactancio: Pues veamos, ¿cómo será imitador de Jesu Cristo el que toma la guerra y deshaze la paz?”

<sup>408</sup> Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.*, p. 60. „Und da Italien die wichtigste Grundlage ist für alles, was Ihr von diesem Kaiserreich gewinnen könnt, um es zu bewahren und zu mehren, Ansehen zu gewinne, in allen Euren Angelegenheiten überlegen und jedem Zwang der Verhältnisse enthoben zu sein, so ist es vernünftig, zunächst die italienischen Dinge zu bedenken, bevor man sich einer anderen, schwierigeren Unternehmung zukehrt, [...]“.

Although Gattinara's position on Italy was doubtlessly influenced by his own Italian heritage and the fact that he possessed property there, it is nonetheless more than likely that the grand chancellor realized that without gaining some kind of ascendancy over the Italian peninsula, the project of the universal empire could not succeed. The papacy, however, presented a problem for any outside power who would try to control the Italian peninsula, mainly thanks to the fact that its policy and orientation was chronically unstable and unpredictable, which greatly diminished the possibility of any long-term alliance or settlement. Unlike kings and princes, popes, who were usually elected as already aged men, often tended to be feeble and very often ruled only for a few years, and in some cases their pontificates even lasted only several months, as was the case of Adrian of Utrecht, a former tutor and later the regent of Charles V in Spain, who was elected the new pope in 1522, only to die in September 1523.<sup>409</sup> The "de-politization" of the papacy, using Headley's terminology, would have probably helped to solve this problem or it would have at least made it less pressing, and if actually conducted, it could tilt the balance of power in the entire peninsula into the emperor's favour. Actual realization would have naturally proved to be very difficult, since it would have probably required the approval or at least tacit acceptance of other Christian princes. It is thus obvious no coincidence that the introduction to *Pro divo Carolo*, from which we have already quoted, called on other Christian princes to take part in the general council in order to help to alleviate the crisis, in which the Christendom found itself.

The fact that papacy indeed played a crucial role in the secular political structure of Italy is further clearly documented in the first part of *Pro divo Carolo*, and it deserves our attention mainly because it represents one of the most important works supporting the ideology of imperial universalism of Charles V. The very title of this work is in itself interesting, since it hints not only to the sacral dimension of the empire of Charles V, but by calling him *Divus Carolus* also points to the sacral character of his very person. This choice of these words may have been inspired by the example of ancient Roman Empire, where practice of using the adjective "divus", meaning "divine", while speaking to the rulers was started by Octavian, who dedicated a temple to his assassinated stepfather Julius Caesar, called *Templum divii Julii*, which translates as "The Temple of Divine Julius". In the Christian context, the choice of these words is nonetheless rather bold, but it may serve as an illustration of confidence, which the imperial court at this time felt. On the other hand, the ascribing of divine qualities to the person of Charles V was not limited to the publication of *Pro divo Carolo*. The similar formulation was employed for example by German artist Nicholas Hogenberg, who captured the triumphal entry of Charles V into the city of Bologna in November 1529, where he was to be crowned following February. Among other scenes, his woodblock print displays a triumphal

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<sup>409</sup> Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 64-65.

arch adorned with the inscription “Divo et Invicto Imperatori Carolo V”, which translated into English means “To the divine and invincible emperor Charles V”.<sup>410</sup>

If we turn back to the text of *Pro divo Carolo* itself, we find that this pamphlet starts with already mentioned introduction, in which the reader is informed about latest conflict in Italy, including the sack of the papal palace by the forces of Hugo de Moncada and the family of Colonese, whose members even served as cardinals, while at the same time acting as allies of the emperor,<sup>411</sup> closed by an explicit demand of the convocation of the general council, which we have already mentioned earlier. After this comes the first papal letter, which was delivered to the emperor by papal nuncio Castiglione on 20<sup>th</sup> of August.<sup>412</sup>

In the beginning of this letter, Clement VII, whom Alcalá described as “always pro-French, anti-Spanish and anti-imperial”,<sup>413</sup> claimed that he always tried to secure Charles’s friendship and to preserve the peace within the Christendom.<sup>414</sup> The pope then stated that despite his wish for peace and friendship with the emperor, the oppression of Italy and diminution of his dignity on part of Charles have forced him to act the way he did:

“But since the things came to the extremity, and while our patience is lasting and great, it was believed that we are neglecting the care for the public good, so we were forced to take up arms as well, so that we may protect justice, the liberty of Italy as well as ourselves.”<sup>415</sup>

Clement VII then blamed Charles for causing the French invasion into Italy and reproached him for his expedition in French territory, which took place in 1523:

“Your ill-timed incursion into transalpine Galia led to the faster and more serious invasion of the French into Italy, while their army was led by the king himself, and their capture of the wealthiest city of Milan.”<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>410</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 186-187.

<sup>411</sup>*Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 3-4. “Verum malo quodam fato dum Clementis milites Ugoni et Columnensibus resistere student, ad arma deventum est, superatique hostes, dum in sacro Vaticano Palatio sese recipere, et saluti quisquis suae consulere contendit, victores victis admixti, Ducibus nequicquam prohibentibus, Vaticanum adoriuntur, et quae a Clemente in Adriani mole recluso ibi relicta fuerant, diripiunt.”

The text of *Pro divo Carolo* then blames Clement VII for violating the truce with Hugo Moncada and Colonese, which was made after the sack of the papal palace, accusing him of invading and ravaging lands of Colonese: “[...] Columnensium terras adoritur non nulla casta occupat, hisque ferro et igne devastatis [...]»

<sup>412</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 88-90.

<sup>413</sup>Alcalá in Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. XX.

<sup>414</sup>*Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 6. “[...] tum pacem communem totius Christiani nominis, tum privatim tuam amicitiam, et coniunctionem nobiscum procuraverimus, atque appetierimus [...]”

<sup>415</sup>*Ibidem*. “Sed cum ad extremum ventum esset, cum patientiae nostrae diuturnae atque magnae iam nomen, atque opinio ad negligentiam rerum publicarum converteretur, coacti sumus tandem ea capere arma, quae et iustitiae, et Italiae libertati, et nobis ipsis possent esse praesidio.”

<sup>416</sup>*Idem*, fol. 7. “Sucessit ex illo intempestivo in Galliam transalpinam tuorum transitu, celerior et gravior in Italiam Gallorum irruptio, Rege maximi nominis exercitum ducente, ac urbis opulentissimae Mediolani ab illis receptio.”



Clement VII also refused that he had previously worked with the French and insisted, that he always wanted to work with the emperor instead:

“In case that you did not know it or you have forgotten it, this will be more appropriate time for us to explain that we have by many means delayed the French invasion into your kingdom, and in case that we would have wanted to enter their company, they not only offered us the greatest rewards, but these [rewards] were also prepared, yet we did not stray from our principles, since the memory of your friendship was more valuable to us than any reward.”<sup>417</sup>

Clement VII then continued to describe how after the imperial victory at Pavia in 1525, he not only agreed to pay the subsidy of one hundred thousand ducats to the generals of the imperial army, which were needed to pay its soldiers<sup>418</sup> but also wanted to sign a treaty with the emperor, which was however not ratified. The pope then continued with the description of the beginning of the hostilities, which started in Milan and soon spread all over Italy. Clement VII particularly complained about the excesses committed by the imperial armies in certain Italian cities, namely in Seina, where according to him “all of his friends and supporters, as well as almost the whole nobility, were exterminated”<sup>419</sup>

The pope then continued with the more description of devastation caused in the papal lands themselves:

“[...] your army entered great part of the lands of Holy Roman Church and its tributary territories and committed such painful acts of injustice and caused harm to our subjects, and its cruelty, its avarice, its innumerable evil deeds and its unheard-of brutality was so horrible, that it should be unbearable for the ears of men [to hear about it].”<sup>420</sup>

It is telling that both sides of the conflict were using the imagery of devastation caused by the armed forces of its opponent to justify their own actions. Precisely same thing was later done by Alfonso de Valdés, who in his turn at great length described the atrocities committed by papal armies in the lands of emperor’s Italian allies,<sup>421</sup> atrocities which Valdés compared to those allegedly

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<sup>417</sup>*Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 7. „Sin autem vel non cognovisti, vel oblitus es, erit tempus commodius, quo ista exponamus, qui et Gallorum transitum in tui regni fines multis rebus remorati fuimus et cum, si societatem eorum voluissemus sequi, maxima nobis praemia non solum proponerentur, sed etiam essent parata, ab instituto nostro non discessimus, plusque apud nos amicitiae tuae memoria, quam praemium ullum valuit.”

<sup>418</sup>*Ibidem*. “[...] sed quo tui Duces egentes pecuniae, alere et sustinere exercitum possent, eumque ab nostris finibus abducerent, centum illis dedimus Ducatorum millia [...]”

<sup>419</sup>*Idem*, fol. 9. „Deinde in Senensi civitate omnes nobis amicos et benevolos tanta tuorum acerbitas et iniquitas insectata est, ut exterminata pene omni nobilitate, caedibusque multis factis [...]”

<sup>420</sup>*Idem*, fol. 10. “[...] exercitus tui bona pars in Sanctae Romae ecclesiae locis, et terris prope assidue versata est, tantis et tam gravibus iniuriis, et detrimentis subditorum nostrorum, ut crudelitatis, et avaritiae, et innumerabilium scelerum, ac inauditae immanitatis horribilis sit, et auribus humanis intoleranda commemoratio.”

<sup>421</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 294-299.

committed by the Roman emperor Nero (r. 54-68) or Dionysius of Syracuse (432-367 BC).<sup>422</sup> At the same time, it is obvious that both Alfonso de Valdés and Mercurino di Gattinara were conscious of the problematic conduct of the imperial army itself, a problem which emerges even before the fateful Sack of Rome.

Some of the problems with which the imperial court had to content were caused by the inability of the imperial court to capitalize on its momentous victories, while others were a result of the simple lack of funds. Mercurino di Gattinara addressed the failure of the imperial party to take advantage of its victories in his autobiography, where he also denounced the conduct of imperial army in Italy while shifting the principal blame to “the ministers”:

“It seemed to be more the fault of the ministers than of Caesar himself. The power and greatness of so many realms and domains seemed to turn into certain weakness and impotence. A mound of victories seemed to go up in smoke and evaporate without producing any fruit. Such a great capture of the enemy resulted in so much glory going to the captive himself, so that if Caesar had been captured, he could hardly have hoped for better terms of peace from him.”<sup>423</sup>

By making these claims, Gattinara obviously tried to vindicate his own opposition to the treaty of Madrid, the opposition which in retrospect seems only rational. But further in the text, Gattinara also acknowledges the devastation caused by the imperial army on the Italian peninsula and proved that he was very well conscious of the emperor’s tainted reputation, which had been caused by the behaviour of his army:

„That victorious army, which made practically the whole world tremble in fear, should have fought against treacherous and barbarous peoples exposed to or involved with enemies of the orthodox faith. Rather, people saw the empire turning against Christian blood, against its own subjects, friends and allies, aiming to ruin its own empire and that of the Christian commonwealth. From this arose so much plunder and depopulation of Christian states and places, so much pillaging, so many robberies, thefts, extortions, turbulence, violations of girls and women, so much adultery, rape, conflagrations, revolutions, and so many other foul and abominable things. It is a wonder that the earth did not swallow up and bury such assassins alive, that God did not hear the cries of the oppressed. When the emperor did not correct and castigate the abominations and evil deeds of his soldiers and ministers, when he did not administer justice, when he did not pay his debts, when he did not provide for those suffering damages, and when he did not remedy so many evils, he was reputed unjust by the just. He was considered evil by the good, cruel by the pious, harsh by the merciful, arrogant by the humane,

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<sup>422</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 297. “¿Qué tiene que hazer el emperador Nero, ni Dionysio Siracusano, ni quantos crueles tyranos han hasta oy reinado en el mundo, para inventar tales crueldades como el exército del Papa, después de haber rompido la tregua hecha con don Hugo de Moncada, hizo en tierras de colonesses, [...]”

<sup>423</sup>Gattinara, *Autobiography, Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 113.

and crude of conscience by the Catholic. He was held as an enemy by the defender of the Church and judged a tyrant by the legitimate prince. He was called imprudent, arbitrary and unwilling to hear good counsel by the prudent.

Mercurino, however, did not blame Caesar, but his ministers.<sup>424</sup>

Naturally, the often anonymous and unspecified “bad councillors and ministers” served as a frequent scapegoat employed in order to avoid direct blaming of princes or other sovereigns, although it is doubtful to pretend that the emperor was not at least partially aware of the problems which his army in Italy was experiencing as well as atrocities it was committing, because it seems obvious that these atrocities were indeed common knowledge at the imperial court. This is obvious from the fact that just like Gattinara, Alfonso de Valdés himself was personally very well aware that the imperial armies were sowing terror in Italy, as is attested for example by his letter to Maximilian Transilvanus from March 1527:

„We are in the middle of the greatest disturbance, in Italy, the Caesar has the strongest troops, but whence they will be maintained, I do not know. Besides this, our enemies are numerous as stones, the viceroy [Lannoy] did not get along with the cardinal Colona, the Spanish soldiers in the Bourbon's army are complaining and everyone is starting to get agitated. The Italian lords fear the Caesar's armies, while the people are horrified by our ferocity. What should we expect out of these difficulties, you can judge for yourself.”<sup>425</sup>

This passage clearly illustrates that Alfonso de Valdés was conscious of the problems the imperial army deployed in Italy was facing, mainly its lack of funds and atrocities it has been committing on Italian soil. The lack of funds to fully cover military expenses had proven to be chronic problem for Charles V, as well as for his successors. In the case of Castile, which bore the lion share of imperial expenses of Charles, the military expenditures represented around one third of its total budget, that is some 508 865 ducats out of total 1 474 365, which Manuel Fernández Álvarez mentions for the period of 1544 and 1555.<sup>426</sup> Although the exact expenditures in the 1520s might have been somewhat different, it gives us a rough idea of how great burden the military expenses presented. But even despite forming such a great share of imperial expenditures, it was not enough to maintain the army. After all, even in his *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, Valdés openly admitted that the emperor did not have enough money to pay his army,<sup>427</sup> which eventually led to semi-mutiny, which

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<sup>424</sup>Gattinara, *Autobiography, Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 113.

<sup>425</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 73. “Sumus in maxima rerum omnium turbatione, validissimas Caesar in Italia copias habet, sed unde alantur nescio. Preterea lapides ipsi nostris hostes sunt, vice regi cum Cardinali Columnae non convenit, hispani milites in Borbonium murmurant tumultuarique coeperunt universi. Italiorum Potentatus Caesaris arma timent, populi nostrorum sevitiā horrent. Quid his rerum difficultatibus nobis de Italia sperandum sit, tu ipse judicare poteris.”

<sup>426</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V el César y el Hombre*, p. 218-219.

<sup>427</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 310. „Si el Emperador no paga su gente, quizá lo haze porque no tiene con qué.”

in turn resulted with the march of the imperial army against the city of Rome. The problem of atrocities committed by this imperial army was quite delicate, but Valdés's solution to this lay in always ascribing the ultimate responsibility for all atrocities to those, who according to him were responsible for the initiation of the war itself, that is to the pope, his advisors as well as cardinals. This allowed Valdés at one side to acknowledge the transgressions of the imperial army while simultaneously not blaming the emperor, or at least not directly.

The most serious controversy, which was the sacking of the city of Rome itself, however, still lay in the future when the propagandist war between the Roman curia and the imperial court began with the exchange of letters in 1526. The letter of Clement VII, from which we have already quoted, ended rather threateningly:

“[...] now we are of the spirit, and in the presence of God we swear to you, that if your Serenity will want to again embrace justice and humanity, our arms would not be pointed towards you, but will serve to truly glorious things. But by daily occupying the great part of Italy and creating discords in other Christian lands, you will not serve your nature (which we always judged to be good), but rather your desires and your [own] stratagems, [and] we will not give up of justice and liberty of Italy, in which the tutelage of the Holy See consists, but we will take up holy arms, not in order to attack you (we have always wished you all good and prosperity) but to our defence, to the salvation of our homeland and to the dignity of the commonwealth.”<sup>428</sup>

The letter of Clement VII shows clearly that his political concept greatly differed from the imperial conception of Charles V. In his letter, Clement VII multiple times invoked *libertas Italiae*, “the liberty of Italy”, which above else meant liberty from imperial and Habsburg interference. This idea was bound to collide with the ideas of Gattinara, who, as we have already seen, regarded Italy to play a central role within the empire itself and who spent the whole decade in the imperial service trying to secure imperial control over the whole peninsula. The papacy of Clement VII, on the other hand, was trying to act as the representative of the domestic interests of Italy, but it was able to do so only by allying itself with the France of Francis I, which in turn was trying to push its own claims in Naples as well as in Milan. Given the geopolitical context of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which was characteristic mainly by the struggle between the Habsburg empire and the French monarchy

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<sup>428</sup>*Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 10-11. “[...] nunc eo animo sumus, atque ita coram eodem Deo, et te testamur, si Serenitas tua ad aequitatem, et humanitatem referre se voluerit, nostra arma non solum non adversa tibi, sed etiam ad res vere gloriosas propicia futura. Sin autem in ocupanda quotidie magis Italia, et aliis partibus Christianitatis perturbandis tu non tam naturae tuae (quam nos probam esse semper existimavimus) quam cupiditati et consiliis tuorum obsequi perseueraveris, nos neque iustitiae, neque libertati Italiae, in qua huius quoque sanctae Sedis tutela continetur, defuturos, sed iusta, et sancta arma moturos, non tam ad offensionem tuam (tibi enim omnia semper honesta, et prospera optamus), quam ad defensionem nostrorum, et patriae salutis, communisque dignitatis.”

controlled by the house of Valois, the prospect of Italy free from foreign influence thus seems to be rather unrealistic.

The bulk of *Pro divo Carolo* is formed by the first reply of Charles V to the pope, composed by Alfonso de Valdés with likely assistance of other members of the imperial chancellery, which in its 1587 edition covers roughly forty folio sheets. This letter is characteristic by its relative severity, which was so obvious that German historian Ranke even went so far as to claim that “no follower of Luther would be ashamed” by the letters of Charles V written in Granada in 1526.<sup>429</sup> This is apparent from the fact that the first imperial response is entitled as “The Letter of the Emperor Charles, in which he broadly replies to these false criminations, and calls to the Roman Pontiff and asks for the convocation of the General Council.”<sup>430</sup>

At the beginning of the letter, the emperor informs the recipient about this distress he felt when he “heard how Your Holiness acts against us, our office and the dignity of Holy Roman Empire”.<sup>431</sup> The various charges levelled against the emperor by Clement VII are then refused and the reader is assured that Charles V, out of his innate humility always intended to honour the pope as Christ’s vicar, doing so like his “own son”.<sup>432</sup> In the following text, the emperor, or more precisely Alfonso de Valdés and his collaborators, who wrote the text on emperor’s behalf, tried to present Charles V as the one who always desired the peace among the Christians, but who was also forced or provoked to take up arms by his enemies.<sup>433</sup> The emperor then again rejects all accusations made by Clement VII, literally claiming that “God be witness that we did not try nothing of it, nor did we ever think about it”,<sup>434</sup> but instead it is claimed that the intention of Charles V always was to re-establish the liberty and peace of Italy, to re-establish the splendour of the Apostolic See as well as act as its guardian and finally, to act as a protector of the Christendom against the enemies of Christian religion.<sup>435</sup>

According to Karl Brandi, the main aim of the imperial letter to Clement VII was to convince the pope to stop the military confrontation with the emperor, with hopes that his example will in turn help to convince his allies to do the same, which would then allow to unite the forces of the

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<sup>429</sup>Alcalá in Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. XXXII. “[...] según Ranke, ‘ningún seguidor de Lutero se habría avergonzado’”.

<sup>430</sup> *Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 11. „Epistola Caroli Caesaris, in qua huiusmodi falsis criminationibus diffuse respondet, a Pontifice Romano appellat, generaleque Concilium Christianorum congregari petit.“

<sup>431</sup> Idem, fol. 12. „[...] quae Sanctitatem vestram contra nos, statumque nostrum, et Sacri Rom. Imperii dignitatem moliri audieramus.“

<sup>432</sup> Idem, fol. 13. „[...] velut Christi in terris Vicarium, ex innata nobis filiali observantia colere et venerari.“

<sup>433</sup> Ibidem. „Ad quam noster animus suapte natura inclinatur, nec unquam inter Christianos (nisi provocati, coactique) bellum gessimus, neque tentavimus.“

<sup>434</sup> Idem, fol. 14. „[...] qui teste Deo, nihil horum tentavimus, nec unquam cogitavimus [...]“

<sup>435</sup> Ibidem. „[...] omneque studium adhibuimus, ut Italiam liberam, ac quietam redderemus, ut Apostolicam Sedem in suo decore, velut illius protector et defensor, stabiliremus, ac servaremus, utque pacata Christiana repu. comunia Christianorum arma in perfidos Christianae religionis hostes communi consilio verterentur.“

Christendom in order to fight “heretics” and Ottomans. This was however accompanied by a threat to convoke the general council, should the pope fail to act as the true pastor of Christians.<sup>436</sup>

This open threat to Clement VII is indeed explicitly formulated towards the end of the whole document, where Charles V warned Clement VII that in case that he refuses to “embrace the universal peace” and continues to act as an aggressor, he is going to have no choice that to remit the whole case to the general council.<sup>437</sup>

At the same time, however, the emperor also urged the pope to take the initiative and to convoke the council himself:

„Therefore, we beg and by Lord we encourage your Holiness, so that for your pastoral office and for the care and solicitude for the flock which has been entrusted to you, you will find it worthy to summon and convoke the holy general council, in a safe and suitable place, with an appropriately set date.”<sup>438</sup>

Since Clement VII did not honour the request, it was up to Charles V to attempt to fulfil his threat of convocation of the general council without the pope’s approval. The emperor indeed did so by appealing to the collegium of cardinals through a letter written by Alfonso de Valdés on 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1526.<sup>439</sup> Here, Charles V claimed that while he would suffer transgressions of Clement VII against his own person, although it allegedly caused him great pain, he could not ignore the pope’s actions which threatened “the peace of the calm of the whole Commonwealth”, and therefore he decided to request the help of cardinals “in ours as well as in the name of all Christians”.<sup>440</sup> The imperial letter then recapitulated supposed merits of Charles V, which included his efforts to maintain the peace and calming the situation in Germany,<sup>441</sup> as well as the treachery and unwillingness of his

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<sup>436</sup> Brandi, *Carlo V*, p. 239.

<sup>437</sup> *Pro divo Carolo*, fol. 51. “Verum si vestra Sanctitas nos ab his culpis et obiectis immunes non censuerit, nostrasque excusaciones, et iustificaciones pro veris, et legitimis non habuerit, si armas contra nos continuaverit, et illorum depositioni non consenserit, si universalem pacem amplecti nolit, quum tunc non patris, sed patris, non pastoris, sed inuasoris officium assumeret, [...] ea omnia, quae nos ex adverso, pro nostra iustificatione, et innocentia ad Christianae Reipub. quietem praetendimus, et praetendere possumus, ad sacri generalis concilii totius Christianitatis cognitionem et iudicium censemus [...]”

The version of 1587 contains a likely topographical mistake „non patris, sed patris“, while the correct form should be „non patris, sed partis“, as is apparent from page 84 of the version published in 1527.

<sup>438</sup> *Idem*, fol. 51. “Suplicantes propterea eidem vestrae Sanctitati, illamque in Domino hortantes, quatenus pro suo pastoralis officio, proque cura et sollicitudine gregis sibi commissi, dignetur ipsum sacrum generale concilium indicere, et convocare in loco tuto, et congruo, cum debita termini praefixione.”

<sup>439</sup> This letter was included in *Pro divo Carolo*, but is also available in the edition of Ángel Angalá. See Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 61-66.

<sup>440</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 61. “[...] tanto profecto animi dolore mens nostra discruciat, dum ea, quae Romanum Pontificem sua Pontificiae dignitatis oblitum non contra nos tantum (id enim aequo animo pateremur) verum in maximum Christiani nominis dedecus, contraque totius Reipub. (quam induxeramus) pacem et tranquillitatem moliri audimus, ut, [...] a Reverendissimis Paternitatibus vestris nro. ac totius Christiani populi nomine auxilium implorare cogamur.”

<sup>441</sup> *Idem*, p. 61-62. “Hoc itaq. animo relictis Hispania ad Germaniam venimus, ortas ibidem seditiones inter quosdam principes, divino favore sedamus [...]”

rivals, specifically mentioning the king of France and the pope, to conclude the peace. Charles even mentioned the previous correspondence with Clement VII, which according to him was so harsh that Charles V did not believe it had been written by “the Vicar of Christ” himself.<sup>442</sup> Charles V also claimed that while attending the imperial diet in Worms, he did not heed the complaints presented by Germans against the transgressions of Roman curia, which he attributed to his “innate obedience to the Apostolic see.”<sup>443</sup> But since Clement VII did not appreciate the services which the emperor allegedly rendered him in Germany and continued to scheme against Charles V and even incite the other Christian princes to arms against him,<sup>444</sup> a clear reference to the role of Clement VII in a formation of the League of Cognac, the emperor officially asked the collegium of cardinals to convoke the general council, adding that the failure to do so would make cardinals responsible for all possible future harms suffered by the church as well as the whole Christendom.<sup>445</sup>

The letter to the collegium of cardinals thus followed the same apologetic line, which dominated the imperial propaganda during the second half of the 1520s; presenting the emperor as the one who selflessly strove to maintain the peace and worked in the best interest of the Christian commonwealth, only to be constantly thwarted by stratagems and perfidy of the king of France, the pope and their mostly Italian allies. At the same time, cardinals were asked to assist Charles in achieving his aim and convoking the general council, only to be reminded that the failure to do so can have adverse consequences.

This threat was not empty. As we have already seen, in the course of the next year, the situation in Italy disintegrated to the point when semi-mutinous imperial forces brutally sacked the seat of the Apostolic see and even captured the pope himself. Whether those cardinals, who have been present in Rome at that time and who have suffered at the hands of German, Italian and Spanish soldiers in the service of Charles V, a thing described by Alfonso de Valdés in his *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*,<sup>446</sup> had second thoughts about rejecting the demand of Charles V regarding the convocation of the council, is not clear.

Although the pope and those cardinals who had been captured were set free in December of the same year,<sup>447</sup> the situation in Italy remained dire. In the beginning of 1528, both Francis I and Henry VII sent their heralds to the court of Charles V, who at that time resided in Burgos, where they officially declared the war on the emperor. The herald of king of France also in the name of his lord

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<sup>442</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 63. “[...] quibus perlectis, quum non tantum a Sumo ecclesiae pastore, a comuni omium patre, Christique Vicario, [...] emanatas esse credamus [...]”

<sup>443</sup>Ibidem. “[...] Germaniae et universi Romani Imperii preces contra gravamina et oppressiones, quas a sede Romana pari, quum Wormatiensi conventu essemus, passim conquebantur, obturatis auribus pro innata nostra erga Apostolicam sedem observatiam obaudivimus.”

<sup>444</sup>Idem, p. 65. “[...] an sit Pontificiae dignitatis Christianorum principum animos afversus ecclesiae protectorem ad arma (ut ipsi aiunt) incitare [...]”

<sup>445</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 66. “Protestantes apud omnipotentem Deum, si quid inde incommodi ac detrimenti Romanae ecclesiae, et Reipub. Christianae accesserit, id non nostra, sed eorum culpa futurum, [...]”

<sup>446</sup>Idem, p. 327-328.

<sup>447</sup>Kohler, *Carlos V*, p. 199.

challenged the emperor to a personal combat, thus starting a lengthy exchange of accusatory letters between both sides, which however fail to result in an actual duel between the two princes. And while these two rivals did not fight in person, their armies did. A new French army commanded by vicomte of Lautrec entered Italy and managed to besiege Naples. Although the situation seemed to be critical from the point of view of Charles V, the imperial side managed to prevail once more. This time, the emperor owed his victory to Genoese admiral Andrea Doria (1466-1560), who fought on behalf of France and whose fleet was blockading Naples, but who later dedicated to change his allegiance and to enter the imperial service. This, combined with the death of Lautrec eventually led to the retreat of French forces and to stabilisation of the situation.<sup>448</sup>

In the autumn of the same year, Charles V at last decided to realize his long-postponed journey to Italy and to finally receive the imperial crown from the hands of the pope. This decision however brought with itself a need to reach some kind of settlement with the papacy of Clement VII. This settlement was eventually indeed reached during the first months of 1529 in a form in a treaty between both sides, which was then also followed by a new peace treaty between Charles V and Francis I, signed in Cambrai in August 1529. Because of the fact that this treaty was signed by Margaret of Austria and Louise of Savoy, mother of Francis I, it is generally known as “Ladies’ Peace”. Although the content of the treaty could have been interpreted as a success from the imperial side, it did not lead to the restitution of Burgundy, which was the ultimate goal of Habsburg dynasty. It did, however, brought French recognitions of Habsburg sovereignty over Artois and Flanders, as well as the renunciation of French claim on Milan, Genoa and Naples. Two sons of Francis I, who were held in Spain as hostages from 1526, were released, but only after the payment of huge ransom.<sup>449</sup>

While the peace negotiations of 1529 could have been interpreted as a new hope for peace in Europe, not everybody rejoiced. In a letter to Erasmus, dated in Barcelona on 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1529, that is a few weeks before the sailing of the imperial fleet to Italy, Alfonso de Valdés makes a rather curious proclamation:

“If I had my way, I would have stayed elsewhere and I would gladly left Italy to Italians and I would have rather enjoyed my quiet than to wonder around to see all of the world’s misfortunes and (what I judge to be more unfair) not without the toll that these evils take on my life and my health.”<sup>450</sup>

The attitude of Valdés could be interpreted as a sign of weariness caused by immense toll, which previous years, filled with war and conflicts, took on all its participants. But before continuing

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<sup>448</sup>Kohler, *Carlos V*, p. 201.

<sup>449</sup>Idem, p. 207.

<sup>450</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 157-158. „Si mihi per meos liceret, alicubi manerem, Italiam Italis quam libentissime relinquerem, meaeque quieti libentius consulerem, quam ita per omnes mundi plagas, et (quod iniquius fero) non absque ingenti earum male meaeque et vitae et valetudinis dispendio circumcuristarem.“



with the discussion over the settlement reached between Charles V and Clement VII in 1529, it is worthwhile now to return to 1527, when Valdés wrote the first of his polemical dialogues, whose ending will help us understand his vision for the future, which he at that time harboured.

Despite all the problems and dangers, which were at that time affecting the Christendom and its religious institution and which Valdés continuously decried, the very end of *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* carries a rather optimistic tone and expresses the belief of eventual triumph of the universalist project of Charles V. The character of Archdeacon, who at the beginning of the whole dialogue fervently denounced the imperial politics in Italy and blamed Charles V for the Sack of Rome, now under the influence of arguments of Lactancio's – or rather of Valdés - came to express his hope that Charles V will realize the throughout reform of the church:

“Truly he needs a very good council, because if this time he reforms the Church, and everybody knows how much it is needed, then apart from the service to God, which he will perform, he will also reach bigger fame and glory in this world than any other prince before, and to the end of the world it is going to be said that Jesus Christ founded the Church and the emperor Charles V restored it.”<sup>451</sup>

This historical role that Alfonso de Valdés thus assigned to Charles V is nothing less than messianic. By achieving the reform of the Church, Charles V would have secured for himself the rightful place in the salvation of the mankind and his historical role would presumably surpassed even that of Charlemagne, with whom he was often compared by his supporters.

With the advantage of a hindsight, we know that Charles V was eventually not able to execute any major reform of the church which Valdés was advocating for. It is true that during his reign, the general council, whose session was taking place in the Italian city of Trent, for which so many, have been calling for decades, was finally convoked. It nonetheless came too late to heal the rift which already affected the Christendom. While the council of Trent was initiated in 1545, it ended after eighteen long years, in 1563, that is five years after the death of Charles V.

But this development still lay in the future by the time when Valdés wrote his dialogues. His philosophy and ideas thus cannot be judged through the prism of posterior development. In the time of writing of his dialogues, the emperor has not even yet celebrated his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday and despite certain mostly diplomatic setbacks, which he suffered in the course of the second half of 1520s, it was still quite reasonable to expected that he might triumph not only in his fight against the papacy and to gain ascendancy over Italy, but also in his struggle against France and eventually to attempt to

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<sup>451</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 357. “[...] A la fe menester ha muy buen consejo, porque si él desta ver reforma la Iglesia, pues todos ya conocen cuánto es menester, allende del servicio que hará a Dios alcançará en este mundo la mayor fama y gloria que nunca príncipe alcançó, dezirse ha hasta la fin del mundo que Jesu Cristo formó la Iglesia y el emperador Carlos Quinto la restauró”.

solve the religious conflict in Germany. This potential triumph then could have put the emperor into the position to effectuate the reform of the Church, which Alfonso de Valdés so desired.

The end of *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* also contains a certain kind of warning directed towards the emperor, should he fail in his historical mission, delivered by the Archdeacon:

“And if he does not do this, although it would be without his intention and he would have had and still has the best intentions in the world, he will not be able to justify himself and prevent that people thinking very ill about him, and I do not know what will be said about him after the end of his days, nor do I know which account is he going to give to God, in case that he is going to let pass and will not know how to use such a great opportunity, which he now has in order to do a very distinguished service to God and to bring an incomparable good to the Christian commonwealth.”<sup>452</sup>

What exactly was Charles V supposed to do according to Valdés? In this case, the author ends his dialogue with a certain cliff-hanger. When asked this question by Archdeacon, Lactancio agrees to give him an answer. But when he is about to give it, he is interrupted by a doorman of the church in which the two men held their discussion. Both characters are thus forced to leave, and the question remains unanswered.<sup>453</sup>

Did Valdés expected to give it, and thus explicitly formulate a positive program for the ecclesiastical reform in the future? We do not know. Although *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, which was published in 1528, sheds further light into Valdés's thoughts and his vision of how the Christian world should be ordered, this is however expressed mostly on an abstract level, without formulating an explicit positive program for imperial policy. This imperial policy had to deal with a growing religious conflict in German lands, where the reform, which Valdés and like-minded humanist spirits hoped to achieve from the above, had spontaneously manifested itself from the bellow, but which soon took the form which Catholic intellectuals could not accept. At the same time, the crisis in Italy finally came to an end and the emperor was about to be solemnly crowned at last. But what did this mean for the project the universal empire?

## 2.12. Treaty with the pope – the end of imperial universalism?

At this place, our aim is to propose that the thing that the radical imperial universalism, promoted by men like Mercurino di Gattinara and Alfonso de Valdés, was indeed effectively curbed

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<sup>452</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 357. “Y si esto no haze, aunque lo hecho aya seído sin su voluntad y él aya tenido y tenga la mejor intención del mundo, no se podrá escusar que no quede muy mal concepto dél en los ánimos de la gente, y no sé lo que se dirá después de sus días, ni la cuenta que dará a Dios de haver dexado y no sabe usar de una tan grande oportunidad como agora tiene para hazer a Dios un servicio muy señalado a un incomparable bien a toda la República cristiana.”

<sup>453</sup>Idem, p. 357-358.

by something that is often being interpreted as the success of the imperial party. We are talking about the treaty between the pope Clement VII and the emperor Charles V, signed on 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1529, which put an end to their mutual conflict and opened the way to long postponed journey of Charles V to Italy.

The signing of the treaty was naturally preceded by long negotiations between the two parties. These negotiations itself meant that radical rhetoric directed against the Roman curia, employed by the members of the imperial court during the previous years, had to be tempered down. This is already evident from a letter of Alfonso de Valdés from 16<sup>th</sup> of February to cardinal Francisco de Quiñones, who, as is clear from the letter itself, has recently arrived in Rome. In his letter, Valdés expressed his happiness over the fact that Clement VII seemed to recover from a serious illness, which has recently affected him and which even led to speculations about his impending death.<sup>454</sup> Valdés also informed de Quiñones about recent death of papal nuncio Castiglione, who represented the pope in Spain, claiming that “his death truly touched us, because we held him to be a good minister to prove the good friendship between his Holiness and us”,<sup>455</sup> a claim whose sincerity on the part of Valdés seems rather doubtful, given the mutual enmity between him and Castiglione. Valdés also addressed an important issue, which has just recently emerged and which eventually led to breaking up the ties between the Catholic church and England, that is the intention of Henry VIII to divorce his wife Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536), an aunt of Charles V. Valdés urged de Quiñones to convince the pope to annul the assignment to cardinal Campeggio, who was supposed to handle this case, “in order to avoid bigger scandals and inconveniences”,<sup>456</sup> probably fearing that this mission could lead to some kind of comprise, which would infringe on the rights of king’s wife.

Putting aside the problem of the divorce of Henry VIII, the letter of Valdés is significant from our perspective mostly because it illustrates a retreat from previously harsh rhetoric, which Alfonso de Valdés employed against the Roman curia and the person of Clement VII himself, and employment of more conciliatory approach. The reconciliation between the emperor and the pope was then officially confirmed by a treaty, which stipulated that the “two lights instituted by God” are going to from now on collaborate together in order to ensure that the whole Christian commonwealth is going to regain its splendour and “sorrowful Italy” is going to enjoy peace again and be revived.<sup>457</sup>

The settlement in Italy can be certainly viewed as a success for Charles V, because it ended his open enmity with Clement VII, secured his Italian dominions, ensured his coronation in Bologna

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<sup>454</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 141.

<sup>455</sup>Idem, p. 142. “El Nunçio que Su S<sup>d</sup>. tenía en esta Corte es fallecido, y de verdad havemos setido su muerte, porque le teníamos por muy buen ministro para comprobar la buena amistad entre Su S<sup>d</sup>. y nos.”

<sup>456</sup>Ibidem. “[...] devría Su S<sup>d</sup> por evitar mayores scándalos e inconvenientes aunque la Reyna no lo pidiesse, evocar la causa en consistorio, y revocar la comission dada al Cardenal Campegio.”

<sup>457</sup>Idem p. 164. “[...] ut his duobus Luminaribus a Deo Optimo Maximo institutis sibi invicem (ut decet) correspondentibus, universa Christiana Respublica decenter illustrata pristinum decorem, ac nitorem reassumere, ipsaque misera Italia pacari, et foveri, ac refocillari posset [...]”

and allowed him to concentrate on the situation north of Alps, which now required his attention. This success however came with a price. This price lay in recognizing secular papal secular dominions in Italy and in de facto abandoning the goals of radical imperial universalism, which were based in strict dualism between the temporal and spiritual power, and which included the elimination of temporal power of the papacy. While it is unclear to which extent Charles V personally embraced this radical program formulated by some of his couriers, a program which involved “reducing of the papacy to its pastoral function”, this idea was obviously embraced by some members of his court, including Alfonso de Valdés, as we have already shown earlier. As was noted by Headley, the previous rather harsh rhetoric directed against the papacy in *Pro divo Carolo* now backfired and even became a “source of considerable embarrassment to Charles.” Headley then continues by noting that while the treaty did not refer specifically to *Pro divo Carolo*, its spirit nonetheless “stood in conflict with any further support of this work’s circulation.”<sup>458</sup> And although *Pro divo Carolo* was not forgotten for good, which is obvious from reprinting of its first book in 1587, the treaty of 1529 certainly sharply curbed its relevance at that moment and also prevented it from further dissemination. But what did the treaty exactly stipulate?

In practical terms, it allowed the emperor and his successors to make ecclesiastical appointments in the kingdom of Naples;<sup>459</sup> it also allowed the imperial armies to transit papal dominions, although it was explicitly specified, that they must do so without causing harm to its inhabitants,<sup>460</sup> clearly an echo of transgressions committed in the course of 1526 and 1527. The treaty also addressed the problem of the duke of Milan, Francisco Sforza, who has been accused of treason by the emperor and deprived of his dominions, and whose case was according to the treaty supposed to be reviewed again.<sup>461</sup> What is probably most important is that the treaty also stipulated the restitution of cities and property which were captured by both sides during the war.<sup>462</sup> This effectively meant the re-establishment of status quo and confirmation of the temporal power of the Roman curia, something which was previous vigorously attacked by Alfonso de Valdés, who even went as far as denying the right of the papacy to so-called Patrimony of Saint Peter.

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<sup>458</sup> Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 109.

<sup>459</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 171.

<sup>460</sup> Idem, p. 168. “Item, actum, conventum, et conclusum extitit, quod quodocunque continget Exercitum Caesareum ex Regno Neapolitano educi, et aut un Tusciam, aut in Lombardiam progredi, aut alias quoquomodo per Terras Ecclesiae transitum facere, Cesar ipse taliter cum ipsius Exercitus Ducibus decerneret, et providebit, quod in ipso transitu dictae Terrae Ecclesiae, eorumque subditi nequaquam indebite opprimantur.”

<sup>461</sup> Idem, p. 173-174.

<sup>462</sup> Idem, p. 169-170. “[...] ac Apostolica Sedes pristinam hujusmode Civitatum, Terrarum et Locorum possessionem recuperet, et in ea realiter reintegretur, et restituatur citra tamen praejudicium jurium Sacri Romani Imperii, quibus eadem Caesarea Majestas nequaquam derogare intendit, nec plus juris in Romanam Ecclesiam transfere, quam antedictam spoliationem seu occupationem obtineret; et viceversa citra praejudicium quorumcunque Jurium Sedis Apostolicae, quibus Sanctissimus Dominus Noste nullo pacto derogare intendit nec derogatum esse vult, nec post dictam reintegrationem plus juris translatum esse intendit in Sacrum Romanum Imperium, quam antea obtineret.”

The rhetoric employed by the imperial court during the previous years however did manage to find its way into the treaty. Towards the end of its main part, it was stated that

“While our most Holy Lord has to employ bigger care of spiritual things and [his] pastoral office than of temporal things, and to protect the dignity of the Apostolic see, the faith and the religion above all; there is however great number of those, who are ill-disposed against the Catholic faith and who deviated from the Religion and from the Christian doctrine in everything and who want to lead others to this error; unless the Imperial Majesty allows so that a fitting antidote against this pestiferous disease could be prepared.”<sup>463</sup>

The treaty further specified that it was the duty of both Charles V, as well as his brother Ferdinand, to “make every effort to suppress these errors, if possible, and to return the erring souls to the right path of the Christian religion”.<sup>464</sup> It would be thus probably erroneous to regard the treaty of 1529 as “the end of imperial universalism”, because it confirmed the role of the emperor as the supreme secular authority of the whole Christendom, whose task was to ensure the end of religious crisis and to re-establish the unity of the Catholic church. The treaty even mention, that it is possible to suppress the “erring souls” by force, if necessary: “And if they do not hear the voice of the Pastor and disregard the mandates of the Emperor and obstinate in these errors and persist pertinacious, then both the Emperor as well as the most Serene King of Bohemia and Hungary, will apply against them their might, and with their power they will avenge the injury done to Christ”.<sup>465</sup> The reliance of the spiritual power on temporal authorities in suppressing “heresies” by force was naturally not a new concept, but rather an established *modus operandi*, well known also in Spain itself, where the Spanish inquisition relied on secular authorities on disposing of condemned “heretics”, who were “relaxed”, that is handed over for execution, to these authorities.<sup>466</sup> The spirit of the treaty however foreshadowed a more active role of the emperor as well as his brother Ferdinand, which for example involved the adopting of special legislative designed to curb the “heretical” doctrines, likes of which were actually indeed shortly adopted in some of the imperial dominions, as we will see more closely in the part III of our work.

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<sup>463</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 176. “Item quum Sanctissimo Domino nostro cura etiam major rerum spiritualium, et Pastoralis Officii, quam temporalium esse debeat, Dignitatemque Sedis Apostolicae, Fidem, et Religionem Christianam super omnia tueri teneatur; multi autem exorti sint, qui et de Fide Catholica male sentiant, et a Religione, Doctrinaque Christiana omnino deviaverint, aliosque in eundem errorem deducere conentur; nec minus Caesarae Majestati cordi sit tu huic pestifero morbo congruum antidotum praeparari possit.”

<sup>464</sup> Idem, p. 176-177. „[...] industria omnem operam possibilem adhibebunt in hujusmodi erroribus, si fas sit, sedantis, errantiumque animis alliciendis, ut ad rectos Christianae Religionis tramites redeant [...].”

<sup>465</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 176. „[...] quod si Pastoris vocem non audiverint, Caesarisque Mandata neglexerint, et in hisce erroribus obstinati, et pertinaces premanserint, tam Caesar, quam Serenissimus Hungariae et Boemiae Rex, contra illos eorum potestatis vim distringent, illatamque Christo injuriam pro viribus ulciscuntur [...].”

<sup>466</sup> Kamen, *The Spanish inquisition: a historical revision*, p. 247. “The punishing was usually done through other authorities, at its most extreme by “relaxing” (a word that in time took on terrible overtones) persons to the secular arm of power.”

What the treaty of 1529 actually did significantly limit was radical dualism, which has been expressed by Alfonso de Valdés or Mercurino di Gattinara and while insisting that the main task of the pope lies in his care of spiritual needs of Christians, when it confirmed his temporal hold of great part of Italy. While certainly being a success for the emperor in a sense that it secured his Italian flank and ended a financially demanding series of wars waged on Italian peninsula, which eventually allowed the emperor to realize a successful campaign in Tunis in 1535, together with the death of Mercurino di Gattinara in June 1530 and with the failure to decisively resolve the religious crisis in Germany in the course of the same year, it substantially watered down imperial universalist ideology, which during the 1520s promised to execute a radical change within the Christendom.

### 2.13. The defence of Europe from the Ottoman menace

As a result of the structure of our work, it is more convenient that we now shift our attention to two years following the imperial diet of Augsburg, which was held during the summer of 1530 and which we are going to discuss more closely in the part III of our work. After the end of this imperial diet, the court of Charles V did not return to Spain, but instead chose to remain north of the Alps. The reasons for this were several, but one of the most pressing was the danger presented by the Ottoman forces, which after their victory at Mohács in 1526 started to directly threaten Habsburg dominions in the central Europe, which they at first attacked only three years. It seemed that the time has come for Charles to finally be able to do what he and his supporters talked about for more than a decade – to defend the Christendom against the Muslim menace. We are informed about Valdés's whereabouts and his view of the ensuing imperial military campaign mostly thanks to the series of letters he wrote in this time to his friend Dantiscus, who accompanied the imperial court from Spain to Italy, where he witnessed the coronation of Charles V in Bologna, and in the same year became the bishop of Culm,<sup>467</sup> while spending the next two years travelling between the imperial court and the court of his own king Sigismund of Poland.

After finishing the imperial business in Augsburg, Valdés wrote to Dantiscus on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1530, when he informed him that he is sending the documents regarding the petitions Dantiscus was making on behalf of Bona Sforza (1494-1557), the queen of Poland.<sup>468</sup> Dantiscus's aim was to secure the restoration of the duchy of Bari, located in the kingdom of Naples, to Bona, and after several years of efforts, he eventually succeeded.<sup>469</sup> Valdés also sent Dantiscus the copy of letters of Clement VII to his "dear son", obviously meaning Charles V, as well the relation of the imperial diet of Augsburg,

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<sup>467</sup> Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 138.

<sup>468</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 246. "S. En tibi mitto petitiones Ser.<sup>mae</sup> Reginae quas Mantuae decretavimus [...]"

<sup>469</sup> For more regarding the mission of Dantiscus to secure the restoration of Bari see Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 124-138.

asking him and Cornelius Schepper for advice regarding the document and literary asking him to “to add or change something in it”, if he saw the need to do so, while simultaneously assuring Dantiscus how much he valued his judgement in comparison with his own.<sup>470</sup> This demand is interesting mostly because it further proves to which extent were even official documents emitted by the imperial court a product of collective effort of men, who were however often not listed as its authors.

At the beginning of the next year, the imperial court found itself in the Netherlands, from where Valdés, in the name of Charles V, wrote a letter to Sigismund of Poland, dated 5<sup>th</sup> of March from Brussels, in which the emperor referred mostly to the conflict between his brother Ferdinand and Hungarian noble John of Zápolya (or Szapolyai), both of whom claimed the Hungarian crown.<sup>471</sup> This conflict was made serious because after the series of defeat inflicted on Zápolya by Ferdinand, his rival appealed for help to the sultan of the Ottoman Empire, which Charles in his letter interpreted as the result of his military failures, while literally claiming that Zápolya stirred “Turks, eternal enemies of the Christian name”, to war.<sup>472</sup> Charles however assured Sigismund about his willingness to fight the common enemy of Christianity, claiming that “[...]neither our most serene brother with his friends and his allies will fail to do his duty, neither will we in such crisis ever fail the Commonwealth, of which we are part with other Christian princes, but if necessary, we will oppose Turks with our as well as with their strength [...]”.<sup>473</sup>

Charles V thus clearly attempted to continue to project the image of the emperor acting as the defender of the Christendom, while maintaining good relations with the king of Poland, who in the situation when the geopolitical focus shifted to the central Europe, could certainly act as an important ally of Habsburgs dynasty. In this way, Charles essentially continued policy already started by his late grandfather Maximilian I, who cemented the relations between Habsburg and Jagiellonian dynasty while ceasing his support to both Teutonic order and Muscovite principality. This geopolitical shift was confirmed by a double wedding, which was held in Vienna in 1515.<sup>474</sup>

The imperial court spent a great part of 1531 in the Netherlands, which required the emperor’s attention after the death of his aunt Margaret of Austria, who acted as the governor of the Netherlands and who died in 1530, and who was following year replaced by Charles’s sister Mary, widow of Louis

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<sup>470</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 246. „[...] mitto rationem rerum in hac urbe gestarum cum Lutheranis quam precor ut una com D. Cornelio si adfuerit legas et quicquid delendum immutandum addendumve judicabis deleas immutes et addas. Scis quam parum meo et quam multum tuo iudicio tribuam neque immerito.“

<sup>471</sup> Tóth, *Between Islam and Orthodoxy: Protestants and Catholics in south-eastern Europe*; in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Reform and Expansion, 1500-1660*, p. 537.

<sup>472</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 251. „Quod si vayvoda difficilem se ut hactenus exhibuerit bellumque alere, Turcas, sempiternos christiani nominis hostes, excitare [...]“

<sup>473</sup> *Ibidem*. „[...] neque idem serenissimus frater noster cum suis amicis et foederatis officio suo deerit neque nos Reipublicae in tanto discrimine constitutae una cum aliis christianis principibus unquam defuturi sumus, sed nostras et eorum vires Turcis, si necesse fuerit, opponemus [...]“

<sup>474</sup> Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 213. The marital union between the two dynasties involved the wedding of Ferdinand of Habsburg with Anna of Jagellon, while her brother Louis of Jagellon, future king of Bohemia and Hungary, who lost his life at Mohács in 1526, married sister of Charles, Mary.

of Hungary. On 30<sup>th</sup> March of 1531, Valdés wrote a personal letter to Dantiscus, stating that “We do not have any news either from Hungary or from Turks (as far as I know), except that they write [to us] from Italy about ships which are not as formidable as the rumours said.”<sup>475</sup> Apart from paying attention to the administration of the Netherlands, Charles V also signed an “Edict against the heretic writings” in Brussels on 7<sup>th</sup> October of 1531, which supposed heavy penalties, including the death, for those who would spread “heretical” doctrine or disputed the Catholic orthodoxy,<sup>476</sup> about which we are going to talk more closely later.

At the same time, the emperor was urged by his brother Ferdinand to return to Germany, which he finally did after the arrival of papal legate to his court Aleandro in November 1532.<sup>477</sup> In the same year, the forces of Ottoman Empire renewed their push against the Austrian lands, thus prompting the emperor to act. Putting aside a short message from the beginning of May,<sup>478</sup> Alfonso de Valdés wrote at length to Dantiscus on 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1532 from Regensburg, a site of another imperial diet. After describing the health problems which had been at that time affecting Charles V<sup>479</sup> and which were result of an injury sustained on a hunt,<sup>480</sup> Valdés informed Dantiscus about the latest political development in the Holy Roman Empire. After stating that the imperial estates, including the Lutherans, agreed to support the emperor in his fight against Ottomans.<sup>481</sup> Valdés also mentioned the emperor’s promise to announce convocation of the general council within the next six months, which then should be celebrated within one year, and should the pope refuse to sanction this council, then the whole problem should be settled by “common consent” (*communi consilio*) within the empire.<sup>482</sup> This particular arrangement was adopted in July 1532 and is known as “peace of Nuremberg”, by virtue of which the emperor also promised the suspension of the Edict of Worms, which Valdés did not mention.<sup>483</sup> The strategy adopted by Charles V regarding the Lutheran question thus displays a relatively huge ambiguity. On one side, Charles V did not hesitate to proclaim a relatively harsh legislation which made the spread of Protestant doctrine punishable by death, as was the case of the

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<sup>475</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p.252. „Neque de Ungaria neque de Turcis novi quicquam habemus (quod sciam) nisi quod ex Italia scribunt apparatus maritimos non tam formidabiles esse uri prius fama pertulerat.“

<sup>476</sup> Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V*, p. 184-186.

<sup>477</sup> Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 121.

<sup>478</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 258.

<sup>479</sup> Idem, p. 265. “Caesar in sua illa villa a molestissima aegritudine omnino convaluit, voluitque ad nos venire, sed vixdum hanc urbem ingressus febris eum invasit a qua in praesentia liber est, modo reddere nolit.”

<sup>480</sup> Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 134.

<sup>481</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 265-266. “[...] quod ad Romanum Imperium attinet omnes ordines se Caesaris arbitrio submittunt, adversus Turcos omnes memine except imperatum militum numerum suppediabant, quin quod Dux Saxoniae et suae factionis omnes longe magis quam caeteri praestare volunt, et Lantgravius Hassiae obtulit se venturum modo rem Caesari gratam se facturum sciat.”

<sup>482</sup> Idem, p. 266. “Quod ad religionem autem spectat Caesar pollicitus est se curaturum ut intra sex menses generalis synodus indicatur, et intra annum deinde celebretur, quod si forte a Pontifice impetrare non possit aliud Conventum Imperii se inducturum, ut quid ea in re faciendum sit communi consilio decernatur et statuatur et intera nihil hinc de facto immutari debeat.”

<sup>483</sup> Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 136.



Edict promulgated in Brabant in October 1531,<sup>484</sup> on the other side, he was still able to compromise with the Lutherans on the imperial level, if the necessity demanded it.

Unfortunately, Alfonso de Valdés limited himself mostly on description and did not offer Dantiscus any in-depth commentary or his interpretation of the latest development, at least not in the letters which we have on our disposal. We may thus only assume, drawing on the opinions which Valdés expressed elsewhere, that he supported this at least temporary truce with the Lutherans, intended to ward off the Ottoman offensive, because it still offered hope of future peaceful reconciliation. Rest of the letter from August is dedicated mostly to military matters and the composition of the imperial army, which as usual consisted of mixed force of Spaniards, Germans and Italians, while Alfonso de Valdés also noted that Swiss and French forces refused to join the campaign.<sup>485</sup> In the end, Valdés expressed his optimism that “if now certain Christian Princes wanted to add their forces to Caesar’s, we could easily liberate the Commonwealth from this dread, but it should not be forgotten that it is because of Caesar who is doing his duty.”<sup>486</sup> This statement was possibly intended to remind Dantiscus, who still acted as a representative of the Polish king Sigismund, to try to convince him to add his forces to that of Charles V.

Alfonso de Valdés eventually wrote two more letters to Dantiscus, the first dated on 3<sup>rd</sup> of September in Regensburg, the second on 11<sup>th</sup> of the same month from Passau. This second letter is also the last letter of Valdés, which is available to us, and although it might not have been the last of his life, it certainly was one of the last he has ever written, considering his impending death.

The letter from Regensburg was dedicated mostly to the description of the advancement of the imperial army, but also to the uncertainty regarding the future actions of the enemy, who in this time was actively besieging the city of Vienna. Valdés himself was convinced that considering the amount of resources and efforts the sultan exerted, he is not going to pull back without an open confrontation, but he also cited the prevailing opinion that the sultan was surprised by the unity displayed by Germans as well as the fact that the king of France did not join the fight on his behalf.<sup>487</sup> Alfonso de Valdés then rather poetically painted the current conflict as the clash of “two most powerful monarchs of the world” with their “most skilled and mighty armies, likes of which I do not think has ever been assembled”.<sup>488</sup> Rather than being literally correct, the style of Valdés betrays his tendency to view the reign of Charles V as the culmination of one epoch in the history of the

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<sup>484</sup> Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.*, p. 185.

<sup>485</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 266. “Helvecii aperte Galli responderunt se eorum stipendio militare nolle nisi adversus Turcos. »

<sup>486</sup> Idem, p. 266. „[...] si nunc caeteri Christiani Principes suas vires Caesarianis adiungere velle facile Rempublicam ab hoc metu liberare possemus sed non propterea ommittet Caesar quin suum officium faciat.“

<sup>487</sup> Idem, p. 269. „Sed dicunt aliqui, non putabat Germaniam unitis viribus in eum ruituram nec Regem Gallum, a quo ut fertur sollicitatus fuerat, domi quieturum.“

<sup>488</sup> Ibidem. „Praeterea ubi video hos duos potentissimos orbis monarchas, perpetua hactenus felicitate usos, ad conserendas manus properare, duos instructissimos ac florentissimos exercitus, quorum similes nondum usquam locorum congregatos esse existimo [...]“

Christendom, an epoch which would result in a monumental clash between the forces of “good and evil” and then be followed by a new age of prosperity and peace, an age of the universal empire. But he was not entirely exaggerating, because although it might not have been the greatest army which has ever assembled to that day, the imperial army was indeed rather impressive. According to Parker, the army of Charles V consisted of “114,000 soldiers, over 74,000 other personnel, and over 73,000 horses”,<sup>489</sup> making it one of the largest militaries assembles at that time.

Overall, Valdés displayed an optimism regarding the future confrontation, claiming the imperial army to be “much bigger than we believed”, citing the influx from money from Spain as one of the reasons, adding that “had I not been a Spaniard, I would have to dare to say that Germany was saved by Spain”.<sup>490</sup> The money coming from Spain Valdés was referring to were probably a part of ransom paid by French king for his two sons, from which Charles ordered a transfer of total 900 000 ducats in the course of 1532.<sup>491</sup>

In a letter written eight days later from Passau, located near the border between Bavaria and Austria, Valdés mentions that the imperial army received news about Ottoman withdrawal, but only after it had set on fire several nearby located towns. The imperial army however decided to press on, not being sure whether this news was credible.<sup>492</sup>

In the rest of the letter, Valdés asked Dantiscus for help with securing the help of his king Sigismund, claiming that “Had we been fighting with [other] Christian princes, I would not have asked any alliance from you, but since we demand this for the salvation of the Commonwealth and against the enemies of [our] religion, I know for certain that you will most gladly do this thing”.<sup>493</sup>

The last years of Valdés are thus characteristic by a shift from anti-papal rhetoric and criticism directed towards the catholic church and calling for its reform, to religious problems of Germany as well as the defence of the Christendom from Ottoman menace. This shift was caused not only by a geopolitical development, during which the Habsburg dynasty significantly enlarged its possessions in central Europe by acquiring Bohemia and Hungary, however contested it was, but also by the settlement with the pope, death of Mercurino di Gattinara and possibly also by an activity of the Spanish inquisition, which started to investigate the dialogues of Valdés in 1531.

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<sup>489</sup> Parker, *Emperor, A New Life of Charles V*, p. 136.

<sup>490</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 269. „Copiae nostrae erunt longe quam credebamus majores, adeo magna hominum turba hoc confluit; pecuniam nobis Hispania suppedabit quae vix credas quanta animi promptitudine in hac expeditione vires et facultates impendat, ut nisi Hispanus essem, servatam Germaniam Hispanis deberi auderem asseverare.“

<sup>491</sup> Parker, *Emperor, A New Life of Charles V*, p. 136.

<sup>492</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 271. „Hic autem rumor ad nos perlatus est Turcas, omisso castro quod expugnare non potuerunt, incensisque nonnullis villis retrecedere; id tamem certumne sit aut incertum ignoramus.“

<sup>493</sup> Idem, p. 272. „Si cum Christianis Principibus nobis contentio esset, nullo pacto hoc abs te peterem, sed cum haec pro Reipublicae salute et adversus religionis hostes posutlemus, sat scio ea te quam libentissime facturum.“

*“Avant l'imprimerie, la réforme n'eût été qu'un schisme,  
l'imprimerie la fait révolution. Ôtez la presse, l'hérésie est  
énervée. Que ce soit fatal ou providentiel, Gutenberg est le  
précurseur de Luther. »*

*Victor Hugo*<sup>494</sup>

In the last section of our work, we are going to focus on one of the most significant themes in the history of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which is the beginnings of the historical movement generally known as the Reformation, its impact on the imperial project of Charles V and its reflection in the work of Alfonso de Valdés, who observed and commented on the beginnings of the Reformation from early 1520s and who in 1530 personally took part in the negotiation at the imperial diet in Augsburg, where he tried to contribute to achieving some kind of compromise between the Catholics and the Lutherans, a compromise which would have meant the preservation of the unity of the Christendom.

The emergence of Protestantism undoubtedly constitutes a decisive turning point in the history of the whole Christianity, the European continent and subsequently in the history of the entire world; after all, both Great Britain and United States of America, the two main superpowers which decisively influenced and shaped the global history especially during the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were and still continue to be countries where most of those who claim to be Christians identify themselves as the Protestant.<sup>495</sup> The same could be said about other European powers, such as Sweden, the Netherlands or Germany, each of whom, albeit in a different time and in a different way, played its crucial role in the history of European continent.<sup>496</sup> The emergence of Protestantism also curiously coincide with the beginnings of the imperial rule of Charles V; it can thus be safely claimed that Charles V indeed begun his reign in the middle of a crucial point of history of Christian Europe, although in a rather negative sense, because for the imperial project of Charles V, the beginning of the Reformation soon proved to be an existential danger.

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<sup>494</sup> Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, p. 292.

<sup>495</sup> According to Pew Research Centre, 70,6% of the population of the United States of America identifies as Christians. From those, 25,4 % identifies as Evangelical Protestants, 14,7 % as Mainline Protestants, 6,5% as Historically Black Protestants, while 20,8 % of Americans identifies as Catholics. See <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/religious-landscape-study/>

<sup>496</sup> Sweden acted as a European superpower especially during the 17<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of kings Gustav II. Adolf (r. 1611-1632) and Charles XII (r. 1697-1718), while Germany acted as a superpower after its unification in 1871 until the end of the second world war in 1945.

The reason why the Reformation threatened the universalist ambition of the imperial court lies in the fact that at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the religious question was still closely intertwined with secular politics and these two aspects thus could not be treated separately. As we have already seen in the previous part of our work, the idea of universal empire was drawing its legitimacy mainly from Christian religion, more precisely from its Catholic version.<sup>497</sup> Without commonly shared religion, the universal empire was hardly conceivable. This is not to say that universalist ideology in general has to be necessarily rooted in commonly shared religion. After all, it is perfectly legitimate to argue that the French Empire of Napoleon Bonaparte, which in its peak covered most of European continent, was nothing less than a secular version of earlier Christian universal empire. Napoleon's exploits, however, took place in a very different historical context. There is indeed a huge gap between the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 16<sup>th</sup> century, especially when it comes to the religious sphere and the role the religion played both in the society as well as in the high politics. Unlike at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the early modern age, the age of Charles V and Martin Luther, is a time in which religious dogmas still constituted a main conceptual framework of social, intellectual and political life. This framework was however undergoing constant evolution, and the Reformation acted as a sort of catalyst for changes, which in some form had already started to manifest themselves in the previous centuries.

According to Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, it was precisely the Reformation which effectively ended the hopes of achieving the goals of Habsburg universalism:

“The Reformation and the Thirty Years War broke the back of the universal ambitions of the Habsburgs. Europe remained split up between a number of regional, jealously competitive monarchies. Without effective power and intellectually discredited, universal empire was put to rest. As Henry VIII had asserted when severing the English church from the Catholic, his kingdom was fully an empire in its own right, not subject to the authority of any other power, be it pope or (Holy Roman) emperor.”<sup>498</sup>

This assessment is certainly correct, since the end of religious unity doubtlessly heavily contributed to the ultimate failure of Habsburg universalist project, although it could be safely argued that the Reformation was not the sole reason for this failure. It nonetheless strengthened the preexisting fragmentation of German speaking area of Holy Roman Empire and later it contributed

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<sup>497</sup>We leave aside for this moment the problem of eastern orthodoxy, which represented a separate Christian universalist concept, but which lost its centre in 1453, when the forces of the Ottoman Empire captured Constantinople.

<sup>498</sup>Fibiger Bang, Kołodziejczyk, *Universal empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, p. 8

to Habsburg loss of the northern part of the Netherlands, which in itself had far reaching consequences for Spain as for the rest of Europe.

### 3.1. The beginnings of the Reformation

Broadly speaking, the beginnings of the historical process called the Reformation is usually set to October of 1517, when hence relatively unknown German Augustinian monk Martin Luther, who at this time held the chair of the professor of theology at the university of Wittenberg, published his famous *Ninety-five theses*,<sup>499</sup> in which he, among other things, heavily attacked the practise of selling of the indulgences. Luther's backlash against the indulgences was a reaction against the ongoing campaign, which saw the increasing selling of indulgences, primarily in German speaking areas of Holy Roman Empire. Luther's critique however did not limit itself to this particular issue. On the contrary, in the course of a relatively short time, Luther continued to develop his distinctive theology further, even to the point where direct confrontation with Roman curia seemed inevitable.

It is imperative to assert that the personal role of Martin Luther himself was more that of a man who served as a catalyst for widespread discontent with modus operandi of the papal curia and the Catholic Church in general. It is also important to note that the German Reformation was not an unprecedented phenomenon, and it did not emerge out of nowhere. Roughly one century before the beginning of "Lutheran" Reformation, it was already preceded by the Hussite movement, which emerged in kingdom of Bohemia as a result of the execution of Bohemian a popular religious reformer John Hus (1372-1415), who was sentenced to death by the council of Constance for heresy and subsequently burned at stake.<sup>500</sup> Although the Hussite movement was fairly successful in the military terms and Hussite armies managed to defeat several crusades directed against Bohemia and were even able to conduct numerous military expeditions and raids inside neighbouring German speaking lands, the movement nonetheless failed to spread its ideas beyond the borders of the Bohemian kingdom, and thus is remained regional phenomenon. Over time, the Hussite movement, alternatively also called Utraquist, gradually disintegrated into various rival factions, the development similar to that which was a century later also experienced by German Protestants, but the great part of the population of the Bohemian kingdom nonetheless continued to adhere the Utraquist doctrine well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it was partly replaced by new Protestant creeds. The fundamentals of Hussite theology, which were formulated in 1420 in Four Articles of Prague, included "the freedom of preaching", "communion in both kinds" even for the laity, the prohibition of "temporal power of clergy", which included rejection or expropriation of "the temporal wealth of the church" and finally, "the

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<sup>499</sup>An English translation of Ninety-five theses can be read here: [http://reverendluther.org/pdfs/The\\_Ninety-Five\\_Theses.pdf](http://reverendluther.org/pdfs/The_Ninety-Five_Theses.pdf)

<sup>500</sup>Brady, *German Histories in the Age of Reformation, 1400-1650*, p. 76.

punishment of mortal sins”.<sup>501</sup> For our purposes here it will suffice to note that although the Hussite theology was naturally not identical with all the theology of Martin Luther and other leaders of the Reformation, it did nonetheless served as a precursor for later criticism of the Catholic church, and according to some interpretations, it can be actually viewed as the first stage of the Reformation itself.<sup>502</sup> It is also telling that some of the elements of Utraquist theology, such as communion under both kinds, were indeed quickly adopted by German Lutherans.<sup>503</sup> This inspiration by Hussites was often conscious. As Alfonso de Valdés noted, Martin Luther himself invoked the name of John Hus in his defence during the imperial diet of Augsburg in 1518, when he claimed, that “John Hus was unjustly condemned by the council of Constance”.<sup>504</sup>

The imperial court was not oblivious to the danger which the Reformation presented to the unity of the Christendom and thus to the whole universalist project of Charles V. As we shall see, Alfonso de Valdés himself was well aware of the problems which spreading of Luther’s doctrine signified as early as 1520. Recognizing the danger and choosing the suitable strategy to combat the emerging threat however proved to be two separate things, and the second task prove to be immeasurably more difficult than the first one and although the emperor took stand against Luther during the imperial diet at Worms 1521, the efficiency of his strategy proved to be insufficient.

The same failure could be however ascribed to the strategy employed by the papal curia. The issue that Luther raised in 1517 soon attracted the attention of the pope Leo X, who tried to silence Luther by sending his legate cardinal Cajetan to the imperial diet which was held in Augsburg in 1518, and which was also the last imperial diet of the emperor Maximilian I.<sup>505</sup> It is very well possible that the controversy caused by Luther’s ideas might have ended as a mere theological dispute, whose instigator could have met a fate similar to the fate of the great number of other controversial religious figures, who throughout the time dared to challenge the authority of the Catholic church; after all, the memory of the execution of John Hus still lingered in a collective memory, especially in the minds of Germans and Bohemians. The fact that the controversy caused by Luther evolved into a movement of historical proportions, which subsequently profoundly changed the face of the entire Christendom, is a direct result of the support and protection, which during this critical period Luther enjoyed from the elector of Saxony, prince Frederick III “the Wise” (1463-1525), and eventually from other German princes, such as Philip of Hesse (1509-1567), as well.

When talking about Protestantism, we must take into account that we are dealing with a highly heterogeneous phenomenon, which was constantly undergoing rapid development and which soon

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<sup>501</sup>Brady, *German Histories in the Age of Reformation, 1400-1650*, p. 78.

<sup>502</sup>Idem, p. 79.

<sup>503</sup>Scribner, *The Reformation movements in Germany*, p. 79.

<sup>504</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 14. „[...] asseveratque Joannem Huss in Concilio Constantiensi inique damnatum [...].”

<sup>505</sup>Alfonso de Valdés described the activity of the papal legate Cajetan in his first letter to Pedro Mártir, see Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 11-14.

differentiated into various confessions, such as Calvinism or Anglicanism. Shortly after the start of Martin Luther's public activity and publication of his first works, a great number of preachers and religious reformers started to develop their activities independently of Martin Luther. The most significant of those were men such as Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstad, Thomas Müntzer or Huldrych Zwingli, who was active in the area of Switzerland.<sup>506</sup> Nonetheless, during its formative years, the attention of the whole western Christendom, including the imperial court, was fixed mostly on teachings of Martin Luther and his collaborators such as Philip Melanchthon.

The first real confrontation between the newly elected emperor Charles V and the rising tide of the nascent Protestant movement took place at the first imperial diet of Charles V, which was held in the city of Worms in 1521 and which was also personally attended by Alfonso de Valdés, who was then a mere scribe who just recently joined the imperial service, and who has been given the opportunity to personally observe one of the defining moments of European civilization.

### 3.2. Martin Luther: the chief adversary

*“Ergo sola gratia justificat”*<sup>507</sup>

The principal protagonist of German reformation was born on 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1483 in a small Saxon town of Eisleben, located north-west of Leipzig.<sup>508</sup> While his father Hans was involved in a booming mining industry, his mother Margaret, born Lindemann, belonged to a rather wealthy family situated in the city of Eisenach. After briefly studying in Mansfeld, Luther moved to Magdeburg, where he visited a school run by Brethren of the Common life and subsequently to Eisenach, after which he started to study at the university of Erfurt, where he successfully gained his degree of Master of Arts in 1505.<sup>509</sup> The life of Martin Luther, however, significantly changed on 2<sup>nd</sup> July of the same year. On that day, while travelling on foot near a village of Stotterheim, Martin Luther was reportedly overtaken by a storm and nearly hit by a lightning. When faced with this imminent danger, Luther appealed for help to Saint Anne with a promise that should he manage to survive, he is going to become a monk. After successfully surviving his ordeal, Martin Luther stayed true to his oath and entered the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt. Once a member of Augustinian order, Luther shifted his attention to theology, while focusing primarily on the study of the Bible. In 1510, during an ongoing controversy which affected the Augustinian order, and which pitted against each

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<sup>506</sup>Scribner, *The Reformation movements in Germany*, p. 81.

<sup>507</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 164.

<sup>508</sup>This chapter is based mainly of two biographies of Martin Luther: the first one is the work of German historian Heiko Oberman entitled *Luther – Man between God and the Devil* (the original German title of this work *Mensch zwischen Gott und Teufel*) while the second the work of American historian Roland Bainton *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*.

<sup>509</sup>Hendrix, *Martin Luther, reformer in Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 6, Reform and Expansion, 1500-1660*, p. 5-6.

other reformist and conventual factions of the order,<sup>510</sup> Luther was sent as a representative of the reformist faction to Rome, where he was supposed to appeal to the general vicar of the Augustinian order. This mission however proved to be futile. After returning back to Germany, Luther successfully completed his studies of theology and in 1512 received a doctorate at the university of Wittenberg, in that time just recently founded by Frederick the Wise, the Saxon elector,<sup>511</sup> to which Luther initially invited by the general-vicar of the German Augustinian Observants, Johannes von Staupitz (1468-1524).<sup>512</sup> In the course of the following years, Luther dedicated himself to further studies of Holy Scripture, while at the same time continuing to work as a professor in Wittenberg, where he gradually elaborated his distinctive theology, which soon became the public issue number one in the whole Holy Roman Empire as well as beyond its borders.

As Oberman notes, Martin Luther was initially known only within a “small, restricted world” of German university professors, but he was basically unknown by wider German public up until the fateful year of 1517.<sup>513</sup> His theology,<sup>514</sup> however, was soon about to rock not only Germany, but the whole western Christendom as well. It consisted of three major pillars, namely justification by faith alone (*sola fide*), the preaching of God's Word alone (*sola scriptura*), and trust in God's grace alone (*sola gratia*).<sup>515</sup> From these theses was also derived the notion of so-called priesthood of all Christians, according to which all Christians were able to interpret the Word of God. This theology was heavily influenced by Luther's biblical studies, in course of which he managed to learn Hebrew and Greek, two original languages of the Holy Scripture, which facilitated his understanding of this principal foundation of the Christian religion. Luther soon started regarding the Bible as the ultimate authority as well as the ultimate source of truth, which according to him always had a precedence over church's traditions, council decrees, canon law and other sources of knowledge. In his studies, Luther heavily focused on the epistle of St. Paul, which inspired him to formulate his distinctive concept of God's grace. This became a core concept of his teachings, since it was God's grace, obtained by faith alone, which according to Luther was the only way to attain a salvation. In his biography of Martin Luther, Heiko Oberman summarized Lutheran concept of salvation by faith alone in this way: “[...] man cannot redeem himself; he is only a heartbeat away from death and on the way to nothingness. Where it is a question of salvation, decisions lie not with the free will but with God

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<sup>510</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 132-134.

<sup>511</sup> Hendrix, *Martin Luther, reformer*, p. 3-4.

<sup>512</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 143.

<sup>513</sup>Idem, p. 187.

<sup>514</sup> The topic of Luther's theology is in itself naturally were complex and we thus cannot fully address it here. After all, not even historians who study the person of Martin Luther are unanimous about the nature and development of this theology, as was observed by Scott Hendrix, who claimed that “No one is likely to discover a single irrefutable key to the formation of Luther's theology. It grew out of the academic responsibility that required Luther to bring all the resources of his education and experience to bear on the interpretation of scripture. His theology also profited from interaction and debate with his colleagues.” See Hendrix, *Martin Luther, reformer in Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 6, Reform and Expansion, 1500-1660*, p. 8.

<sup>515</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 220.



alone, on whom man is dependent from his first sigh to his final breath. Man must be driven forward by the Word and grace of God and held fast in his faith to the very last moment; without divine mercy he collapses into himself and back into nothingness.”<sup>516</sup>

R. W. Scribner suggests that the distinctive Lutheran theology is essentially a product of Luther’s own spiritual distress, which plagued him with consistent doubts regarding his own imperfection and his inability to follow the God’s law. The solution for Luther was to rely with full force on God’s grace, which was channeled by the Holy Scripture:

“He resolved his spiritual crisis on the basis of a Pauline insight that the individual could not attain perfection through human endeavour alone; righteousness came only from God in the form of justifying grace given in response to faith. The living Word of God in the Bible was the unshakeable rock on which he could found spiritual certainty, and his fusion of spiritual, emotional and intellectual conviction was to make him a unique personality in his own time.”<sup>517</sup>

Luther hinted at this key theological concept even in his famous *Ninety-five Theses*, namely in the thesis number sixty-two, which stated: “The true treasure of the church is the most holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.”<sup>518</sup> Luther’s theological concept, which negated the role of “good works” on earth as a possible way to attain salvation truly proved to be extremely innovative, but it was something else which introduced Luther to the wide world and made him into an object of interest of a great part of Europe – we are talking about the controversy surrounding the selling of indulgences.

Overall, the activities of Martin Luther had a distinctive sense of urgency, which stemmed from his conviction about the incoming “end of times”, the imminent, which was heralded by the increased activity the Antichrist. Martin Luther thus came to identify the disturbances of his age with the metaphysical forces well beyond the control of men. What was equally important, Luther also came to identify certain protagonists with the forces of Antichrist, among which was the papacy.<sup>519</sup>

### 3.3. Alfonso de Valdés and the reflection of early Protestantism

We are able to reconstruct Alfonso de Valdés’s insight of the beginning of the Reformation mostly thanks to the correspondence with Pedro Mártir de Anglería, which consists of three letters written successively from Brussels, Aachen and Worms, the city which hosted a decisive imperial diet of 1521. The testimony of Valdés is important especially thanks to the fact that he attended the imperial diet personally and, while writing his reports, he thus did not have to rely on secondhand information.

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<sup>516</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 224.

<sup>517</sup>Scribner, *The Reformation movements in Germany*, p. 69.

<sup>518</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 190.

<sup>519</sup>Idem, p. 43.

In the first letter to Mártir, written in Brussels on 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1520, Valdés summarized the beginnings of the Protestant movement, which was in this time already causing considerable unrest in the whole Germany. Valdés first drew the attention to the time of pontificate of Julius II (1503-1513), who, as Alfonso de Valdés reminded Mártir, initiated the construction of the new basilica of Saint Peter. However, as Valdés further explains, the costs of this project soon became so high that it forced the papacy to try to secure additional sources of income. This development continued during the reign of Julius's successor Leo X, which began in 1513 and ended with his death in 1521, who tried to secure the necessary funds by initiating a new wave of selling of so-called indulgences, which were supposed to be sold especially in the German speaking area of the Holy Roman Empire. This new wave of selling of indulgences however triggered a rather strong negative reaction and sparked public protests. In the area of Wittenberg, the selling of indulgences was entrusted to the Dominican preacher named Johannes Tetzel, whose activity soon provoked Martin Luther into action.<sup>520</sup>

In his letter to Mártir, it was claimed by Valdés that the principal reason for emerging discontent lay in the fact that it were not Augustinians, but Dominicans, who were tasked with selling of indulgences; Valdés even went as far as to declare “There you have the first scene of this tragedy, which we owe to the mutual hate between friars”.<sup>521</sup> This attitude can be easily explained by the fact that certain dislike towards monastical orders marks one of the features of Valdés's philosophy, which he shared with Erasmus of Rotterdam. After all, it was precisely Erasmus, who uttered the famous phrase “*Monachatus non est pietas*” - “Monasticism is not piety”,<sup>522</sup> through which he attacked the traditional monastic claim to special access to the salvation. As we will see later on, Valdés himself also repeatedly displayed his dislike towards monasticism and the way of life of majority of monks in his later works. It is also interesting to note that the interpretation of Alfonso de Valdés regarding the beginning of the controversy of indulgences was shared also by the Spanish chronicler Prudencio de Sandoval, who wrote his chronicle towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and who also attributed the resistance to the selling of indulgences to the envy of Dominicans.<sup>523</sup>

This assertion is obviously gross simplification, if not completely false, because the factors which led to a widespread popular uproar, which first materialized itself in a form of resistance to indulgences and then resulted in the formation to the Protestant movement, were far too complex to be reduced merely to a result of a rivalry between two monastic orders. Furthermore, Luther himself already denounced the selling of indulgences at the latest in 1514,<sup>524</sup> and it is thus clear that his

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<sup>520</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 187-188.

<sup>521</sup>Caballero, *Alonso y Juan de Valdés*, p. 292. „Habes primam hujus tragoediae scaenam, quam monachorum odiis debemus“.

<sup>522</sup>Gallardo, *Diccionario Español de Términos Literarios Internacionales: Erasmismo*, p. 6.

<sup>523</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del Emperador Carlos V*, Libro segundo, XLIV. “Era costumbre muy antigua en Alemania darse a los frailes agustinos la predicación de la Cruzada. El cardenal, por su gusto o por otro respeto, diola a los frailes de Santo Domingo. Afrentáronse grande y extrañamente los agustinos, y mostróse más impaciente que todos fray Juan Estapucio, su vicario general, y Martín Lutero que le ayudaba.”

<sup>524</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 191.

attitude was a result of a long-term intellectual development, a development which stemmed from his deep convictions and was not motivated by the fact that it was Dominicans would be tasked with selling of indulgences, instead of his Augustinians. Nonetheless, Valdés made it clear that he regarded the current controversy to be unnecessary and that he blamed Luther personally for instigating the unrest, when he called him “the author of this tragedy”, who was driven by the envy towards Dominicans.<sup>525</sup> Interestingly, this Valdés’s comment corresponds with the reaction attributed to the pope Leo X, who allegedly proclaimed that “The whole row is due to the envy of the monks”.<sup>526</sup>

Valdés then recounts the intervention of the elector of Saxony Frederick III, who seized the money thus far collected by selling of indulgences while claiming that he wanted to send his own representative to Rome, who would then supervise the spending of money.<sup>527</sup> As was noted by Oberman, this intervention of secular power was not historically unique, but it had its own precedents in the past, especially in Saxony, since Frederick’s ancestors already intervened in the process of selling of indulgences before; this fact was however probably unknown to Valdés at that time, since he does not mention it in his letter. Instead, Valdés recounts how pope Leo X twice reprimanded the elector and urged him to return the confiscated money. The elector, however, failed to heed the pope, to which he was encouraged by Luther, who according to Valdés “with great audacity” claimed that the pope does not have any right to excommunicate anyone “unjustly”.<sup>528</sup>

Valdés then moves to what can be safely described as a turning point of the early Reformation, when he describes the way in which Luther’s writings started to be published and the ease with which they have been spreading all over Germany.<sup>529</sup> Naturally, the role that printed word played in the spreading of early Protestant thoughts could not be overestimated. However, the speed with which Luther’s ideas were spreading could not be attributed solely to the existence of press, but rather to the existence of substantial demand for thoughts that he was expressing, which stemmed from deep discontent and indignation with the functioning of Roman curia. After all, the “grievances” against the Rome were already present in German speaking area for substantial time before Luther raised his voice, as they were in neighbouring Bohemia, as we have already seen. Alfonso de Valdés was keen enough to capture this sentiment, when he wrote:

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<sup>525</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p.12. „[...] monachus Augustinensis, cui nomen Martinus Lutherus Saxo, et hujus tragoediae auctor, et Dominicani fortassis invidia motus [...]“

<sup>526</sup>Bainton, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, p. 85.

<sup>527</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 12. “Omnem pecuniam ex hujusmodi condonationibus per universam ditionem suam collectam e commissariorum (quos vocant) manibus eripuit, dicens, se velle proprium hominem Romam destinare, qui eam pecuniam in fabricam templi Divi Petri exponeret, videretque in quem usum reliquae pecuniae ab aliis partibus ferrentur, Romae consumerentur.”

<sup>528</sup>Idem, p. 13. „Tunc Augustinensis, Ducis favorem captans, magna audacia asseveravit hujusmodi sententiam, ut iniquam, non ligare: nec posse Romanum Pontificem quemquam injuste (uti ajunt) excommunicare [...]“

<sup>529</sup>Ibidem „[...] per universam Germaniam facile pervolarunt.“

“Meanwhile the minds of Germans got irritated, seeing that the manners of Romans did become more profane, and they secretly started thinking about shaking off the yoke of Roman popes. What happened was that when first of Luther’s writings were published in the language of the people, it was remarkable how much applause they received from everyone. Then Germans started to shout and hurl insults at Romans, asking for the convocation of the general council of all Christians, where the things that Luther was writing would be examined and a new order of the church would be instituted.”<sup>530</sup>

After noting this, Valdés continued with a criticism of his own directed towards the pope Leo X, who according to him made a huge mistake in not convoking the general council, instead trying to silence Luther by force:

“Pity that this [the convocation of the council] was not done! But while the pope tenaciously defends his rights, he fears the council of the Christians, and while (to speak freely) he cares more about his private interests, which may be threatened by the general synod, than about the salvation of Christians; and since he desires to condemn Luther’s writings without discussion, he sent a legate to the emperor Maximilian and tasked him, among other things, to silence Luther by the authority of the emperor and the entire Holy Roman Empire.”<sup>531</sup>

This passage clearly proves that Valdés was deeply convinced about the deteriorating state of the Catholic church and the need for reform even at the beginning of the third decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. While he regarded the controversy caused by Martin Luther to be a result of jealousy between Dominicans and Augustinians, he nonetheless agreed that the best way to address the whole situation was through a convocation of the general council, which would examine and remedy all grievances; in this matter he held the same opinion that Luther, who in this time demanded the convocation of the general council in his *Address to the Christian Nobility of German Nation*,<sup>532</sup> a work written solely in German language<sup>533</sup> and published in 1520. Valdés also did not hesitate to, albeit he did so only in a private correspondence, to blame Leo X for the failure to act accordingly and resolve the looming crisis. Valdés also criticized what can be described as an authoritarian approach of Roman papacy,

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<sup>530</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p.13. “Intumuerantdudum Germanorum animi, videntes Romanensium mores plusquam prophanos, coeperantque de excutiendo Romani Pontificis jugo clam per cuniculos agere. Quo factum est, ut quum primum Lutheri scripta in vulgum prodire, mirum quanto applausu ab omnibus sescepta sint. Ibi Germani gestire et convicia in Romanenses jactare: petereque ut generalis Christianorum omnium conventus indiceretur: in quo excussis his quae Lutherus scribebat, alius ordo in rebus Ecclesiae statueretur.”

<sup>531</sup>Ibidem. “Quod utinam factum fuisset! Veruntamen dum Pontifex jus suum mordicus tuetur; dum timet Christianorum conventum, dum (ut libere loquar), plus apud eum valet privatum commodum, in generali Synodo forte periclinaturum, quam Christiani populi salus, dum cupit Lutherana scripta nondum discussa e medio tollere; Legatum a latere ad Caesarem Maximilianum mittit, qui inter alia curaret, ut Caesaris atque universi romani Imperii autoritate Luthero silentium indiceretur.”

<sup>532</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 262.

<sup>533</sup>The German title of this work is *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation*.

which instead of discussing the controversial topics focused primarily on strength and which tried to silence its critics and opponents. From the advantage of hindsight, it is obvious that the strategy employed by Roman curia not only did not work, but on the contrary made the resistance in German lands even stronger. The strategy of silencing the critics and opponents can be, at least in a short term, effective only when it can be employed without generating widespread resistance among population. It is however usually ineffective in a situation in which the authoritarian power lacks the means to effectively and quickly quell the possible resistance, which was exactly the case of Roman curia in relation to Germany. This “effectiveness” can be illustrated on the reaction to the discovery of several small groups of Protestants in Spain, namely in Valladolid and Seville, which were however swiftly suppressed.<sup>534</sup> These Protestant cells however lacked the support of wider public and they were confronted by relatively efficient apparatus of infamous Spanish inquisition. As we have already mentioned earlier, this organization had been already operating in Spain since 1480 and its initial purpose was to control so called *cristianos nuevos* (new Christians) or *conversos*, that is Christians of Jewish or Muslim heritage, who often converted to Christianity unwillingly and only under pressure. Papal curia in Rome, on the other hand, had to rely on a collaboration of foreign secular authorities when it dealt with people suspected of heresy outside of its own secular domain. And as we have already seen, Martin Luther in his turn enjoyed a protection not only of the elector of Saxony, but later also of other imperial estates, who refused to outright condemn him without a hearing during the diet in Augsburg, as Alfonso de Valdés noted in his letter to Pedro Mártir.<sup>535</sup> And although Roman curia requested that Luther be arrested and sent to Rome, this request was not fulfilled, which possibly saved Luther’s life, and certainly saved his career as a religious reformer.

After describing to Mártir the events of imperial diet in Augsburg of 1518, where papal legate Cajetan in vain tried to secure Luther’s condemnation while denying him a public hearing, Valdés noted that the whole affair actually increased Luther’s fame and prestige, especially considering the fact that he seemed to emerge from the diet of Augsburg as a victor.<sup>536</sup> This fame was further enhanced by new writings which Luther was about to publish soon, among which figured for example the work *De captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae* (On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church), one of the most notorious of all Luther’s writings. Valdés however also displayed his indignation over Luther’s audacity, when he dared to pronounce the pope Leo X himself a heretic and a schismatic.<sup>537</sup> Although Valdés himself earlier also criticized the pope, whom he partly blamed for the upcoming crisis, he still nonetheless remained loyal to him as to the head of the church and thus, as would be expected of

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<sup>534</sup>Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, p. 91-98.

<sup>535</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 13-14. “Status Imperii vicissim contendebant, iniquum esse hominem inauditum damnre compellereve, ut quae scripta se propugnaturum asseverabat, nisi convictus revocaret.”

<sup>536</sup>Idem, p. 14. “Lutherus vero majori cum gloria dimissus quam admissus [...]”.

<sup>537</sup>Ibidem. “[...] ipsum Pontificem Maximum (oh impudentia) haereticum et schismaticum pronuntiat [...]”.

every pious Catholic, was horrified by Luther's actions, which meant nothing less than direct attack on the head of the Catholic church, who despite all his faults was still perceived as the vicar of Christ.

Valdés ended his letter by describing Luther's public burning of books containing canonical law, which were allegedly responsible for "perverting of Christian piety",<sup>538</sup> the event which is seen by R. W. Scribner as a true beginning of the Reformation,<sup>539</sup> and then concludes the letter by stating how this public burning further fanned the tensions, which were already high in Germany:

"When the news about this spread all over Germany, it further moved the minds of Germans against the Apostolic see, so that unless either the pope's prudence and piety, or the good fortune of our Emperor counters this evil with the general synod, I am afraid and afraid, that this evil will spread further the latter we administer an antidote against it."<sup>540</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1521, Valdés wrote to Mártir again, this time from the city of Worms, informing him about the imperial diet which took place there and about the progress of Lutheranism.<sup>541</sup> The diet of Worms itself plays a crucial role in the development of early Protestantism and could be regarded as a turning point in the history of Christianity as well as in the history of Europe. It was also the first imperial diet of young Charles V and first time he set foot in Germany.

Valdés informed Mártir that the emperor was asked by the imperial estates that Luther be granted a hearing at the diet as well as provided with a safe passage, so that he could be heard and given an opportunity to either explain his teaching or to renounce his errors while recognizing, that he had also written many pious and Christian things. Charles V, upon "seeing that he cannot order anything else, [the emperor] ordered Luther to come to him and granted him a safe passage, so that he could be questioned in his presence, as well as in the presence of imperial estates."<sup>542</sup>

What Valdés is referring to was a fervent discussion which took place at the beginning of the year 1521, which concerned the question of whether Luther should be granted a hearing before the diet or whether he should be arrested and sent to Rome. While the former option was defended by some of imperial estates including Frederick the Wise, the latter solution was promoted by papal legate Aleandro, who also counted on a promulgation of the papal bull *Exsurge Domine*, in which Luther's works were condemned as "heretical or problematic" and their author was excommunicated

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<sup>538</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p.14. „Nec his etiam contentus, quotquot Witembergae nactus est Juris Pontificii libros, publico igni tradidit, dicens, eos Christianam pietatem pervertisse atque inquinasse, ob idque e medio tollendos esse.“

<sup>539</sup>Scribner, *The Reformation movements in Germany*, p. 69.

<sup>540</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 14. "Horum itaque fama per universam Germaniam sparsa, adeo Germanorum animos in Apostolicam sedem commovit, ut nisi Pontificis prudentia pietasque, aut Caesaris nostri felicitas cum generali Synodo his malis occurrat, vereor atque iterum vereor, en hoc malum latius serpat quam ut postea illi antidotum adhibere valeamus."

<sup>541</sup>The letter from Worms was preceded by a letter from Aachen, which we have already mentioned in a previous part of our work, this letter however does not contain any information regarding the religious situation in Germany.

<sup>542</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 19. „Caesar videns nihil aliud imperare posse, sub fide publica Lutherum ad se venire, in suaque et omnium ordinum Imperii praesentia hominem sisti jubet: qui interrogatus [...]“

from the church.<sup>543</sup> The delivery of this bull to Germany was tasked to two men; besides Aleandro, who was supposed to travel to the Rhine area as well as to the Netherlands, the role of second papal messenger was entrusted to none other than to Luther's opponent in Leipzig disputation from 1518, John Eck. In executing their mission, the latter of these two men encountered passive and sometimes even active resistance from many imperial princes and other authorities, not surprisingly including the elector of Saxony Frederick the Wise. In the end, Eck managed to publish the bull only in the cities of Meissen, Brandenburg and Mersenburg. Meanwhile Aleandro travelled to Brussels, where he met the emperor Charles V, who had recently arrived there from Spain. Once there, Aleandro presented the papal bull to Charles and gained the promise of his full support in combating supposed "heresy". Aleandro also planned to stage an auto-da-fé at Louvain, during which several Luther's books were supposed to be publicly burned, this event was however disrupted by rebellious students who were throwing medieval scholastic works in the fire instead of Luther's writings.<sup>544</sup> Aleandro's meeting the Charles V meant that the emperor was well acquainted with the case of Martin Luther as well as with the stance of the Holy see on the whole matter and that he had already pledged his support to the pope before actually granting the hearing to Luther. This indicates that Charles V was actually not interested in hearing Luther's arguments and explanation as much as in making him publicly recant and renounce his opinions. This would prove advantageous for Charles V, since Luther's public repentance would probably, at least for a time, quelled the religious discontent in Holy Roman Empire without the need of resorting to starker measures.

Nonetheless, the fact that Charles V himself repeatedly changed his mind, when he at first invited Luther to speak before the diet, then cancelled his summons only to renew it once again after the pressure of imperial estates,<sup>545</sup> suggests that the emperor himself did not follow a straightforward strategy and may have been unsure about how to exactly handle the religious crisis in Germany, a trait which was present in the behaviour of Charles also in the future.

What happened after Luther's arrival at Worms and his introduction into the presence of the emperor is now generally known, but in the time when Alfonso de Valdés was writing his letter to Mártir, the news of the development of the imperial diet were still probably almost revolutionary, and Valdés therefore described the unfolding of this encounter in great detail. Luther was first asked to confirm the authenticity of his books, which he did, and not only did he fully recognize his authorship. Valdés then described how when Luther was asked, if he was ready to repent, he demanded the time for deliberation, which has indeed been granted to him until the next day by the emperor.<sup>546</sup> The following day, when Luther was ordered (*jussus est*) to reply to the question whether he wanted to

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<sup>543</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 35-38.

<sup>544</sup>Bainton, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, p. 156-159.

<sup>545</sup>Idem, p. 178.

<sup>546</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 19.

recant or not, he allegedly gave a long oration in “both Latin in German”, in which he also categorically refused to retract any of his theses, unless he be proven by the evidence from the Bible itself that he erred or written anything impiously.<sup>547</sup> After this statement,<sup>548</sup> Luther triumphantly left the hall. The emperor was now on the move. During the following night, Charles V personally redacted a text, in which he explicitly expressed not only his loyalty towards the Catholic church and its tradition, but also his willingness to defend the Catholic doctrine, even if this should cost him his life. In this document, written in his native French,<sup>549</sup> Charles thus proclaimed:

“You know that I am a descendant of the most Christian emperors who reigned over the noble German nation, of Catholic Kings of Spain, of archdukes of Austria, of dukes of Burgundy who all, until their deaths, remained faithful sons of the Roman church, the defenders of the Catholic faith, of sacred customs and traditions of the divine service, who left me all this and right until the present, I have followed their example. I am therefore determined to stay faithful to everything, which had been established at the Council of Constance.”<sup>550</sup>

In this document, Charles V effectively resumed the most important points, which made him to reject Luther’s teachings. It is important to note that the core message of Charles’s declaration was not rooted in theology. After all, when he wrote his declaration, Charles was a young man of 21 years, who did not have any theological education and could have hardly polemize with the opinions of a professor of theology such as Martin Luther, who dedicated several years to close study of Bible. Instead, Charles V rejected Luther’s teachings on different grounds. Among those was his own identification with the Catholic tradition, which was inseparably tied to his own imperial dignity and mission. To cast doubt on the foundations of the Catholic doctrine would equal to undermine his own position. Charles’s declaration is a manifestation of what Brady called “unitary concept of Church and Empire”, which essentially meant that both Holy Roman Empire as well as the Catholic church were seen as “two aspects of a single body”, although as Brady himself notes, this concept was not shared by everyone.<sup>551</sup> In the view of Charles V, the empire and the church were however intertwined

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<sup>547</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 20. „[...] post longam diffusamque orationem, quam tum Latine, tum Germanice habuit, dixit se non posse quicquam in libris suis contentum revocare, nisi doctrina Evangelica, et veteris instrumenti testimonio sibi comprobaretur eum errasse, impieque scripsisse.“

<sup>548</sup> The German version of Luther’s alleged reply is mentioned for example by Álvarez, *Carlos V: el César y el Hombre*, p. 149-150. “Solange ich nicht durch die Heilige Schrift oder klare Vernunft widerlegt werde, kann und will ich nichts widerrufen, da gegen das Gewissen zu handeln beschwerlich und gefährlich ist.”

<sup>549</sup>The Spanish translation of the whole declaration has been captured by Prudencio Sandoval in his chronicle, see Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y de hechos del Emperador Carlos V*. Libro décimo, X.

<sup>550</sup>Molinié-Bertrand, Duviols, *Charles Quint et la monarchie universelle*, p. 25. “Vous savez que je suis descendu des Empereurs très chrétiens qui ont régné sur la noble nation germanique, des rois catholiques d’Espagne, des archiducs d’Autriche, des ducs de Bourgogne qui, tous, jusqu’à la mort, ont été les fils fidèles de l’Église romaine, les défenseurs de la foi catholique, des coutumes sacrés et des usages du service divin qui m’ont légué tout cela et dont jusqu’à présent j’ai suivi l’exemple. Je suis donc résolu à rester fidèle à tout ce qui a été fixé depuis le Concile de Constance. »

<sup>551</sup>Brady, *German Histories in the Age of Reformation, 1400-1650*, p. 80.



enough to conclude that an attack directed against the traditions of the Catholic church was also an attack directed against the Holy Roman Empire as well.

Alfonso de Valdés states that before publishing his declaration, the emperor first invited the electors who still remained in Worms, showed them the manuscript of his declaration and asked them for their opinions. The electors and other members of the imperial estates, some of which, according to Valdés reportedly “drank Luther’s poison”, while others refused to condemn him unless Germans were first freed from oppression and burdens imposed by the Roman church, and they proposed that it should be attempted to admonish Luther in private and try to convince him to revoke that which he wrote against the “constitutions of the church.”<sup>552</sup> The emperor agreed, but even after the three days of futile attempts to convince him, Luther remained obstinate.

In the end, since the attempts to convince Luther to recant obviously failed, the emperor decided to publicly declare Luther a heretic and completely ban his teachings in the whole area of Holy Roman Empire. This was done through so called the Edict of Worms, published in May 1521, which Luther later describe as one of his three excommunications, while the first one being the excommunication by the pope Leo X and the second his excommunication from the Augustinian order, this time, Luther was “excommunicated” by the entire empire. According to the Edict of Worms, buying, selling, reading, keeping copying, printing or any form of dissemination of Luther’s books and writings, whether in Latin, German or some other language was banned, just like all preaching of his doctrine.<sup>553</sup> However, as Alfonso Valdés himself noted, the actual effects of these prohibitions were very limited, because selling of Lutheran books continued unimpeded, just as spreading of his doctrine:

“When I see how strongly hostile against the Roman see the minds of Germans are, I do not think that emperor’s edict will mean much for them, since after its promulgation, Luther’s books are being sold in villages and streets with impunity. Thus, you can easily imagine, what is going to happen once the emperor will be absent.”<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>552</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 20. „Electores vero aliique Imperii ordines, quorum aliqui Lutheri venenum hauserant, alii autem nequaquam Lutherum damnandum esse contendebant, nisi Germani prius a Romanensium (ut ajebant) gravaminibus et oppressionibus liberarentur, apud Caesarem summis praecibus effecerunt, ut saltem secreto Lutherus admoneretur, ut quae adversus Ecclesiae constitutiones ab eo scripta sunt, revocaret.“

<sup>553</sup>Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.*, p. 76-79. “Ferrer gebieten wir euch allen und eur jedem insonders bei den vorgeschriben peenen, das eur kainer des obgenannten Martin Luhters schriften, von unserm hailigen vater babst, wie obstet, verdambt, und all ander schriften, die in Latein und Deutsch oder in ander sprach bisher durch ine gemacht sein oder hinfür gemacht werden, als böss, argwenig und verdecktlich und von einem offenbarn, hartneggichen ketzer ausgegangen, kauf, verkauf, lese, behalt, abschreib, druck oder abschreiben oder drucken lese, noch seiner opinion zufall, die auch nit halt, predig noch beschirme, noch das in ainig ander weg, wie menschensinn das bedenken kan, understee, unangesehen ob darin etwas guts, den ainfeltigen menschen damit zu betriegen, eingefürt were.”

<sup>554</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 21. “Nam videm Germanorum animos graviter in sedem Romanam concitatos, nec video Caesaris aedicta magni ponderis apud eso futura, quum post aeditionem Lutheri libri passim per vicos et plateas impune vendantur. Hinc facile conjectare poteris, quid absente Caesare futurum sit.”

Moreover, some Protestant princes openly challenged the legality of the edict, pointing to the fact that it has been published in a time when most of the participants of the diet has already left the city of Worms. According to Scribner, the edict was in fact really enforced only by the duke George the Bearded of Saxony and by dukes of Bavaria.<sup>555</sup>

After describing the futile attempts to bring Luther to heel, Valdés ended his letter with assertion that the whole situation could have been resolved, if the pope did not fear general council and put the public salvation over his private interests.<sup>556</sup> It was clear that for now, the emperor failed to resolve the situation and to quell growing religious discontent in Germany. As Geoffrey Parker explains, the proclamation which the emperor made at the diet of Worms could not rival the urgency of Luther's message:

“As the Reformation historian Heiko Oberman pointed out, Luther saw himself as the forerunner of the Apocalypse, anxious to gather in the congregation of the faithful ‘in these last days’ because he believed ‘that these last days have already started, and that therefore the “last things” have commenced in our historical time, so that the eschatological clock has started to tick’. This gave his message an immediacy that Charles could not match.”<sup>557</sup>

Seven years later, while writing his *Dialogue of Mercury and Charon*, Valdés interpreted the failure of Roman curia to address the growing issues in Germany as the source of hate among Germans towards the head of the Catholic church, and thus one of the contributing factors to the sack of Rome, which took place in 1527, when he had the two main characters of the dialogue discussing the events in Rome:

“Charon: Those [who sacked Rome] had to be Lutherans.

Mercury: Rather not, because while Germans demanded that some grievances that were being done to them by the Apostolic See were remedied, the Roman pontiffs never wanted to see to it, in order not to lose their own benefits, and from this reason Germany faced so many discords, deaths and irreparable damage, so that it is now almost destroyed. For these two reasons the said Germans hold this hate towards the pope.”<sup>558</sup>

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<sup>555</sup>Scribner, *Politics and the institutionalisation of reform in Germany in New Cambridge Modern History, Volume 2: the Reformation, 1520-1559*, p. 172.

<sup>556</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 21. “Poterat hoc malum cum maxima Christianae Reipublicae utilitate profligari, si Pontifex a generali Synodo non abhorreret, si publicam salutem privatis commodis anteponeret.”

<sup>557</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 80.

<sup>558</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 407. “Carón: Devían ser luteranos. Mercurio: Antes no, mas como los alemanes se pusieron en pedir remedio de algunos agravios que resçebían de la Sede apostólica, y los romanos pontífices nunca avían querido entender en ello por no perder su provecho, y a esta causa avía sucedido en Alemaña tantas discordias, muertes y daños irreparables, en manera que queda cuasi destruiday así por estos dos respectos le tienen los dichos alemanes ese odio.”

In general, the attitude of Alfonso de Valdés towards the early Protestantism can be described as somewhat ambivalent, this ambivalence however clearly illustrates the atmosphere of the first years of the Reformation, where the exact dimensions of this new movement were yet unknown to its participators and spectators alike. Just like many other educated minds of this period, Alfonso de Valdés recognized the factors eventually leading to direct disobedience to the Catholic church, but at the same time, he did not share the radicalism of Luther and some of his followers, nor did he condone the militant attitude of both Luther and representatives of Roman curia. The attitude of Valdés thus can serve as a clear illustration of uncertainty of this time; uncertainty of spirits like Valdés or Erasmus, who desired to see the church reformed, but who also could not identify themselves with the kind of reform which manifested itself in German lands. As we will see in the following chapter, the ambiguity of Alfonso de Valdés towards the early Protestantism was also not completely in line with the official stance, which prevailed in Spain in the years to come.

#### 3.4. Alfonso de Valdés and the accusation of Lutheranism

As we have already described in the first part of our work, after having published his two polemical dialogues in 1527 and 1528, Alfonso de Valdés had to deal with his opponents, who tried to secure condemnation of his writings as the works containing “Lutheran errors”. This was case especially of *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, which was the first dialogue to be published by Valdés. It must be noted that accusations of “heresy” in general were rather common in Spain in our period of interest. We have already mentioned the case of Juan de Vergara, who spent several years in the inquisitional prison, but the accusation of heresy could affect all sort of persons. Even the clerk of Valdés’s friend Johannes Dantiscus, named Wojanowski, was in 1525 imprisoned by the inquisition on charge of heresy, only to be released after the intervention of the emperor himself.<sup>559</sup> But as we have also already proved in the Part I of our work, Alfonso de Valdés was able to withstand the attacks of his rivals such as Lalemand and Castiglione, which followed the immediate publication of his dialogues. In this context, Rebecca Ard Boone suggests that Alfonso de Valdés was in fact directly protected from the Inquisition by the grand chancellor Gattinara himself.<sup>560</sup> This suggestion seems logical if we consider the fact that while Gattinara died in 1530, the Spanish inquisition officially started its inquiry into the dialogues soon after that. At the same time, the interest displayed by the Spanish inquisition in the dialogues of Valdés can be also seen as a symptom of hardening stance towards all who were seen as “Erasmian”, which also commenced around the year 1530.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>559</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 99.

<sup>560</sup>Ard Boone, *Mercurino di Gattinara and the Creation of the Spanish Empire*, p. 57. „[...] as long as Gattinara lived, he protected Alfonso de Valdés from the force of the Inquisition. After Gattinara died in 1530, the Inquisition began a review of Valdés’s case. The secretary only avoided prosecution by dying of the plague in Vienna in 1532.“

<sup>561</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 7.

The style in which *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* was written and its sometimes sharp criticism or even ridicule of certain aspects of contemporary Catholic cult may give the impression that papal nuncio Castiglione and other critics such as Jean Lalemand could be excused for attributing the label of Lutheranism to it, but upon closer examination, these accusations are shown to be mostly baseless, despite the fact that there is no denying that some of the arguments which Valdés utilized and proposals he made were also frequently employed by early Protestants. However, as we will see, despite all of superficial these similarities, it would be a mistake to actually classify Valdés's works as either "Protestant" or "Lutheran". The similarities notwithstanding, important theological differences with far reaching implications between Valdés's philosophy and Luther teachings remained. After all, this was confirmed even by the inquisitional *censura* written in 1531 by Pedro Olivar, an interesting personage himself and a man, whom Bataillon characterized to Erasmian himself.<sup>562</sup> In his *censura*, Olivar analysed the content of *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, and his conclusions turned out to be rather favourable for Valdés, at least when it came to the accusation of Lutheranism. In fact, Pedro Olivar actually had a previous knowledge of Alfonso de Valdés and his work, and even discussed his person with none other than Erasmus himself. In a letter from January 1527, Olivar even called Valdés to be *Erasmicior Erasmo*, that is "more Erasmian than Erasmus".<sup>563</sup>

In his *censura*, Olivar literally claimed that "Firstly, I do not see anything in this dialogue to be either heretical or to either explicitly fight against any article of faith, or implicitly against anything which could be deduced from the best syllogisms of faith."<sup>564</sup> This did not however mean that the dialogue of Valdés did not contain any errors, at least according to Olivar. On the contrary, Olivar reprimanded Valdés for his attacks on Clement VII, as well as for his stance of relics and holy images, literally stating that "When it comes to [the things] he wrote regarding the images, he could have stayed silent, so that these plebeians would not take this as an excuse for contempt against that which was approved by the decree of the [church] fathers".<sup>565</sup>

Olivar further explains that Valdés's criticism of relics and images is dangerous, since it could potentially foment popular iconoclasm similar to that which was already spreading in Germany. Olivar explicitly mentioned the danger of publishing material critical towards holy images in vernacular, since it is thus more accessible to "uneducated plebeians", and explicitly mentions German theologian Johannes Oecolampadius (1482-1531), whom he blamed for instigating iconoclasm among German population.<sup>566</sup> This warning was not entirely unfounded, if we consider

<sup>562</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 66-67.

<sup>563</sup>Álcala in Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. XVIII.

<sup>564</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 596. „In primis ego non video in hoc dialogo aliquid quod sit haereticum aut explicite pugnans cum aliqua propositione fidei, aut implicite quod pugnet cum aliqua quae ex fide optimo sillogismo consequatur.»

<sup>565</sup>Ibidem. „Quod de imaginibus scripsit, taceri poterat, ne plebeii ipsi sumerent occasionem contemnendi quod decreto patrum receptum est.»

<sup>566</sup>Idem, p. 597. „[...] et nunc primum coepit insanire cum Oecolempadio in delendis imaginibus[...]».

the turmoil which affected German lands and which indeed often involved acts of iconoclasm and disruption of religious services.<sup>567</sup> Whether Valdés's writings could have had the similar effect in Spain is however uncertain, since their author never called for destruction of holy images nor for their elimination, but merely for moderation in their veneration.

Olivar closes his *censura* by stating that Valdés's books ought to be suppressed, so its example will not affect wider population, and saying that "If you stop this in its beginning, Spain will not be moved by new things in the future, but will remain content with the most ancient decrees of the [church] fathers"<sup>568</sup>

Olivar's *censura* illustrates that what members of the Spanish inquisition and like-minded individuals feared above all were indeed *res novae*, that is "new things", as well as potential changes, be they religious or social, which these "new things" could cause in the society. Olivar's approach thus may be labelled as conservative in its most literal sense, since he valued above all the conservation of prevailing social order and strove to avoid theological discussions which could upset prevailing stability. The greatest danger of Valdés' ideas therefore might not have laid in their actual content, which could have been presumably discussed within the circle of theologians and other educated individuals, but in their potential to affect the wide sectors of the population and possibly even inspire it not only to abandon certain religious attitudes. In short, what was seen as dangerous was the potential to instigate a movement, which would combine demands for both religious as well as social reforms with all its far-reaching consequences. Whether it was actually possible for wider sectors of Spanish population to replicate the behaviour previously seen in Germany and not only to turn against the veneration of relics or holy images, but also to initiate a broader movement resembling the Protestant movement in Germany is difficult to answer, but it is certainly not impossible. In German speaking areas of the Holy Roman Empire, the acts of iconoclasm were the result of momentum which the Protestant movement gained, a momentum which developed partly outside of the control of even Martin Luther himself, and which was fanned by a number of radical preachers, who often combined religious as well as social topics. The great peasant revolt, which rocked Germany between the years of 1524 and 1526 and which was eventually violently suppressed, was a stark reminder of how easily the existing social order could be could upset. The fact that Martin Luther personally distanced himself from the revolting peasants meant very little, especially if we consider that the ranks of rebels were indeed supported by a great number of other Evangelical

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<sup>567</sup>Scribner, *The Reformation movements in Germany*, p. 80-81. "Preachers often gave the lead, if not by their militancy of action, at least by the vehemence of their speech. Impatience for reform took on the shape of 'reformation by provocation': disruption of the sermons of those who did not preach the 'pure Word of God', disturbance of church services, ceremonies and processions, abuse of the clergy, attacks on their persons and possessions, sometimes extending to mass expulsions of all clerical persons from the community, attacks on images and other cult objects, the forcible seizure of churches and enforced alteration to religious cult."

<sup>568</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 597. „Quod si istis initiis obstiteritis futurum est ut Hispania non rebus novis moveatur, sed vetustissimis decretis patrum quibus assuevit sit contenta.»

preachers.<sup>569</sup> The Spanish inquisition thus feared that the instability, which was at that time affecting Germans lands, could also manifest itself even on the Iberian Peninsula. If we consider that just a decade ago, Castile was rocked by the rebellion of *comuneros*, which in its later stages also started to take a form of a social movement, this fear does not seem to be entirely unfounded. The desire to maintain both social as well as religious stability, two concepts which were judged as essentially intertwined, could be seen as one of the main reasons why Spain became one of the main strongholds of so called “counter-Reformation”, a place where all signs of religious dissent were vigorously persecuted. In a certain way, these efforts were successful, because after the failed revolt of 1520-21, Spain did not experience any major social or religious revolt as long as it was ruled by monarchs of Habsburg dynasty. It is true that Charles V was forced to deal with the rebellion of Spanish colonists in Peru in 1540s, led by Gonzalo Pizarro (1510-1548), yet this revolt was caused primarily by the introduction of so-called New Laws in 1542, which limited the rights of Spanish colonists over their Indian subjects and supposed the abolition of the institution of *encomiendas*,<sup>570</sup> and thus lacked religious motivation.

Just like *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, the second dialogue of Valdés, entitled *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, was subjected to inquisitional *censura* as well. This time, it was not Pedro Olivar who evaluated it, but doctor Vélez, who assessed it in his *censura* written in March 1531. Just like Olivar, Vélez found the dialogue of Valdés to contain certain errors, although just like Olivar, he did not accuse Valdés of Lutheranism either:

“[...] what I can gather from the said book is that it was written by a person who is well learned in the affairs of humanity, but in the case of Holy Scripture and when he speaks about it he shows himself to be indevout and even scandalous, and those who will see or hear what he said here will not take from it neither good doctrine or good example, especially those who are not so well read, since these days all presume to be theologians, even the women [...]”.<sup>571</sup>

Just like Olivar, Vélez reprehended Valdés for his criticism towards the highest members of ecclesiastical hierarchy, when he wrote that “[...] in this way [he] also makes fun of the importance of the bishops and their insignias, mitre, white rochet and rings, and even though there might have

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<sup>569</sup>Scribner, *The Reformation movements in Germany*, p. 88-93.

<sup>570</sup>For more regarding the revolt of colonists in Peru see Thomas, *El Imperio Español de Carlos V*, p. 353-375 or Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 204-229.

<sup>571</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 589. „[...] lo que yo de dicho libro puedo rrecoligir es que él es ordenado de perssona bien docto en las cosas de humanidad, más que en la Sagrada Escritura y que en lo que cerca della habla se muestra yndevoto y aun escandaloso, y los que vieren o oyeren lo que aquí dize tomarán no buena doctrina ni buen exemplo, mayormente los que no son tan leýdos, como oy día todos presuman de theólogos hasta las mugeres [...]”

been the reason to reprehend some things in some bishops, he could have done it without making fun of their insignias [...]”.<sup>572</sup>

Among other things, Vélez also pays attention to Valdés’s assertions that only a small part of Christians actually lives in accordance with the Christian doctrine, and that these “true Christians” regularly face persecution. Vélez then draws the conclusion that the people Valdés is referring to are actually none other than alumbrados themselves:

“[...] and it seems that this points to so-called alumbrados, and it seems to me that is not possible to either verify or to understand these words in any other way than referring to them, and regarding the persecution that he says they suffer, by this he cannot mean anything else than that of Holy Inquisition and its judges, because it is them who act against these errors and this author calls this persecution [...]”.<sup>573</sup>

Vélez then correctly assumed Valdés was accusing the members of the religious orders from being one of those who are responsible for persecution of “perfect Christians”: “As to those whom he calls wolves who persecute and accuse, it seems that he means friars [...]”.<sup>574</sup> Further in his *censura*, Vélez also points out that in his dialogue, Valdés employs the terms which are habitual among *conversos*, calling the members of the inquisition “wolves” or “thieves”,<sup>575</sup> further supporting the assumption that Alfonso de Valdés indeed was of *converso* heritage.

The inquisitional documents dedicated to the writings of Alfonso de Valdés thus confirm that the charges of Lutheranism coming from men like Jean Lalemand or Balthasar Castiglione were seen as unfounded even by the advisors of the Spanish inquisition. As a religious non-conformist heavily influenced by Erasmus and possibly by the ideas of alumbrados, the position of Alfonso de Valdés was nonetheless precarious. His criticism and sarcasm directed towards the high members of ecclesiastical hierarchy as well as his attitude towards relics, holy images and other important aspects of contemporary Catholic doctrine were making his position extremely difficult, especially if we consider the pressure which the inquisition was at that time applying against all forms of religious dissent, however inconsequential they may appear today. One of the effects of this rigidity of Spanish intellectual environment was that it became basically impossible to hold a free discussion about the

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<sup>572</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 594. „[...] burla así mesmo de la gravedad de los obpos. y de sus ynsignias, mitra, roquete blanco y anillos, y aunque oviera causa de reprehender algunas cosas de algunos obpos. podiera lo hazer sin burlar de sus ynsignias [...]”.

<sup>573</sup>Idem, p. 591. « [...] y paresçe q. a questo se en dereça a los llamados alumbrados y a mi ver no se pueden verificar ni entender estas palabras sino dellos, y la perssecución que dize padescen, así mesmo no se puede entender sino dela Scta. Ynquisición y de sus juezes porquellos son los que contra estos errores proceden y esste auctor llama esto perssecución [...]”.

<sup>574</sup>Idem, p. 592. “Y a los que llama lobos que persiguen y acusan, paresçe que entiende por los frayles rreligiosos [...]”.

<sup>575</sup>Ibidem. „Porque paresçe que cautelosamente dize lobos por los ministros del Sto. Ofiçio a los cuales suelen los conversos llamar lobos, y aun robadores [...]”.

reform of the church. But from whence did this rigidity sprout? To answer this question in a satisfactory manner, it would probably take an entire work dedicated to just this particular topic, although as we have already suggested earlier, this typically Spanish “intolerance” might have been actually a consequence of the perceived need to conserve the prevailing religious and social order and to avoid the popular turmoils such as those which manifested itself in German lands. It might be also suggested that the specific situation in Spain was a consequence of the existence of relative efficient apparatus of Spanish inquisition, which other countries such as France or various German principalities lacked. Although the original purpose of the inquisition was to control the population of *conversos*, it managed to quickly reorient itself towards the surveillance of possible Protestant thoughts. The inquisition was undoubtedly highly successful in creating an atmosphere of fear among the entire population, which further helped to stifle “unwanted” ideas and prevent their wider dissemination. As Jiří Chalupa suggests, “The fight over whether to accept or to refuse the inquisition within the Spanish society ended sooner, than it really began”, and continues to explain that after the assassination of inquisitor Pedro de Arbués, which took place in Zaragoza in September 1485, the ensuing repression can be described as “so effective and brutal, that in the course of the following 350 years, almost no one in Spain dared to take a stand against the inquisition”.<sup>576</sup> This is further illustrated by the fact that even Alfonso de Valdés, who thanks to his direct relationship with the emperor can be counted among the politically powerful men of his time, dared to criticise the inquisition only indirectly and using coded language, as was noted by doctor Vélez.

Chalupa also mentions that the activity of the Spanish inquisition can be interpreted by some researchers as one of the reasons for the absence of internal religious conflict, likes of which rocked Bohemia, German lands and later also France, in Spain.<sup>577</sup> This interpretation is certainly viable, since it would be virtually impossible for men like Martin Luther, Jean Calvin, or any other religious reformer to spread their ideas in Spain, if we consider how vigorously the inquisition persecuted even the incomparably smaller “offences” of men like Juan de Vergara and many others. It must be however also noted that Spain paid extremely high price for this stability. The pressure on intellectual conformity drove some of the most brilliant minds, such as Luis de Vives or Alfonso’s brother Juan, into exile, while others were forcibly silenced. This could be in turn interpreted as one of the contributing factors, though certainly not the only one, for stagnation and then gradual decadence of Spain’s power on the international field as well as a factor hindering its domestic development. This stagnation and then decadence effectively meant that in the course of a relatively short amount of time, Spain turned from probably the world’s more powerful kingdom during the reign of Philip II to

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<sup>576</sup>Chalupa, *Dějiny Španělska*, p. 174. „Boj o přijetí/odmítnutí inkvizice uvnitř španělské společnosti skončil skoro dříve, než vlastně naplno začal. V polovině září 1485 byl v zaragozské katedrále zavražděn inkvizitor Pedro de Arbués. Následná represe byla tak efektivní a brutální, že během příštích 350 let se ve Španělsku proti inkvizici prakticky nikdo neodvážil vystoupit.“

<sup>577</sup>Idem, p. 179-180.



a second-rate European power just a few decades later. This gradual decadence also made it virtually impossible for future Spanish monarchs to try to revive in some form the universalist project of Charles V.

This development however still lay at the future during the last years of 1520s, when Alfonso de Valdés wrote his dialogues. Although the pressure against *alumbrados*, humanists and other “non-conformists” was already growing, it did not yet enter its worst stage. Some could then still hope that with the eventual triumph of Charles V, the growing rift in the Christianity could yet be healed and the whole church could begin its path towards so needed reform. A reform, which would not play itself spontaneously, as was the case of Germany, but a reform which would be executed by the close collaboration between the emperor and the pope. If successful, this reform could have possibly saved the project of the universal empire of Charles, or least this is what Alfonso de Valdés might have imagined, since he saw the reform of the church to be the only possible way to avoid the complete schism with the Protestants, as he later admitted in a letter written to cardinal Accolti during the imperial diet of Augsburg in 1530.<sup>578</sup>

In the narrative constructed by Valdés, God himself tried to signal his displeasure with the humanity and intended to urge Christians to execute the reform. In the introduction to his *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, he discussed his motivation to write this particular text. Valdés did not make any effort to hide his intention to absolve the emperor of the responsibility for the whole incident, since he openly claimed that “in the first part, Lactancio explains to Archdeacon that the emperor does not bear any responsibility for this [the sacking of Rome], and in the second, he explains how God allowed all of this to happen for the good of Christendom.”<sup>579</sup>

This notion is further developed in the course of the dialogue, where Valdés, speaking through Lactancio, explains God’s intent to address the failure of popes to fulfill their predestined role, which is to act as “teachers, from whom the others should be able to learn to live like Christians.”<sup>580</sup> According to Valdés, God initially tried to address the issue of bad state of Christendom by sending various “prophets, evangelists and holy doctors”, who in their works constantly attacked vices while simultaneously praising Christian virtues. When this did not bring success, God decided to try to correct Christians by sending teachers, preachers and finally an “excellent man” Erasmus of Rotterdam, who continuously shamed and reprimanded papal court and the ecclesiastical hierarchy for their failure to follow the christian doctrine. However, since even these measures proved unsatisfactory, and “[...] since the vices and wrong manners were getting worse every day, God wanted to try to convert them by different means, and so he allowed this frail Martin Luther to raise

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<sup>578</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 210. „Dios es padre de todos nosotros, y dienos por maestro al Romano Pontífice para que dél y de los que cabe él estoviessen aprendiésemos a vivir como cristianos.“

<sup>579</sup>Idem, p. 285 „En la primera parte, muestra Latancio al Arcidiano cómo el Emperador ninguna culpa en ello tiene, y en la segunda cómo todo lo ha permitido Dios por el bien de la cristiandad.“

<sup>580</sup>Idem, p. 314.

himself, who would not only embarrass them by denouncing all of their vices without any respect, but who would also make numerous towns to renounce their obedience to their prelates, so since you did not want to repent out of shame, you would at least repent out of greed and not to lose the profit which you have been gaining from Germany or out of ambition not to see your dominion to be diminish so much, which would happened if Germany stayed the way it is now, [that means] out of your control [...]”.<sup>581</sup>

The suggestion that the initial activity of Martin Luther was at first beneficial was also shared with other Spanish humanists, such as Juan de Vergaga, who claimed that as long as Luther demanded the reform of the church and criticized “the corruption of manners”, he himself and many others had sympathized with him,<sup>582</sup> although these kinds of opinions became basically unacceptable in Spain after 1530.

Valdés then continued to explain that since not even the emergence of Martin Luther and the spread of his doctrine resulted into a throughout reform of the church, God decided to implement even more drastic measure, when he allowed the brutal sacking of the capital of western Christendom to take place. This approach is interesting firstly because it affords Martin Luther the place in God’s plan, whose ultimate goal was the reform of the Catholic church. Luther is thus not seen as a mere heretic who defies the doctrine of the church nor as a man possessed by Devil or by demons, something which was later claimed by Prudencio de Sandoval,<sup>583</sup> but essentially as a tool of God. Martin Luther himself would most likely did not take an offense by the suggestion of being “a tool of God” and he would have certainly agreed that his mission was necessary, since he himself was also convinced that the vices of the Roman curia became unbearable. He would not have nonetheless entirely agreed with Valdés’s interpretation, because according to him, the crisis which Christendom of the 16<sup>th</sup> century faced had far deeper roots, because it was caused by the Devil himself.

Throughout his dialogue, Alfonso de Valdés went to great lengths to describe the supposed vices and shortcomings of Roman curia, but he did not assign them any deeper metaphysical meaning; according to him, the church had fallen from grace because of collective failure of popes and other

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<sup>581</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p.314. „[...] antes los vicios y malas maneras fuessen de cada día creciendo, quiso Dios probar a convertirlos por otra manera, y permitió que se levantasse aquel fray Martin Luter, el qual no solamente les perdiessse la vergüença, declarando sin ningún respecto todos sus vicios, mas que apartasse muchos pueblos de la obediencia de sus preladados, para que, pues no os haviades querido convertir de vergüença, os convirtiéssedes siquiera por cobdicia de no poder [perder] el provecho que de Alemaña llevávades, o por ambición de no estrechar tanto vuestro señorío si Alemaña quedasse casi, como agora está, fuera de uestra obediencia.”

<sup>582</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 33.

<sup>583</sup>Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperador Carlos V*, Libro Segundo, XLIV. “Era Lutero de complexión enfermo, y particularmente le fatigaban unos desmayos como de gota coral o mal de corazón. Algunos que sabían más de él, decían que le tomaban espíritus malignos, y aun por muchas señales que en él vieron, se tenía por cierto que trataba con el demonio, y que se revestía de él, y que él mismo lo confesó, porque predicando un día antes que se declarase contra la Iglesia, dijo: Yo conozco muy bien al diablo, y he comido con él más de un puño de sal. Y un día, estando con los frailes en el coro, cantándose en la misa el Evangelio que dice: *Erat Jesus eiiciens daemonium, et illud erat mutum*, etc, en llegando el que lo decía allí donde dice: *et illud erat mutum*, cayó Lutero en tierra súbitamente, dando voces. Y diciendo en latín: *-Non sum ego, non sum ego*; no soy yo ése, no soy yo ése.”

prelates, who were either not able or not willing to follow the doctrine of Christ and instead pursued their own secular and private goals. Luther, however, saw the things differently. In his own mind, the decadence of papacy could not have been solved by a “simple” reform. The reason for this was obvious – Luther came to the realization that the true reason for the state of Roman curia was the fact that it had been fallen under the dominion of the Devil himself. According to Oberman, this realization was extremely traumatic to Luther, who was until the beginning of his own controversy loyal to the pope, but it nonetheless helped him to overcome distress caused by his own condemnation, news about which reached him on 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1518: “Only the dread suspicion and then the terrible certainty that the papacy had opened Rome to the Antichrist enabled him to bear the blow of a papal ban”.<sup>584</sup> Luther’s conviction was essentially eschatological in its nature, because he was honestly convinced that the turmoil in which Christendom found itself was a symptom of the approaching Judgment day and the end of the world. What this meant in practice was that it was now more than even necessary to return to the foundations of faith, the Gospel, and preach it. However, the upcoming end of the world also meant that the attacks of Satan intensified and that his influence in the world was growing stronger than ever. Luther made this clear in a letter addressed to his friend Spalatin, in which he was reacting to a publication a papal bull *Exsurge Domine*, by which he was officially condemned as a heretic:

“When since the beginning of the world did Satan ever so rage against God? I am overcome by the magnitude of the horrible blasphemies of this bull. I am almost persuaded by many and weighty arguments that the last day is at the threshold. The Kingdom of Antichrist begins to fall. I see an insuppressible insurrection coming out of this bull, which the Roman curia deserves.”<sup>585</sup>

According to Luther, the Sack of Rome in 1527, however brutal it was, could not in itself change the nature of times, nor could any human effort be sufficient enough to reform the papacy, which was now completely under the control of Satan and acting as an Antichrist. As Bainton puts it, “Luther held that every pope was Antichrist even though personally exemplary, because Antichrist is collective: an institution, the papacy, a system which corrupts the truth of Christ.”<sup>586</sup> This fact clearly distinguishes Lutheran teachings from the philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés, which was in its core still essentially reformist; Valdés never interpreted the problems of his time to the growing influence of Satan which would herald the approaching end of the world nor did he accuse any pope of being the Antichrist, but rather hoped for the restoration of church to what he perceived to be its primary

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<sup>584</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 185-186. The excommunication of Luther was formally confirmed in January 1521, see Hendrix, *Martin Luther, reformer, in Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 6, Reform and Expansion, 1500-1660*, p. 12-13.

<sup>585</sup>Bainton, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, p. 161.

<sup>586</sup>Idem, p. 111.

function. It must be also noted that even some of other Protestant theologians, like for example Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli, did not share Luther's eschatological beliefs about the imminent coming of "the last days".

Valdés also made it clear that he still considered Martin Luther to be a heretic, his heresy was however primarily the result of the church's obstinacy to remedy its own errors:

"Archdeacon: Well, but this friar was not only speaking ill about us, but also about God in thousands of heresies that he had written.

Lactancio: You are telling the truth, but if you would remedied that which he at first much reason said and not provoked him with your excommunications, maybe that he would have never written the heresies that he later wrote and still writes, nor would have Germany experienced such a vast perdition of bodies and souls, as later happened because of this."<sup>587</sup>

Although Valdés does not specify which exact part of Luther teachings did he consider to be heretical, we might assume that among these "heretical notions" might have been also the claim that the whole Roman curia acted as Antichrist. Valdés, on the contrary, blamed the pope Clement VII mostly on the grounds that he had allowed himself to be counseled by "bad ministers":

"[...] I want to assure you that nothing that will be said here is being said in the perjury of papal dignity nor against his person, since his dignity should be truly venerated by everyone, and as for the person, I truly could not say anything bad even if I wanted, since I know that the things that were done were not being done because of his will, but because of the wickedness of certain persons with which he surrounded himself."<sup>588</sup>

Later, however, Valdés directly blamed Clement VII for surrounding himself with bad councillors:

"Archdeacon: In this way, who would be responsible?

Lactancio: Those who put him in this situation as well as he himself, because he surrounded himself by such despicable people. Do you think that a prince can excuse himself before God by throwing the blame on members of his council? No, no. Since God has given him a reason, he should choose good

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<sup>587</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 315. "Arcidiano: Bien, pero esse fraile no solamente dezía mal de nosotros, mas también de Dios en mil heregías que ha scrito."

Lactancio:.. Dezís verdad, pero si vosotros remediárades lo que él primero con mucha razón dezía, y no le provocáredes con vuestras descomuniones, por aventura nunca él se desmandara a escrivir las heregías que después escrivió y escrive, ni hoviera havido en Alemania tanta perdición de cuerpos y de ánimas como después a esta causa ha havido."

<sup>588</sup>Idem, p. 291 "[...] quiero protestaros que ninguna cosa de lo que aquí se dixere se dize en perjuizio de la dignidad ni de la persona del Papa, pues la dignidad es razón que de todos sea tenida en veneración, e de la persona, por cierto, yo no sabría dezir mal ninguno aunque quisiese, pues conozco lo que se ha hecho no haver seído por su voluntad, mas por la maldad de algunas personas que cabe sí tenía."

people who would form his council and would advise him well. And if he chooses or wants to choose bad people, then the blame is his, and if he does not possess sufficient judgment to choose people, he should give up his power.”<sup>589</sup>

There cannot be found any trace of equalizing the pope with Antichrist or hinting at the activity of Satan himself within the work of Alfonso de Valdés. Instead, the current state of the church is presented as a mere human failure. This distinction is indeed crucial, because while an institution controlled by Satan could not have been reformed by human power alone, an institution corrupted by human wickedness could have. The question remained – who should be the one to reform it? Certainly not God himself all alone. God could, naturally, give the impulse for this reform and this was, according to Alfonso de Valdés, exactly what had happened when he allowed first the spreading of Lutheran doctrine and then the terrible Sack of Rome. God was thus certainly willing to help in the reform, but the main responsibility for the task rested on the Christians themselves, and among them mostly on their leaders.

Indeed, the philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés is distinctive in its emphasis on the role of the emperor in the reform of the church and in a wider sense in a reform of the whole Christendom. In this context it is worth to quote Hugh Thomas, who has described Alfonso de Valdés as an “Erasmian who tried to convert his monarch into an enlightened despot.”<sup>590</sup> This assessment is certainly true in a sense that Valdés firmly believed that the role of the temporal power should be to create the conditions which would then enable the revival of Christian faith and to ensure that the society would live in accordance with “the teachings of Christ”. Valdés endorsed this position in *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, in the passage where Lactancio and Archdeacon discuss the nature of the power of princes:

Lactancio: The princes are responsible more to God than to men, more to the prudent than to the ignorant. It would be a strange thing if the prince stopped doing what he is obliged to do in the service to God and well-being of the commonwealth, because of something that blind people could say or judge. Let the prince do what he is obliged to do and let the ignorant judge what they want.”<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>589</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p., p. 293. “Arcidiano: Dessa manera, ¿quién terná en eso la culpa?

Lactancio: Los que lo ponían en ello y también él, que tenía cabe sí ruin gente. ¿Pensáis vos que delante de Dios se escusará un príncipe echando la culpa a los de su consejo? No, no. Pues le dio Dios juicio, escoja buenas personas que estén en su consejo e aconsejarle han bien. E si las toma o las quiere tener malas, suya sea la culpa, e si no tiene juicio para escoger personas, dexé el señorío.”

<sup>590</sup>Thomas, *El Imperio español de Carlos V*, p. 40

<sup>591</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 307. “Latancio: Más obligados son los príncipes a Dios que no a los hombres, más a los sabios que no a los necios. Gentil cosa sería que un príncipe dexasse de hazer lo que deve al servicio de Dios y bien de la República por lo quel vulgo ciego podría dezir o juzcar. Haga el príncipe lo que debe, e juzguen los necios lo que quisieren.”

An interesting explanation for Valdés's support to the strong central rule is offered by Odyniec, who claims that "conversos naturally looked for support in the growing central authority of the crown. The stronger it was, the better for them."<sup>592</sup> This explanation seems plausible, although it is difficult to prove, because even if it is true, Alfonso de Valdés or any other *conversos* could not be expected to confirm it explicitly.

Regardless of his own *converso* heritage, from his position of the secretary of the emperor himself, Valdés could have hardly endorsed any position which would endanger the unity of the empire. Even though Martin Luther briefly put his hopes in the new emperor, the diet of Worms and his subsequent condemnation by Charles V in 1521 put an end to the prospect of possible cooperation with the highest secular authority of the Christendom and Luther was thus forced to rely mainly on the support of German nobility. According to Brady, Luther saw the members of this German nobility as "Agents who could, and should, effect reform where pope and general council had not and the emperor would not".<sup>593</sup>

One of the most intensely discussed theological issues of the age was without a doubt the question salvation. In this matter, Luther's answer proved to be nothing else but revolutionary. According to Luther, who as we have already mentioned drew heavily on the apostle Paul, the key to the salvation did not lie in "good works" nor in any other earthly endeavours but was instead possible entirely through the faith and through God's mercy alone. This principle was known as *sola fide*. In his conclusions regarding the human salvation, Luther was heavily influenced by his own perception of human inadequacy and inability to live a life without constantly committing sins. The most important question for us is, however, how was the problem of human salvation viewed by Alfonso de Valdés, and which practical conclusions from his stance on salvation did he draw.

Valdés's stance towards the problem of individual human salvation can be reconstructed mostly thanks to his two polemical dialogues. Especially *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, in which its two main protagonists encounter several souls of the dead who are travelling through the underworld, some of whom are heading towards the heaven, while the rest of them are heading to the hell, can be illuminating in this regard, because the conversations with the dead clearly reveal which behaviour did or did not result, at least according to Alfonso de Valdés, in attaining the salvation.<sup>594</sup>

Some of the dead which Mercury and Charon encounter are clearly immoral and do not even make any attempt to hide it. Among those is a soul of a man who presents himself as a "king of

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<sup>592</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 174.

<sup>593</sup>Brady, *German Histories in the Age of Reformation, 1400-1650*, p. 150.

<sup>594</sup>It is interesting to note that the existence of purgatory is mentioned only twice and excursively by souls who mistakenly relied on papal bulls which were supposed to protect them from the purgatory. This is the case of the soul of a duke, see Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 398. "[...] diéronme a entender que rezando la oración del conde no moriría en pecado mortal ni podría venir al infierno, pues para el purgatorio tenía diez o doze buldas del Papa que me libran del."

Galatians”,<sup>595</sup> who openly admits that during his reign, his only concern was to satisfy his personal needs, that he left the administration of his kingdom entirely to his counsellors, intentionally favoured bad people and shunned the good ones and always strove to enlarge his dominions by leading wars. As for his supposedly good deed, the deceased king claims to wage war against the Turks only to admit that he did so only as a pretext to further extend his dominion, and then claims to build many temples and monasteries. These deeds are obviously unsatisfactory, because as is explained by Valdés, founding of temples and monasteries while living a morally bankrupt life does not suffice to guarantee salvation.<sup>596</sup>

It can be safely argued that Alfonso de Valdés did not share Lutheran teaching about the salvation, which is possible only thanks to faith itself – *sola fide*, the denial of the importance of “good works”, which according to Martin Luther were completely unsatisfactory as a means of salvation. Valdés instead repeatedly talked about “following the doctrine of Jesus Christ” as a means of salvation, which is however clearly distinct from attaining the salvation by faith alone, as we will yet see.

One of the other central features of Lutheran theology is the notion of absolute primacy of the Scripture as a sole authoritative source of Christian doctrine – *sola scriptura*. This axiom had serious implications, since by stating this, Luther was denying the established monopoly of papal curia as well as the councils to interpret the Christian doctrine. As Valdés noted in his letter to Mártir from 1521, one of the central arguments of Luther was that councils as well as popes could and in fact did err and sometimes contradicted each other.<sup>597</sup> Their decisions and decrees therefore could not be taken as a foundation of the faith – only the Scripture could. Martin Luther had actually stated this during his Leipzig debate with the prominent theologian Johann Eck, which took place in November 1518:

“I assert that a council has sometimes erred and may sometimes err. Nor has a council authority to establish new articles of faith. A council cannot make divine right out of that which by nature is not divine right. Councils have contradicted each other, for the recent Lateran Council has reversed the claim of the councils of Constance and Basel that a council is above a pope. A simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or a council without it. As for the pope's decretal on

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<sup>595</sup>Although Galatians were Celtic people who inhabited the area of Anatolia during the Antiquity and to whom was addressed Epistle to the Galatians, which forms the part of the New Testament, Valdés sets the lifetime of a king to early 16<sup>th</sup> or possibly late 15<sup>th</sup> century, since he claims that he ruled over Christian people and fought against Ottoman empire. The person of a king is thus rather fictional and unlike some of the other souls of the dead who make their appearance in the dialogue, it does not represent any historical person, but rather serves as a prototype of a king turned tyrant. It is also however possible, as suggests Ángel Ancalá, that the “king of Galatians” was supposed to represent the “king of Galls”, that is, the king of France. See Ancalá in Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. XLV. “[...] el rey de los gálatas, es decir, de los galos, retrato de Francisco I [...].”

<sup>596</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 423-430.

<sup>597</sup>Idem, p. 20. , [Luther] Respondit, se nihil velle revocare, nec posse etiam stare decretis Conciliorum, quum ipsa Concilia aliquando sibi ipsis contraria fuerint.“

indulgences I say that neither the Church nor the pope can establish articles of faith. These must come from Scripture. For the sake of Scripture we should reject pope and councils.”<sup>598</sup>

During this debate, Luther had also denied the primacy of papacy by stating that during the first centuries of Christian era, the authority of Roman pontiffs did not have a primacy over eastern bishoprics; by this he was referring to Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch.

Having explained this, it is possible to actually identify the similarities between Valdés’s opinions and Luther’s teachings, which so irritated Castiglione and other opponents of Valdés? First of all, it is undeniable that Valdés in fact condemned many practices of Roman church which were attacked by Luther as well as by other Protestants, including indulgences, which are mentioned three times in the second part of *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* and even makes it so that his opponent in the debate recognizes that selling of indulgences represents one of the vices of Roman curia:

“Archdeacon: Certainly, in this you are very correct, and God knows how it always seemed to me and what I felt in my heart while seeing this city (which truly should serve as an example of virtues to the whole world) so full of vices, drudgery, deceits and open wickedness. [And also full of] this selling of offices, benefices, bulls, indulgences, dispensations, which was done so shamelessly, that it truly seemed like a mockery of Christian faith, and it looked like the ministers of the church did not care about anything else except for finding ways to receive money.”<sup>599</sup>

But exactly on what grounds did Alfonso de Valdés reject indulgences? Broadly speaking, Valdés’s attitude stemmed from his conviction about the absolute precedence of inner faith and living a life in accordance with Christ’s doctrine over external aspects of the cult. These he did not reject completely, but he afforded them a place of relatively low importance and treated them with suspicion, because these external aspects of cult could easily lead many Christians, especially the common people who lacked deeper understanding of Christian doctrine, astray.<sup>600</sup> Second reason for Valdés’s criticism of indulgences stemmed from his categorical refusal to accept the notion that church’s services or even the grace itself should be sold for money. This is illustrated in a conversation with a soul of a man heading towards the heaven, during which the main protagonists of the *Diálogo de*

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<sup>598</sup>Bainton, *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, p. 116-117.

<sup>599</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 313. “Arcidiano: Ciertamente, en esso vos tenéis mucha razón, y sabe Dios lo que me ha parecido siempre dello y lo que mi corazón sentía de ver aquella ciudad (que de razón debía de ser exemplo de virtudes a todo el mundo), tan llena de vicios, de tráfigos, de engaños y de manifiestas vellaquerías. Aquel vender de oficios, de beneficios, de bulas, de indulgencias, de dispensaciones, tan sin vergüenza, que verdaderamente parecía una irrisión de la fe cristiana, que los ministros de la Iglesia no tenían cuidado sino de inventar maneras para sacar dineros.”

<sup>600</sup>Idem, p. 343.



*Mercurio y Carón* inquire whether he relied on indulgences throughout his life. The answer was negative:

“Charon: Did you gain many jubilees and indulgences?”

Soul: Yes, but I have always preferred to take the real road instead of searching for shortcuts, and I have preferred to enter through the door instead of climbing through the window, and with this intention, my jubilees and indulgences were to try to follow the doctrine of Jesus Christ, which to me seems to be a road so real that it could not err.”<sup>601</sup>

Charon then asks the man if he had been reprehended by others for this conviction, to which he answers in affirmative, but adds that he always tried to reason with those who criticized him:

“[...] But I used to tell them: Brothers, you make take the road that seems to be the best for you, and [you may] leave me to take the one that I want to take, since you see that it is not an evil one.”<sup>602</sup>

To this Charon replies that he is certain that one can very well take either way, to which the soul of a man answers: “You are telling the truth, but I had a very firm intent to let go off all things and to confirm myself solely to Jesus Christ.”<sup>603</sup>

There is no denying that the statement, in which the soul of a man claims to “confirm itself solely to Jesus Christ” (confirmarse solamente de Jesu Cristo) as a certain way to salvation does appear to have Lutheran overtones, at least on the first glance. The similar statement can also be found in *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, where Lactancio, upon being asked by Archdeacon about the safest way to salvation, answers: “The one that was shown by Jesus Christ, to love him over all things and to put all your hope solely in him.”<sup>604</sup>

The key difference between Alfonso de Valdés and Martin Luther lay in the fact that the latter considered the faith in Jesus Christ as the exclusive means of salvation. Valdés, on the other hand, considered that the man can be saved not just solely placing his faith in Christ, but by “following his doctrine”, which supposes active adjustment of one’s life and actions, which should be lived in accordance with Christ’s teachings, while the failure to do so may result in damnation. Unlike Luther, Valdés does not deny the instrumental role of “good works” in salvation, these good works however

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<sup>601</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 455. “Carón: ¿Ganavas muchos jubileos y indulgençias?”

Ánima: Siempre me holgué más de yr por el camino real que de buscar atajos, y más de entrar por la puerta que de subir por la ventana, y con esta intinçión, mis jubileos y mis indulgencias heran procurar de seguir la doctrina de Jesu Cristo que me pareçia camino tan real que no se podía errar.”

<sup>602</sup>Ibidem. “[...] mas yo les dezia: Hermanos, tomá vosotros el camino que os paresçiese mejor y a mí dexame tomar éste que yo quiero, pues veis que no es malo.”

<sup>603</sup>Ibidem. “Dizes verdad, mas yo tenía un propósito muy firme de desasirme de todas las cosas y confirmarme solamente de Jesu Cristo.”

<sup>604</sup>Idem, p. 344. “Acridiano: Bien, pero ¿qué camino ay más seguro?”

Lactancio: El que mostró Jesu Cristo, amarlo a él sobre todas las cosas y poner en él solo vuestra esperança.”

must be a result of person's internal conviction, and not just public signs of devotion or charity intended to gain public's approval. Even the acts such as funding of temples or cloisters cannot compensate the lack of internal faith and cannot guarantee salvation.<sup>605</sup>

The statement of Valdés, claiming that in order to attain salvation, it is necessary to rely "solely on Jesus Christ" thus should be read mostly as a reminder not to seek "shortcuts" on a road to salvation, for example by buying indulgences or by funding temples, but rather to fully embrace the doctrine of Christ, not in a Lutheran sense, but as an active agent, who adjusts his or hers life accordingly to Christ's example.

The passage criticizing the use of indulgences earned a criticism of doctor Vélez, the author of an inquisitorial censure dedicated to *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, who claimed that "In the folio 58 from the beginning, he [Valdés] ridicules the indulgences and jubilees, calling them shortcuts, saying that it was always preferable to walk the real road instead of searching of shortcuts, etc."<sup>606</sup>

Despite this, indulgences themselves did not constitute a key issue for Valdés; throughout his two dialogues, they are mentioned only occasionally and usually are taken only as a part of bigger issue. This bigger issue was a general moral decadence, which supposedly affected the Catholic church and its capital city of Rome. This moral decadence which had been prevailing in Rome was not a conjecture of Valdés, nor was it a slander used by the imperial court in its fight with the papacy of Clement VII, but was widely recognized by various contemporaries and is something, that Martin Luther himself experienced in his visit of the Holy city in 1510:

"At the same time, he [Luther] was horrified to hear that if there were a hell Rome was built upon it. He need not have been a scandalmonger to know that the district of ill fame was frequented by ecclesiastics. He heard there were those who considered themselves virtuous because they confined themselves to women. The unsavory memory of Pope Alexander VI was still a stench."<sup>607</sup>

It was exactly the activity of renaissance popes such as Alexander VI or Julius II, which discredited the papacy in the eyes of many Christians. We have already mentioned the satirical dialogue *Julius exclusus de coelis*, published shortly after the death of the pope Julius II, which was presumably written by Erasmus himself and which attacked the way of life and of this rather typical renaissance pope.

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<sup>605</sup>This is illustrated by Valdés in *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* during a conversation with a dead king-tyrant; see Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 428. "Carón: ¿Qué más hazías? Ánima: edificué muchos templos y monasterios. Carón: Si el dinero desos gastos tú ganaras con trabajo de tus manos, pudierate aprovechar, mas tú hurtavas el cuerpo y davas los pies por Dios, fatigavas con vejaçiones indevidas tus súbditos yy después pensavas aplacar a Dios con edificarle templos."

<sup>606</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 590. "Y en el folio 58 desde el prinçipio dél burla y escarnesçe más de las yndulgencias y jubileos, llamándolos atajos, diziendo que siempre holgó más de yr por el camino rreal que de becar atajos, etc..."

<sup>607</sup>Bainton: *Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, p. 50.

Apart from the highest member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, one of the main targets of Erasmians, including Alfonso de Valdés, were also the members of monastical orders. Towards the end of *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, its two main protagonists encounter the soul of a monk, who is on his way towards heaven. After Mercury, with slight surprise generated by the fact that a monk was actually granted an entry to heaven, demands to know how exactly newcomer spent his life in the world, the soul of a monk answer:

“Soul: I know very well why you are asking me this. You think that I am one of those who think that the religion consists of dressing in one colour or another or in wearing the habit of this or that making, or in walking with shoes or without shoes, or in wearing a shirt made of wool or linen, or in touching or stopping to touch money. Honestly, you are very wrong, because before I became a monk, I was very well informed of all this.

Mercury: Since you had known and understood that, who tricked you into living a life so devoid and lacking of reason?”<sup>608</sup>

During the ensuing conversation, the soul of a monk defends its decision to become a member of a religious order, eventually convincing both Mercury and Charon, that it is possible to attain salvation despite being a monk. This passage thus proves that Valdés did not entirely reject monasticism, nor did he see a monastical life as an obstacle to personal salvation, although he remained critical to many practices associated with the monastical orders of his time and generally seen the monastical orders as problematic or controversial, which is clear from the very fact that he felt to need to include the passage where was explained that salvation was possible despite the membership in order.

As a disciple of Erasmus of Rotterdam, Valdés saw the key to the personal salvation as well as to good Christian life in internal piety and spiritual acceptance of Christ’s doctrine. Another example of Valdés’s view of salvation is illustrated in a particular passage in the first book of his *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, where Mercury and Charron encounter the soul of a dead man, who introduces himself as a former councillor of a “very powerful king”, and who is, to his great dismay, on his way to hell. The counsellor refuses to accept his fate and presents a long list of his supposedly godly deeds, which according to his belief should grant him an entry to heaven, or presumably at least to purgatory:

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<sup>608</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 519. „Ánima: Bien sé por qué me lo preguntáis. Vosotros pensáis haver yo sido de aquellos que piensan consistir la religión en andar vestido de una o de otra color o en traer el hábito desta o de aquella hechura o en andar calçado o descalço o en traer camisa de lana o de lienço o en tocar o dexar de tocar dineros. A la fe, hermanos, muy engañados estáis, que antes que me metiese frayle estava de todo eso muy bien informado.  
Mercurio: Pues sabiendo y entendiendo tú eso, ¿quién te engañó que tomases una vida tan puesta en razón y tan fuera de razón?”

“Soul: Of course, that I was a Christian and as a child, I received the baptism and later confirmation. I used to confess and to take communion three or four times a year. I was celebrating all the holiday, I was fasting on bread and water on all days when the church mandates it and even on many more, because of my devotion and the vigils of our lady. I attended a mass every day and I let many to be celebrated on my own expenses. I prayed regularly the canonical hours and many other devotions, I went on a pilgrimage many times and I had many novenas celebrated in the temples of great devotion. I prayed the rosary blessed by the pope Adrian. I used to give alms to the poor, I many wedded many orphaned girls, I built three monasteries and did infinity of other good works. Apart from this, I had a bull from the pope which absolved me from blame and penance in *articulo mortis*. I always used to wear a habit of Mercedarians. In the time of my death, I took a candle from the pope Adrian in my hand. I was buried in the habit of Saint Francisco, apart from infinity of pious bequests that I did in my testament. And with all this I am now to go to hell?”<sup>609</sup>

Some of these things, such as granting giving alms to the poor or helping orphans are undeniably good, which is recognized even by Valdés himself, but these deeds cannot suffice unless they are result of inner piety and conformity with Christ.

The true piety and spiritual identification with Christ, which Alfonso de Valdés regarded as an instrumental for one’s salvation, could not be reconciled with rendering of religious services for money, which was relatively well common practice at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as was noted by Scribner.<sup>610</sup> This practice, which was one of the reasons for strong anti-clerical sentiment in Germany, which in turn was one of the factors that enabled successful spread of Luther’s message, was also sharply criticised by Alfonso de Valdés himself, who expressed his sentiment through the character of Mercury:

“I saw that there were many men and women kneeling to receive the body of Jesus Christ, who wanted to do them such a great good on earth, and I wanted to join them and to receive it with them, and then

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<sup>609</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 386-387. “Ánima: Cata que yo era christiano, y reçebí siendo niño el bautismo y después la confirmación. Confessávame y comulgávame tres o cuatro veces en el año, guardava todas las fiestas, ayunava todos los días que manda la Yglesia y aun otros muchos por mi devoçión ,y las vegalias de nuestra Señora a pan y agua, oya cada día missa y hazía decir muchas a mi costa, rezava ordinariamente las oras canónicas y otras muchas devoçiones, fui muchas vezes en romería y tuve muchas novenas en casas de gran devoçión, rezava en las cuentas que bendixo el Papa Adriano, dava limosnas a pobres, casé muchas huerfanas, edificqué tres monasterios y hize infinitas otras obras buenas. Allende desto tomé una bula del Papa en que me asolvía a culpa y a pena *in articulo mortis*. Traía siempre un ábito de La Merced, al tiempo de mi muerte tenía una candela en la mano de las del papa Adriano, y enterréme en ábito de San Francisco, allende de infinitas mandas pías que en mi testamento dexé. ¿Si que con todo esto aya yo agora de venir al infierno?”

<sup>610</sup>Scribner, *The Reformation movements in Germany*, p. 72. “It is undeniable that a cash nexus had crept into religious practice from two sides, from those with a lottery mentality, willing to pay to maximise their chances in the game of salvation, and from those who refused to provide religious services unless the price was right. It was in this free market place of the sacred that the traffic in indulgences grew up and flourished, virtually as a stock exchange of salvation. “

came a sacristan to demand money from me, and since I did not have it, I told him: ‘So in this way you would also give the body of Jesus Christ for money?’ And I left moaning.”<sup>611</sup>

This attitude is consistent with the conviction that the worth of a particular person is supposed to be measured according to their personal virtue and which strictly rejects the assumption that access to salvation should be conditioned by wealth or social status, whether directly or indirectly, as is apparent from the fact that Alfonso de Valdés on numerous occasions criticised the attempts to compensate one’s sins or lack of internal piety by donating money to the church or by funding “godly works” such as buildings of new churches or temples.

### 3.5. The imperial diet of Augsburg

When trying to describe the person of Alfonso de Valdés, some authors tend to use the term “irenicism”. This term, sometimes also spelled “irenism”, for which Alfonso de Valdés was lauded for example by Ángel Alcalá, has its origin in a Greek word εἰρήνη, which means “peace”,<sup>612</sup> and describes an approach which strives to establish unity among Christians by reasoning and peaceful means. As such, it stands in contrast to the confrontational approach later employed in both Catholic and Protestant regions, which strived to enforce religious unity simply by eliminating or significantly weakening its opposition. This term was also used by Marcel Bataillon in order to describe a faction within the Catholic church, which preferred a peaceful solution of the conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants, even after the failure of Diet of Augsburg in 1530 and the beginning of pontificate of Paul III in 1534.<sup>613</sup> Whether we are going to call the attitude of Valdés as “irenicism” or simply “tolerance”, nowhere was this particular trait in the thinking of Alfonso de Valdés as apparent than during the convocation of the imperial diet of 1530, in which Alfonso de Valdés took an active part as a member of the imperial delegation.

The imperial diet which took place in Bavarian city of Augsburg, which served as a frequent site of imperial diets, and which lasted from June to August of 1530, marks a decisive moment in the development of religious conflict in Germany as well as one of the last opportunities to close rapidly growing rift between the Catholics and the Protestants and to achieve some kind of reconciliation without the need to employ the force of arms. At the same time, the diet of Augsburg also represents a clear acceleration of the religious conflict between the forces of the Reformation and the orthodox forces of the Catholicism. In the period of 1521 and 1529, the emperor was absent from the central

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<sup>611</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 373. “Vi que estaban muchos hombres y mugeres hincados de rodillas para recibir el cuerpo de Jesu Christo que tan gran bien en la tierra les quiso dexar, y quise juntar a recibirlo con ellos, y llego un sacristián a pedirme dineros, y como yo no los tenía, le dixé: ¿Y assí también vosotros dais por dineros el cuerpo de Jesu Christo? Salíme de allí gimiendo.”

<sup>612</sup>Van Voorst, *Building Your New Testament Vocabulary*, p. 69.

<sup>613</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 80.

Europe, which meant that while the religious conflict was not entirely dormant, its intensity was nonetheless significantly reduced, especially considering the fact that the emperor was forced to focus heavily on his conflict with France and the papacy of Clement VII. In the meantime, the Lutheran princes tried to implement the ideas of the Reformation within their respected holdings, but as Scribner writes:

“The survival of these developments [of the implementation of the Reformation] depended on the way in which the 'high politics of reform' were worked out within the empire, where the princes' *ius reformandi* did not become a major issue until 1529. Since 1521 the enforcement of the Edict of Worms had been entrusted to the regency government appointed to run the empire during Charles V's absence. Its implementation depended on who presided in the regency and on the willingness of local authorities to put it into effect. When the Diet of Speyer met in 1529, the scene was set for a confrontation over religion.”<sup>614</sup>

Scribner thus sees the diet of Speyer, which took place in March and April of 1529, as an actual starting point of a serious religious conflict, which then further progressed at the diet of 1530. Since the diet of Speyer took place before the emperor's journey from Spain, it was presided by his brother Ferdinand, who just recently gained the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia. The diet of Speyer of 1529 also gave birth to the very term of “Protestantism”, which comes from the “Protestation of Speyer”, filed by Lutheran princes and representatives of cities, who were in the minority at the diet, as a reaction to the diet's recess, which annulled the recess of the previous diet of 1526, also held in Speyer, and according to which the Edict of Worms was supposed to be enforced, while the status quo was supposed to be preserved until the future convocation of the general council. The Lutherans refused to accept this decision, while claiming the superiority of Word of God before the political decisions of the imperial diet.<sup>615</sup> The journey of Charles V first to Italy in 1529, and then over the Alps in 1530 thus starts the second part of his confrontation with the Protestantism.

At the imperial diet of Augsburg, the Catholic party was represented by the imperial delegation, which included Alfonso de Valdés, by German Catholic princes and finally by the papal legate cardinal Campeggio,<sup>616</sup> who was accompanied by a group of Catholic theologians. The Protestant party was represented by Lutheran princes as well as the delegation of Lutheran theologians, which included Philip Melanchthon, one of the most influential theologian of early Protestantism and Luther's associate, but not by Martin Luther himself, who was not allowed to enter Augsburg nor come to its vicinity, but instead spend his time at Coburg castle in Saxony. As was noted by Scribner, Martin Luther was anything but conciliatory in this time: “For Luther, the papal

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<sup>614</sup>Scribner, *Politics and the institutionalisation of reform in Germany*, p. 184.

<sup>615</sup>Idem, p. 184-185.

<sup>616</sup>Pineda, *Carlos V (I), dos acercamientos a la reforma protestante, Cuadernos de Historia Moderna*, p. 452.

church was the church of the Antichrist with which no compromise was possible, and he constantly sought to frustrate attempts at mediation.”<sup>617</sup> We may thus assume that his absence from the diet could have been interpreted by some as a positive sign of hope for peaceful compromise. The question remained – was the banishment of Martin Luther enough?

After the imperial coronation in Bologna in February, Charles’s court traveled northwards across the Austrian lands in direction of Bavaria. While passing through the city of Innsbruck at the beginning of June, the grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara felt mortally ill and died on 5<sup>th</sup> of that month; his passing marked not the end of the imperial chancellery itself,<sup>618</sup> but also the end of one era in the history of the empire of Charles V. The death of Gattinara also heavily affected Alfonso de Valdés. Now bereft of the guidance of his mentor, Valdés nonetheless still continued to exercise his role of the emperor’s secretary. Unlike in the case of Diet of Worms, which took place nine years earlier, Valdés now enjoyed the opportunity to play a more active role in the ongoing negotiations. The role and the influence that Valdés exercised during the negotiations can be reconstructed mainly from a series of letters, which he addressed to the cardinal Accolti in the course of summer of 1530 and in which he informed him in great detail about the proceedings of the diet.

In the first of these letters, which is dated to 12<sup>th</sup> of July, Valdés states that “If only it pleased God to grant that my strength would correspond to my good will, or that the good will of others would be the same as mine, and we would soon see this storm mitigated and the things would be reduced to the state, which those who really love Christ and his church long for.”<sup>619</sup>

Valdés then continued with the description of the beginning of the negotiation, when he wrote:

“When we arrived here, I spoke with Philip Melanchthon, and I said to him that a such learned man as he had to be deceived to take part in this tragedy, in which one takes part only as a result of confusion and trickery, and even if that was the best thing in the world, no sane man should take part in it.”<sup>620</sup>

After this, Valdés however recounts how he was informed by Melanchthon about possible willingness on the side of the Protestants to accept some kind of compromise, under the condition that the Protestants will be granted three concessions. The first of these three concessions were that priests would be allowed to marry, the second was that Protestant laity would be allowed to receive communion under both kinds, and the third one was the abolition of private masses. Valdés then

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<sup>617</sup>Scribner, *Politics and the institutionalisation of reform in Germany*, p. 186.

<sup>618</sup>Headley, *The Emperor and his Chancellor*, p. 139-142.

<sup>619</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 208. “Pluguiesse a Dios que o mis fuerças correspondiessen a my voluntad, o la voluntad de otros se conformasse con la mía, y veríamos muy presto mitigado este furor y la cosas reduzidas al estado que desean los que a Christo y a su Iglesia de veras aman.”

<sup>620</sup>Idem, p. 209. “Quando aquí llegamos hablé a Philippo Melancton diziéndole que a un hombre docto como él quién lo había engañado en meterse en esta tragedia, en que sólo por la confusión y mal arte con que se tracta, aunque fuesse la mejor cosa del mundo, ningún hombre cuerdo devría estar en ella.”

recounts how if these conditions were satisfied, the Protestants would be willing, according to Melanchthon, to return to the obedience to the pope and to follow other decrees and ceremonies prescribed by the Roman church.<sup>621</sup>

Valdés then allegedly tried to convince Melanchthon to hand him over a written document, which would contain the aforementioned demands, and which would be presented in the name of all Protestant princes. This however proved difficult, since Melanchthon instead presented a different document, whose particular content Valdés does not describe, although he states that he made Melanchthon to remove certain things which seemed to him to be inappropriate.<sup>622</sup> Further in the same letter, Valdés however expressed his pessimism regarding the outcome of the diet, when he wrote:

“When I see such intentions on one side and then on the other, I have a very little hope that this thing is going to end well, and since there is a lot which remains hidden, when it will come to swords, we will see the bigger conflagration than ever, if God does not remedy this, but to tell the truth, it seems to me that *nondum venit hora* [the time has not yet come]; [but] for my part, I will not stop working as long as my strength remains, since I do not believe that there is anyone who longs for reaching of this concord as much as I do.”<sup>623</sup>

Valdés had also expressed his mistrust to the papal legate cardinal Campeggio, whom he continuously criticized throughout the whole session of the diet, but whose name he never actually mentioned, when he said that “I am well aware that he will rather fan the flames instead of putting them out, according to what people who understand this are telling me.”<sup>624</sup> This attitude was probably caused by the very fact that Campeggio received orders from Clement VII to avoid the convocation of the general council and to try to secure the enforcement of the Edict of Worms.<sup>625</sup>

The fact that Valdés personally negotiated with Philip Melanchthon, at least during the first stage of negotiations, speaks loudly his own political influence at this time. This negotiation might have been facilitated by the fact that Philip Melanchthon was an acquaintance of Valdés’s friend Johannes Dantiscus, who for the first time met Melanchthon in Wittenberg in 1523, and who helped to arrange their mutual meeting in Augsburg. Dantiscus himself, who corresponded with Melanchthon

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<sup>621</sup> Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 209. „Las cosas erant ut sacerdotibus permitterentur nuptiae; ut liceret suis laycis communicare sub utraque specie, y que non essent apud eos missae particulares vel privatae, sed tamen communes pro populo. Con esto eran contentos reddere suum jus episcopis, obedire summo Pontifici et servare omnia statuta omnesque cerimonias ab Ecclesia romana statutas.“

<sup>622</sup> Ibidem. „Todavía le hize quitar algunas cosas que offendieran y no aprovecharan [...].“

<sup>623</sup> Idem, p. 209-210. „Bien veo en una parte y en la otra tales intenciones que tengo muy poca speranza que esta cosa se aya de acabar bien, y quando mucho quedará solapada de manera que, bueltas las espaldas, veremos mayor fuego que antes, sy Dios no lo remedia, pero a la verdad que a my *ver nondum venit hora*; por my parte no dexaré de trabajar quanto mis fuerças bastaren, porque de verdad no creo que ay ninguno que más ny aun tanto como yo esta concordia dessee.“

<sup>624</sup> Idem, p. 209. “[...] bien sé que estará más çerca de ençender que mitigar el fuego, según las personas me dizen que entienden en ello.”

<sup>625</sup> Pineda, *Carlos V (I), dos acercamientos a la reforma protestante, Cuadernos de Historia Moderna*, p. 452.



after their meeting in 1523, even expressed a hope that the meeting between Valdés and Melanchthon could help to resolve the conflict and contribute in reaching the compromise.<sup>626</sup> It has been also suggested by Bataillon that denunciations regarding the conversations with Melanchthon may have been a cause of the investigation of Valdés by the Spanish inquisition, which started in 1531,<sup>627</sup> although the inquisition was primarily interested in Valdés's polemical dialogues.

In a following letter, this time from 21<sup>st</sup> of July, Valdés continued to describe the ongoing negotiations by mentioning that the written document that has been eventually handed over to the Catholic party by the Protestants did not satisfy the former. Instead, Valdés commented that “We found it to be so harsh that it looked more like an invective instead of an answer or Christian admonition.”<sup>628</sup>

Interestingly, Valdés also described the disunity in the Protestant camp, where different cities presented their own capitulations:

“Now again four cities of the Empire have presented four individual capitulations, which differ only very little among each other. The city of Ulm has also presented its capitulations; all of them express almost the same opinion. Those who so far have declared themselves are five princes and eleven cities, without the one in which we are, which is worse than the others. Nobody dares to show or publish anything about the Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, since it is a thing so bestial that they cannot find the courage to defend it. If only it pleases God so that this with Lutherans should be concentrated; and all these sects would be exterminated, and their leaders punished.”<sup>629</sup>

This passage clearly illustrates that the tolerance for which Alfonso de Valdés is often lauded certainly had its limits and did not encompass all possible religious factions. Even a relatively tolerant humanist like Valdés was thus not willing to tolerate the doctrine of Anabaptism, according to which the baptism was only valid if it is a result of voluntary decision, which excluded the possibility of baptizing of children. The doctrines of Anabaptists and Sacramentarians were also condemned by Martin Luther himself.<sup>630</sup>

Another important point that Valdés made was when he claimed that the best strategy for the Catholic party would be at first to remedy its own faults, when he claimed that “[...] I hold to be

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<sup>626</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 121-123.

<sup>627</sup>Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 66.

<sup>628</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 211. „Hallámosla tan agra que parecía más invectiva que respuesta ny admonición christiana.“

<sup>629</sup>Idem, p. 211-212. “Agora nuevamente quatro ciudades del Imperio han presentado otros capítulos aparte, que diffieren muy poco de los otros. La ciudad de Ulma ha también presentado sus capítulos; todos quasi son de una mesma opinión. Los que hasta agora se han declarado, que son cinco príncipes y onze ciudades, sin ésta en que estamos, que es peor que las otras. De los anabaptistas y sacramentaryos ninguno se osa mostrar ny publicar por ser la cosa tan bestial que no hallan color para defenderla. Pluguiesse a Dios que esto de los luteranos se concertasse; todas essotras sectas se extinguirían y castigarían auctores dellas.”

<sup>630</sup>Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, p. 229- 232.

certain that they [Lutherans] will never amend unless we at first do not amend ourselves.”<sup>631</sup> In this regard, Valdés was consistent with his own opinions from 1521, when he accused the pope Leo X of threatening to destabilize the whole Christendom by being unwilling to convoke the general council and thus to improve the state of the whole church.

Further in the letter, Valdés also informed Accolti about his another meeting with Philip Melanchthon:

“Yesterday I spoke with Philip Melanchthon, because it seemed to these lords that I should have done so, since he is the most learned and the least bad of all these Lutherans. It seems to me that *verentur potentiam Caesaris* [they respect the Emperor’s power].”<sup>632</sup>

In this regard, Valdés was not wrong, since Melanchthon counted among those Protestants leaders, who were obviously sincerely trying to reach some kind of settlement with the Catholics, which would preserve the unity of the church even during the diet of Augsburg.<sup>633</sup> In this regard, he differed substantially from his friend Martin Luther, who was notorious for his militancy and unwillingness to make compromises, as we have already seen.

In the following letter dated to 1<sup>st</sup> of August, Valdés described the process of elaboration of the reply to the Protestant declaration, while claiming that papal theologians were too uncompromising against the Lutherans and preparing a “harsh response”. In contrast, the members of the emperor’s council allegedly favoured more delicate and conciliatory approach. Eventually, as Valdés informed Accolti, during one drinking session he managed to convince the papal theologians to concede to certain changes in the Catholic response to the Lutherans.<sup>634</sup> This strategy to conduct an official business during the drinking session clearly mirrored the behaviour of Valdés’s friend Dantiscus, who reportedly often indulged in hosting foreign courtiers and diplomats in similar fashion.<sup>635</sup>

Meanwhile, Valdés’s negotiations with Philip Melanchthon continued. The main point of the discussion were now possible Lutheran concessions in the area of clerical marriage, which would suppose a temporary separation of married Protestant priests from their wives, while leaving the final verdict in this question to the future general council.<sup>636</sup> Valdés also tried to convince Melanchthon by

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<sup>631</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 211. “[...] tengo por cierto que nunca ellos se emendarán sy primero nosotros no nos emendamos.”

<sup>632</sup>Idem, p. 212. „Ayer hablé con Filipo Melancton, porque pareció a estos señores que ansí lo devía hazer, porque es el más docto y menos malo de todos estos lutheranos. Paréceme que *verentur potentiam Caesaris*.”

<sup>633</sup>Oberman, *Luther – Man between God and the Devil*, p. 283.

<sup>634</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 214. „En esto ha havido bien que hazer, y nunca acabamos hasta que yo los truxe a my posada, y allý, burlando y beviendo (*nosti mores hominum*), enmendamos nuestra scriptura de manera que satisfizo a todos.“

<sup>635</sup>Odyniec, *Diplomacy and Empire in the Age of Charles V: Johannes Dantiscus in Spain, 1519-1532*, p. 54.

<sup>636</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 214.

pointing out the fact it is needless for him, as for a married man who himself is not a priest, to defend the clerical marriage, while adding

“[...] by telling him this and about many other dangers in which they are and how easily the princes could abandon them, and on the other hand offering him that if the business is concluded and he would want to get away from this tragedy and go somewhere, where he could concentrate on his studies, I will make sure that His Majesty will grant him a very good entertainment [...]”.<sup>637</sup>

By this, Valdés clearly tried to convince Melanchthon about the supposed hopelessness of Protestant cause while assuring him that in case that he would decide to either switch sides or at least to become “neutral”, the emperor would take care of his needs, thus providing him an exit option. This approach however failed, since Melanchthon did continue to act as the foremost representative of Protestant party, and in fact even wrote the Protestant manifest known as *Confesio Augustana*.

Valdés also did not forget to stress the role of emperor Charles V, whom he regarded as a tool of divine providence, and he could be able to save the whole situation:

“I do not want to say anything about the Emperor’s spirit besides that just as Our Lord allowed this evil to take place because of our sins, he also in his mercy has given us this Prince to remedy it.”<sup>638</sup>

The objective value of this statement is however rather low, since Valdés’s loyalty towards Charles V and his enduring belief in his messianic role prevented him from seeing any negative aspect of the emperor’s action. It is however also natural that even if Valdés had some doubts about the strategy employed by the emperor, he would not wanted to disclose it to his correspondent, who at that time stayed at the papal court.

The emperor’s attempts to remedy the situation and to reunite the Christianity, so lauded by Valdés, were meanwhile proving to be insufficient. The Protestants were also not the only ones who demanded that certain practices of the church should be remedied, but as Valdés mentioned, this was also demanded by some Catholic princes, who complained about “abuses” of the church, among which were “annates, indulgences and dispensations”. Valdés however warned that the satisfaction of these demands would be difficult, because “if we concede to it, the Apostolic See will suffer great

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<sup>637</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 215. “[...] con dezirle esto y otras muchas cosas del peligro en que están y cuán fácilmente los Príncipes los podrían desamparar, y por otra parte ofreciéndole que sy la cosa se conzierta, cómo quiriéndose él apartar desta tragedia y reducirse a parte donde pueda entender en sus estudios, yo haré que Su Magestad le dará muy buen entretenimiento [...]”

<sup>638</sup>Ibidem. “Del ánimo del Emperador no quiero dezir syno que assý como Nuestro Señor, por nuestros pecados, ha permitido este mal, assý por su misericordia nos ha dado de su mano este Príncipe para remedio dél.”

loss and damage”, but the refusal to do so could according to him result in driving more people into Lutheran ranks.<sup>639</sup>

Valdés nonetheless still continued to call for a conciliatory approach and expressed his opinion that in order to reach the settlement with the Protestants, the Catholics should be willing to make some concessions in the issues “where the concessions can be made”.<sup>640</sup> The remaining dogmatic issues as well as the Protestants’ complaints about supposed abuses committed by the Catholic church should then be remitted to the decision of the general council, while in the meantime, all parties should obey the current rulings of the church. As Valdés put it: “I believe that this would be a good measure, although I do not know if they will want to accede to it.”<sup>641</sup> This stance was also, at least for a time, endorsed by the emperor himself, who officially proposed the same thing, only to adopt a stricter approach later.<sup>642</sup>

Some two weeks later, more precisely on 12<sup>th</sup> of August, Valdés wrote another letter to Accolti, which is interesting by the very fact that its main part has been written in code. Valdés was thus obviously afraid that his letter, which contained some strong criticism of certain members of the Catholic party, could be intercepted and its content made public.

At the very beginning of this coded letter, Valdés recounted how the imperial response caused the indignation among the Lutherans as well as the other Protestants, since the Catholic party still did not offer to make any concessions. As a reaction to this, some Lutherans allegedly even claimed that “if the emperor wants to force them to believe what he believes, he will never be able to do it without a great spilling of blood.”<sup>643</sup>

Valdés also this time stressed the geopolitical context of religious division in Germany and warned about the possible military alliance between German Protestants and France, which according to him could possibly lead to the complete loss of imperial control over the German lands and even endanger imperial control over Italy.<sup>644</sup> This assessment was obviously not unfounded, since France of Francis I. earlier showed itself to be willing to cooperate even with the Ottoman Empire, and thus would not hesitate to cooperate with Lutheran princes, and as we now know, in the future religious wars, more precisely during the Thirty Years’ War, France indeed openly allied itself with Protestant powers.

Alfonso de Valdés once more reaffirmed his insistence on the peaceful resolution of the conflict, when he wrote “I, sir, have always held the opinion [...] that this thing has to be resolved by

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<sup>639</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 215. „[...] porque sy se los concendemos verná mucha pérdida y daño a la Sede apostólica, sy se los negamos tengo miedo no ayamos venido por lana y bolvamos transquilados; quiero dezir, no dexemos más lutheranos que hallamos.”

<sup>640</sup>Ibidem. “Lo que a mý me parescería es que se les conçediessen las cosas que buenamente se les pueden conceder.”

<sup>641</sup>Ibidem. „Este creo sera buen medio, aunque no sé sy querrán ellos venir en él.”

<sup>642</sup>Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 118-119.

<sup>643</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 216 „[...] que si el Emperador quiere forçarlos a que crean lo que él cree nunca lo acabará sin grande effusión de sangre.”

<sup>644</sup>Ibidem.

an agreement, and that we should not strive nor even try to do it by force, nor push the thing so far that when once we will think that we have accomplished something, we will find our hands full of flies.”<sup>645</sup>

Valdés further expressed his fear that the refusal to grant at least some concessions would greatly damage the Catholic cause, because it would force Lutherans to increase their demands, which then, according to Valdés, could be replicated by “all the other provinces of the Christendom wanting to have the same thing”, and since it will be impossible to reasonably refuse them, then “in this way, the Lutherans will succeed in this intention to destroy the Apostolic See.”<sup>646</sup> Valdés then concluded the coded passage by another criticism of the papal legate:

“I see that his Most Revered Honour is blind, since he wishes to attain this glory of having overcome the Lutheran sect, and because of this he does not pay attention to the inconveniences that are born from this nor to those [inconveniences], that after [this thing] is achieved and our aim will have succeeded, will clearly come”.<sup>647</sup>

This observation is consistent with claims made by Parker, according to whom before the commencement of the diet itself, the papal legate Aleandro advised Charles to adopt a hard stance against the Lutherans and “urged him ‘to use the naked sword’ against the heretics”. Parker also claims that although Charles V was indeed initially in favour of this solution, he later, mainly out of geopolitical considerations and out of fear of another French attack, decided to adopt a conciliatory stance.<sup>648</sup> In the imperial camp, the hard stance was also initially supported by the imperial confessor García de Loaysa y Mendoza, who at first called for deployment of force, only to later change his mind and call for a compromise and peaceful reconciliation, which would allow the mutual defence from the Ottoman menace,<sup>649</sup> thus adopting a stance similar to that of Alfonso de Valdés.

In a following letter dated to 18<sup>th</sup> of August Valdés once again repeated his warning that “sometimes by not conceding a part we will lose everything”.<sup>650</sup> Valdés then turned his attention to

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<sup>645</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 217. “Yo, seenor, siempre soy del parescer [...] que esta cosa se devría assentar por concierto, y no trabaiair ni aun tentar de hazerlo por fuerça, ni llevar la cosa tan por el cabo que quando pensemos haver hecho algo nos halleemos llenas de moscas las manos.”

<sup>646</sup>Idem, p. 218. „[...] todas las otras provincias de la cristiandad querrian luego tener lo mismo, y con buena razón no se les podría negar, y por esta vía habrían los lutheranos salido con su intencón de destruir la Sede apostólica.”

<sup>647</sup>Ibidem. “Veo que su Sennoría Reverendísima está ciego, desseando alcançar esta gloria de haver confundido la seta lutherana, y con esto ni mira en los enconvenientes que de ponerse en ello nascen ni en los que después de alcançado, quando muy bien nos sucediesse la cosa, claramente vernían.”

<sup>648</sup> Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 118.

<sup>649</sup> Idem, p. 117-118. Parker quotes Loyasa, who literary urged Charles to „overlook“ Lutheran heresies: “Your Majesty should come to terms with all of Germany: just pretend that its heresies do not exist, and allow the Germans to live however they wish. You should work with them to abandon some past errors, and everyone should accept those that are easy. In this they should serve you as their lord, obey you as is only right, and join together to defend Germany and Hungary from the Turk. To that end they should provide you with paid troops for a time.”

<sup>650</sup>Idem, p. 220. „[...] que algunas vezes por no conceder parte perdemos el todo [...].”

the possible convocation of the general council, while referring to the letter written by Clement VII,<sup>651</sup> in which the pope listed various reasons why the general council should not be convoked. To this, Valdés replied that the council should be convoked for two main reasons; that is “to discuss the errors and heresies or to reform the ecclesiastical estate.”<sup>652</sup> Valdés then adds that since the pope claims that “these errors and false opinions” were already condemned by other councils, it is not necessary to wait for the convocation of a new council, but the pope and cardinals should themselves take the initiative to reform the church even without the convocation of the council. This would mean, according to Valdés, that “not only will the minds of Germans be calmed, but everything will be soothed so that there won’t be a talk about the council anymore.”<sup>653</sup>

This argumentation is quite interesting considering the attitude towards the general council by Alfonso de Valdés, who for the last ten years saw the general council as almost universal remedy for all problems affecting the Christendom, but it also illustrates that Valdés was well aware of the obstinacy of Clement VII to convoke the council, which was displayed even by his predecessor Leo X, and he thus tried to present the idea of conducting a reform even without the need to turn to the council, which papacy obviously feared.

Another, this time rather short, letter to Accolti came on 5<sup>th</sup> of September. In it, Valdés stated that the negotiations tended to proceed without his involvement, which he attributed to the fact that he had been freely sharing his opinions:

“I, sir, am free and straightforward and when I see the necessity or the danger, I cannot do anything else than freely speak my mind. Until now I have been doing it this way, and I think that either because [their] ears are not fond of hearing the truth, or because of some suspicion, they have been handling the negotiations without me.”<sup>654</sup>

After this, Valdés foreshadowed the impending failure of the negotiations, by stating:

“But believe me, Your Most Revered Honour, that we will not be on the right path, neither will we achieve the result that we long for, unless God actually interferes in this.”<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>651</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 221. Valdés literally says that „he visto la carta de mano de Su Santidad, con tanto prudencia scripta que no se podría más desear“, which means “I saw the letter [written] by the hand of His Holiness, written with such wisdom that one could not wish for more”. It is however unclear to whom was the letter addressed, whether to the emperor or the participants of the imperial diet in general.

<sup>652</sup>Ibidem. “[...] para disputar de los errores y eregias o para reformar el estado ecclesiástico [...].”

<sup>653</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 221. “[...] y que con esto no solamente se aplacarán los ánimos de los alemanes, mas se asossegará todo de suerte que no se hable más de Concilio.”

<sup>654</sup>Idem, p. 223. “Yo, señor, soy libre y claro y quando veo la neçesidad y el peligro no puede dexar de dezir libremente lo que me paresçe. Hasta agora lo he hecho assý, y pienso que o porque las orejas no huelgan de oýr verdades o por alguna sospecha, han tratado la cosa syn mý.”

<sup>655</sup>Ibidem. “Pero créame Vuestra Señoría Reverendísima que no llevamos el camino que convernía ny sacaremos el fructo que desseamos sy Dios no pone en ello muy de veras la mano.”

Valdés wrote the last letter to the cardinal Accolti regarding the diet of Augsburg on 24<sup>th</sup> of September 1530. Around this time, it was already obvious that the main goal of the diet, which was the reaching of concord with Lutheran princes, had failed. Valdés claimed that he himself almost achieved to mediate the concord, but his attempts were allegedly thwarted by other members of the Catholic delegation:

“God is my witness that when I spoke with the Lutherans in this city and [then] referred what took place [during the dealings] with them to the Emperor, and then to the lord Legate, I was very certain about the concord, but when I saw that ours left the path that I have started to walk on and that they wanted to handle the business by other means and to focus on capitulations and answers, I told them immediately that they are erring and that they are ruining the negotiations, as they have erred and ruined it.”<sup>656</sup>

If what Valdés claims here had been true, it would have meant nothing less that he was robbed of an achievement of historical proportions, since the potential successful concord between the two parties would have meant the end of religious division between the Catholics and the Protestants, or more precisely the Lutherans, and it could have prevented a century of religious conflict and persecution, committed by both sides of the conflict. Was Alfonso de Valdés really that close to heal the rift between the two sides? It can be granted that his conciliatory approach probably had more hope of success than the adamant position of other members of the Catholic party, especially the papal legate and his theologians, whose unwillingness to make concessions was repeatedly criticised by Valdés. Whether it would suffice is difficult to answer. It seems to be very unlikely that Martin Luther would have been satisfied by any possible compromise at this point, on the other hand, in case that the Catholic side managed to convince the Protestant princes to accept the concord, the activities and influence of Martin Luther would have been most likely severely diminished.

Valdés explained to Accolti that at the beginning, the Lutherans were intimidated by the presence of Charles V, but the Catholics, seeing their fear, decided to try to force them to yield without granting any concessions. This strategy, however, eventually failed, since the Lutherans gradually lost their fear as well as their willingness to compromise:

“[...] and in the end, it came to that that they did not want to content themselves with what they demanded at the beginning and what was [by us] absolutely refused, and after this, when they all

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<sup>656</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 225. “Testigo me es Dios que quando en esta ciudad hablé con los lutheranos y referé al Emperador lo que con ellos había pasado, y después con el señor Legado, yo muy cierta tove la concordia, pero quando ví que se apartaron los nuestros de la práctica que yo había comenzado y quisieron guiar la cosa por otros términos y andar en capítulos y respuestas, a la hora les dixé que lo erravan y que gastarían la negociación, como la han errado y gastado.”

left as they did, they left the matter much more broken and in much worse state than it had even been in [...].”<sup>657</sup>

Valdés also described his personal situation, when he regretted that Mercurino di Gattinara, who recently passed away, was not present at the diet,<sup>658</sup> and also mentioned that during the late phase of the diet’s proceedings, he pulled away from active negotiations, mostly because of the hostility displayed towards him by other members of the Catholic party, who allegedly did not want Valdés to take too much credit and to wield too much authority.<sup>659</sup> The reply eventually given to the Protestants was according to Valdés “[...] written by certain theologians that we had here, who are more apt in creating disturbances than in making agreements.”<sup>660</sup> Valdés then once again repeated that the negotiating strategy of the Catholic party was flawed thanks to the unwillingness to make concessions, so that once the Catholic party was finally ready to make them, the opposite party was no longer interested in accepting them, but instead demanded more.<sup>661</sup>

Valdés then finishes his report to Accolti by urging that Clement VII should take an initiative and to begin reforming “everything which to the wise and virtuous persons seems worthy of reformation”.<sup>662</sup> The last sentence of the letter dedicated to the topic of the imperial diet is rather ominous:

“I do not want to say anything regarding what I expect that will come of this, because it would be to predict the evil while not showing the remedy for it, but Your Highest Honour will be personally informed about what is going to happen.”<sup>663</sup>

At the end of the month of September, Alfonso de Valdés wrote an official account of the diet of Augsburg,<sup>664</sup> in which he recapitulated the results of the negotiations from the perspective of the imperial court. As an official document, this account does not have deeper analytical value similar to that of the letters addressed to Accolti, nor does it describe the negotiations which were going behind the scenes, but rather serves as an official public statement intended to present the imperial version of the diet to wider audience. Even then, the document well captures the stalemate in which both

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<sup>657</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 226. “[...] y a la fin vino la cosa a no quererse contentar con lo que primero demandavan y les fue absolutamente negado, y tras esto, a yrse todos, como se han ydo, dexando la cosa más rota y en muy peores términos que nunca estovo [...]”.

<sup>658</sup>Ibidem. “Faltóme al mejor tiempo el Gran Canciller, por cuyo medio yo pensava obrar [...]”

<sup>659</sup>Ibidem. “[...] ny me quisieron escuchar por no dar causa que se me dicesse más crédito del que a algunos convernía. [...] porque no se me dicesse más auctoridad de la que a ellos convernía.”

<sup>660</sup>Idem, p. 227. “[...] compuesta por ciertos thélogos que aquí teníamos, muy más aptos para estorvar que para hazer conçiertos.”

<sup>661</sup>Ibidem. “[...] quando viniessemos a concedérselas, ellos no se contentassen con ellas.”

<sup>662</sup>Ibidem. “[...] todo lo que a personas prudentes y virtuosas paresciesse digno de reformaçión [...]”

<sup>663</sup>Idem, p. 226. “De lo que aquí spero succederá no quiero dezir nada, porque sería adivinar el mal y no mostrar remedio para él, mas de lo que succedere será Vuestra Señoría Reverendísima particularmente avisada.”

<sup>664</sup>Full Spanish title of this document is “Relación de lo que en las cosas de la fee se ha hecho en la Dieta de Augusta”.



parties were locked. On one side the Protestants, who based their position in Holy Scripture, on the other the Catholic party, who based its position in the tradition and authority of the church. The document also makes only sparse mentions of the papal legate, but instead assures the reader of the leading role of the emperor as well as the secular Catholic princes.

After describing the arrival of Charles V to the city, the *Relación* of Valdés paraphrases the speech of the count-electoral Frederick held in front of the imperial estates, in which he lauded the imperial mission of Charles V:

“[...] telling them how His Highness left his Spanish kingdoms and the Empress, his wife, along with his sons, and he had at first come to Italy and from there to Germany, with the intention to pacify the wars and to receive his imperial crowns there, and to calm the minds of those who had been disturbed by these new errors, and since with the help of God, our Lord, that in Italy had been done according to His Highness’s wish, he asked that each on his part helps in what needed to be done with his good and holy intention.”<sup>665</sup>

Valdés then describes following exchange of written declarations and ensuing negotiations, although he could not hide the fact that the two parties were unwilling or unable to retreat from their basic positions. The Lutherans claimed that they could not accept the emperor's reply to their initial declaration, in which he had asked them to retract their opinions and to return to the fold of the Catholic church, while promising them that “if there had been some abuses in the Christendom, the emperor with the authority of the pope would strive to remedy and resolve them.”<sup>666</sup> The Lutherans – it is worth noting that none of their representatives were personally named in Valdés’s relation – however refused to do so, claiming that they cannot accept the emperor’s reply without the “injury to their souls”,<sup>667</sup> while complaining about the failure to convoke the general council, as was stipulated in the edict of the diet of Speyer. To this, the Catholics responded by challenging the Lutherans to obey the Edict of Worms, published by the emperor in 1521, through which he banned the teachings of Martin Luther. They also demanded that the Lutherans stop “disputing the matters of our faith, which were approved by so many councils and confirmed by the blood of so many martyrs”.<sup>668</sup>

The Catholic side was willing to concede that certain issues would be remitted to the future general council, but only under the condition that in the meantime, the Lutherans would obey the

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<sup>665</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 230. “[...] diciéndoles como S.M. dejados sus Reinos de España y la Emperatriz su muger e hijos, había venido primera en Italia e de allí en Alemania con intención de pacificar allí las guerras y recibir sus Imperiales coronas, y aquí asentar los ánimos de los que con estos nuevos errores andaban desasosegados, y pues con ayuda de Dios nuestro Señor lo de Italia se había hecho conforme al deseo de S.M., les encargaba que cada uno por su parte en lo que aquí se había de hacer ayudase su buena y santa intención.”

<sup>666</sup>Idem, p. 231-232. “[...] que si algunos abusos en la cristiandad había, el Emperador con autoridad del Papa procuraría de remediarlos y quitarlos.”

<sup>667</sup>Idem, p. 232. “sin cargo de sus conciencias.”

<sup>668</sup>Ibidem. “[...] no entrar en disputa las cosas de nuestra fee por tantos Concilios aprobadas y por tanta sangre de mártires confirmadas [...]”

Catholic church, would not disseminate any new teachings, allow expelled monks to once again use their cloisters and other properties, and generally would “live in peace and concord and [would] not sow any novelty”.<sup>669</sup> Although Valdés claimed these demands to be favourable to the Lutherans, their acceptance would have meant almost total capitulation, and it is no wonder that Lutheran representatives refused to do so. The stalemate was thus almost complete. Although the Lutherans had not yet come so far as to directly refuse the obedience to Charles V in secular matters, they were completely unwilling to make compromises in the matters of faith. After new round of futile negotiations, both parties gradually came to the realization that the imperial diet has failed and the concord will not be achieved. After the marquis of Brandenburg informed the Lutherans that the emperor was unwilling to accept any changes in his decree and refused to grant them any more time for deliberation, both parties openly stayed that they preserved in their positions and left the city. The imperial diet of Augsburg was over.

At the very end of the *Relación*, it is mentioned that four German cities, namely Constance, Strasbourg,<sup>670</sup> Memmingen and Lindau, presented their own declaration, which was allegedly “much worse than the one of the Lutherans and so full of errors against the Blessed Sacrament of the altar and other sacraments of our Christian religion, so that it seemed that was not needed to answer that or to negotiate with them.”<sup>671</sup> Alfonso de Valdés thus made sure that the distinction between the Lutherans, with whom it was still able to negotiate and to try to reach some kind of compromise, and other Protestant sects would be preserved and conveyed even to the wider public.

The imperial diet in Augsburg of 1530 undoubtedly marks a high point in the career of Alfonso de Valdés. The very fact that he formed a part of the imperial delegation and that he had personally negotiated with Philip Melancthon speaks volume about the political influence he wielded towards the end of his life. It is naturally true that his influence could never rival that of his old mentor Mercurino di Gattinara, although it is not inconceivable that had he not died in Vienna just two years later, he might have continued to develop his influence even further. The power of Alfonso de Valdés stemmed mostly from his close relationship with the emperor, who apparently had confidence in him and was even willing to defend him from attacks of his enemies such as Jean Lalemand, as well as from his undeniable intellectual capacities, which allowed him to face the greatest minds among the Protestants, such as Melancthon, in open discussions, and possibly also from his willingness to act as a mediator between various factions.

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<sup>669</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 233-234. “[...] y viviesen en paz y concordia no tentando ni sembrando novedad alguna [...]”

<sup>670</sup>Valdés refers to Strasbourg as „Argentina“, the name derived from Latin toponym „Argentoratum“, which was the original name of the city.

<sup>671</sup>Valdés, *Obra completa*, p. 240. “[...] muy peor que la de los lutheranos y tan llena de errores contra el Santísimo sacramento del altar y otros sacramentos de nuestra religión cristiana, que pareció no merecer que se les respondiese ni tratase con ellos.”

Even with his intellect and his influence, Valdés was not able to prevent the collapse of the negotiations with the Protestants and was not able to achieve any concord, although should we believe his own words, he came rather close to mediate the agreement. The fears that Alfonso de Valdés expressed regarding the violent clash between the Catholics and the Protestants eventually came true, although not immediately, since the armed conflict between the two parties, known as the Schmalkaldic War,<sup>672</sup> eventually began only sixteen years after the imperial diet in Augsburg took place.

With the failure of the imperial diet of Augsburg, the dream of the universal Christian empire ruled by Charles V received another heavy blow. The ever-present Ottoman threat however meant that the final breakdown between the Catholics and the Protestants was postponed. In this context, Scribner notes that “The crisis of 1530 was not of long duration, for the reappearance of the Turkish threat, combined with the desire of King Ferdinand to consolidate his position in eastern Europe and the willingness of Charles V to make a further gesture of conciliation, led to a temporary resolution in the so-called Nuremberg Agreement of 1532. This introduced a kind of truce in the religious issue by incorporating the Protestants into the general peace of the empire, assuring them that although they stood in breach of the Edict of Worms, they would be free from attack, and all legal suits against them in the Imperial Chamber as offenders against the laws of the empire would be withdrawn.”<sup>673</sup>

This is of course the development which we have already mentioned in our chapter “The defence of Europe from the Ottoman menace”, in which we have discussed the comprise that the emperor was forced to make in order to be able to assemble an army with which he eventually successfully countered the Ottoman army, which at that time was threatening Vienna.

It is now useful to also recall the emperor’s edict proclaimed in Brabant on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1531, to which we have also already briefly alluded. This edict explicitly not only prohibited anyone, “be he of any nation, of any state and any occupation, to print or to write, to sell or to buy, to distribute, to read, etc. [...]”, but also to “discuss or to hold any gathering or circle (“conventiales”), any books, writings or teachings [...] of Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, John Huss, Marsilius of Padua, Oecolampadius, Ulrich Zwingli, Philip Melanchthon, Franz Lambert, Johannes Pomeranus (Johannes Bugenhagen), Otto Brussi, Justus Jonas, Johannes Pauperus, Gorchianus and other authors from their sect or from other heretic sects [...] condemned by the church.”<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> The Schmalkaldic league, which united several Protestant princes and which gave the later war its name, was however already established on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1531. See Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 119.

<sup>673</sup> Scribner, *Politics and the institutionalisation of reform in Germany*, p. 187-188.

<sup>674</sup> Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.*, p. 185. „Erstens soll ich künftig niemand unterstehen, welcher Nation, welchen Standes und Berufs er auch sei, Bücher, Schriften oder Lehren oder etwas davon zu drucken oder zu schreiben, zu verkaufen oder zu kaufen, zu verteilen, zu lesen, aufzubewahren oder mit sich zu führen oder in Empfang zu nehmen, darüber zu predigen, sie zu unterrichten, zu verfechten, zu verteidigen, öffentlich oder im geheimen weiterzugeben oder darüber zu diskutieren oder Zusammenkünfte oder Zirkel („conventiales“) darüber abzuhalten, die verfaßt worden sind oder noch verfaßt werden könnten von Martin Luther, Johannes Wycliff, Johannes Hus, Marsilius von Padua, Ökolampadius, Ulrich Zwingli, Philip Melanchthon, Franz Lambert, Johannes Pomeranus (Johannes Bugenhagen), Otto

The text of the edict is interesting mostly by the fact that besides several notorious Protestant figures such as Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli or Oecolampadius, it also banned the books and writings of some medieval authors. While the ban on Englishman Wyckliffe or Bohemian Hus, who in a certain way acted as “precursors” of the Reformation can be seen as understandable, the ban of Marsilius of Padua does not seem to fit into the pattern, especially considering the fact that the philosophy of Marsilius in certain aspects, especially when it came to his support of conciliarism or his criticism of the temporal power of the pope, corresponded with the universalist ideology of promoted by the imperial court of Charles V during the 1520s. One possible explanation for this could be that the names included in the list were not compiled by the imperial officials, but rather by the members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy or possibly by theologians of the university of Louvain, who might have seen Marsilius’s criticism of papacy as dangerous. We may also speculate that concession of this kind could be the result of the absence of Mercurino di Gattinara, who would have probably opposed not only the inclusion of Marsilius, but possibly also the severity of the edict as well. It is undoubtful that the demise of Gattinara greatly weakened the “humanistically” oriented party of the imperial court, the party which included Alfonso de Valdés, and which was most prone to advocating for peaceful solution of the religious conflict, although as we have already seen, the emperor’s confessor Loyasa, who’s influence now greatly increased, was also opened to making pragmatic compromises with the Protestants, albeit only in certain circumstances.

The edict of Brabant, even though its validity was restricted only to the Netherlands, heralded the change in the approach of Charles V to the religious questions and showed increased willingness to resolve this conflict by force. After all, the text of the edict supposed the death penalty for both men as well as women, who would be found guilty of spreading the Protestant or any other “heretical” doctrine, while their heads were supposed to be mounted on a stake and displayed as a warning to the others, and all their property was supposed to be confiscated.<sup>675</sup> While we cannot judge here to which extent was this edict actually enforced, the very fact that the measure of such a severity was pronounced clearly illustrates the hardening of the attitude of Charles V. We do not know exactly what Alfonso de Valdés thought about his measure, since he does not mention it in his correspondence, but considering the opinions which he had been expressing for years, we may safely assume that he did not view it favourably.

The truce with the Protestants, established in 1532 by the peace of Nuremberg, eventually lasted for full fourteen years, during which Charles V concentrated on his two military expeditions to Africa, namely on the successful expedition to Tunis in 1535 and on the failed expedition to Algiers

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Brussi, Justus Jonas, Johannes Pauperus, Gorchianus und anderen Autoren ihrer Sekte oder von andren häretischen, in Irrtum befangenen oder Mißbrauch treibenden, von der Kirche verworfenen Sekten.“

<sup>675</sup>Kohler, *Quellen zur Geschichte Karls V.*, p. 186. „[...] und zwar die Männer sind mit dem schwert, die Frauen durch die Grube hinzurichten, und ihre Köpfe sollen in der Umgebung auf einen Pfahl gesteckt werden, als warnendes Beispiel für die anderen, und ihr Vermögen soll womöglich konfisziert werden.“

in 1541. In 1541, another attempt to reconcile the Catholics and the Protestants was made at the imperial diet Regensburg, which was attended personally by Charles V, when the Catholic side was represented by the papal legate Gaspar Contarini as well as a group of theologians, which included an old enemy of Martin Luther, John Eck. The Protestants were in turn represented again by Philip Melanchthon, as well as other theologians such as Johann Pistorius and Martin Bucer. But just as eleven years ago in Augsburg, even this time the negotiations failed because of the obstinacy of Martin Luther as well as the pope Paul III. Three years later, another imperial diet was convoked, this time in Speyer, but not even this attempt did lead to reconciliation.<sup>676</sup> In 1546, however, the conflict between the emperor and the Protestants finally took on a new force, when the military confrontation, about which Alfonso de Valdés was warning from Augsburg in 1530, finally began.

As it turned out, the unity could not be upheld by the force, certainly not only by the force alone. Despite the rather impressive military victory over the Protestant forces in the Battle of Mühlberg on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1547, which gave rise to iconic painting by Charles's painter Tizian, depicting the victorious emperor astride of his horse with a spear in his hand, it turned out that the Protestants could not be subdued for long. The further diversification of the Protestant camp, which was already noticed by Alfonso de Valdés during the diet of Augsburg, made it even more difficult to re-establish the control.

It is a historical irony that it was again the city of Augsburg, which hosted another imperial diet, where the peace between the Catholic and Protestants had been sealed, this time in 1555, one year before the abdication of Charles V. The religious peace of Augsburg established the principle generally known as *cuius regio, eius religio*, that is “whose realm, their religion”, which allowed secular princes to determine the religion which was then binding for all subjects of their dominions, who however had the option to emigrate if they did not agree with the creed enforced by their lord. Needless to say, this peace applied only to Catholics and Lutherans, while excluding other Protestant factions such as Calvinists, Anabaptists or Sacramentalists. It is telling that this religious peace was made without the direct involvement of Charles V, who towards the end of his reign felt strong disillusion from his failure to resolve the religious question in Germany, and thus he left the negotiations the diet to his brother and successor Ferdinand.<sup>677</sup>

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<sup>676</sup>Pineda, *Carlos V (I), dos acercamientos a la reforma protestante*, p. 456.

<sup>677</sup>Scribner, *Politics and the institutionalisation of reform in Germany*, p. 193-194.

## Conclusion

In order to form a conclusion of our work, it is probably useful to recapitulate the main research question, which we have outlined at the beginning of our work, and which is: What was the exact attitude of Alfonso de Valdés towards the project of universal empire of Charles V, or more precisely, what was the content of the “universalist ideology” of Alfonso de Valdés? This main research question was then supplemented by two subquestions: Did Alfonso de Valdés develop his ideas independently of other members of the imperial court, especially the grand chancellor Mercurino di Gattinara, or did he just disseminate the ideas whose content was outlined by someone else? What was the attitude of Alfonso de Valdés towards the Reformation, whose beginning coincided with the beginning of the reign of Charles V?

As we have demonstrated throughout our work, Alfonso de Valdés continuously supported the idea of the universal empire, despite the fact that he did not use to literally employ the term “universal”. The lack of the adjective “universal” while referring to the empire of Charles V in the writings of Valdés however does not negate their content, which was heavily in favour of the establishment of imperial hegemony. Although the writings of Alfonso de Valdés are less explicit in this matter than those written by Gattinara, which may be explained by the fact that the grand chancellor often strove to directly influenced the emperor himself through his memoranda, something Alfonso de Valdés probably could not afford to do, there is no doubt that Valdés supported the idea of unified Christendom. In this context, it is possible to talk about *Imperio Cristiano* promoted by Valdés, the term coined by Ramón Menéndez Pidal, although contrary to the claims made by Pidal, the concept used by Alfonso de Valdés did not stand in opposition to that of Gattinara. Our conclusion in this matter is that the question of denomination is rather unimportant here; it is completely acceptable to talk about “the universal empire” promoted by Alfonso de Valdés, in the same way as it is acceptable to talk about “the Christian empire” or even “the Christian universal empire”.

Among the main reasons for the unification of the entire Christendom in one empire, however loosely defined it was, which were listed by Valdés, was the perceived need to organize a common defence against the forces of the Ottoman Empire, as was explicitly stated by Valdés in his *Relación de la batalla de Pavia*, and to ensure the establishment of peace among the Christians, whose guarantor should be the emperor himself. Alfonso de Valdés was also convinced about the pressing need to reform the whole Catholic church, which would supposedly also lead to the reform of way of life of ordinary Christians. This conviction stemmed from Valdés’s attitude towards the Roman curia, whom he strongly criticised mainly in his *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, in which he went as far as to suggest that the Sack of Rome, committed by imperial forces, actually represented God’s punishment for the failure of the church to fulfil its mission. It is however difficult to judge to which extent was the criticism levelled on the pope Clement VII as well as the cardinals and other high-

ranking members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy motivated by true conviction and to which extend it was a result of need to shift the blame from the Sack of Rome from Charles V to the pope. Prior to 1529, the writings of Alfonso de Valdés heavily lean in favour of dualism between the emperor and the pope, which in practice meant confining competences of the pope and the whole church to the spiritual sphere, while Valdés also went as far as to suggest depriving the papacy of its dominions in central Italy. The establishment of the imperial hegemony, which Valdés supported, would have also meant the “depoliticization” of the papacy, as was suggested by Headley. This depoliticization would allow the emperor to more effectively control Italian peninsula and would eliminate one of the most serious rivals to the imperial power. However, after 1529 and the signing of the treaty between Clement VII and Charles V, rhetoric towards the papacy employed by Valdés lost its strong anti-papal flavour. As we have argued, signing of the treaty with the pope, together with death of Mercurino di Gattinara in June 1530 and failure to settle the religious crisis in Germany eventually led to disintegration of radical imperial universalism.

Besides his criticism of the papacy, Alfonso de Valdés also dedicated big part of his writings to the conflict between Charles V and the king of France, Francis I, who for the emperor represented by far the biggest obstacle in the fight for hegemony over western Europe. There is however nothing to suggest that Alfonso de Valdés was in favour of violent expansion of emperor’s dominions, although this “pacifist” attitude did not include the recuperation of all territories of the former duchy of Burgundy, which were seen as lawfully belonging to the emperor. When Francis I renegaded and refused to honour the treaty of Madrid, which stipulated the restitution of Burgundy to the emperor, Valdés fiercely criticized his “perfidy” in *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*.

It is difficult to judge the precise motivation of Valdés, that is whether he supported the emperor and spread the imperial propaganda just because of his employment at the imperial court, or whether he did become an important personage precisely because the fact that he internally aligned with the goals of Habsburg universalism. Judging by his literary activity and his correspondence with other humanists, we tend to favour the second option, despite the fact that it is impossible to present some sort of a definitive evidence. His personal commitment to the reform of the Christian society and the renewal of Christian piety and morality, which he hoped to achieve through the establishment of the universal empire led by Charles V, however, suggest that Alfonso de Valdés was sincere in his efforts to help to achieve the universal empire of Charles V, and that he truly saw this as a possible solution of all variety of problems, which were at that time affecting the Christendom.

The influence of Mercurino di Gattinara over the work of Alfonso de Valdés is undeniable, and it is most apparent in the official documents and correspondence, which Valdés wrote on behalf of Charles V and which sometimes included the phrases present also in Gattinara’s own writings. This does not mean, however, that Alfonso de Valdés always acted exclusively under direct supervision of Gattinara. On the contrary, the existing evidence suggests that Valdés wrote his two polemical

dialogues independently and from his own initiative; in the case of *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, he only approached Gattinara for advice once its manuscript was completed. The certain independence of Alfonso de Valdés might have been also facilitated by the fact that he held correspondence with personages such as Erasmus of Rotterdam or Pedro Mártir, which granted him access to other sources of inspiration beyond that which he received from Gattinara.

Alfonso de Valdés had been observing the beginnings of the Reformation at least from 1520, when he personally travelled to the Netherlands and later to Germany, where he personally attended the imperial diet in Worms. Valdés was conscious of the significance as well as of the potential of the nascent Protestant movement to destroy the religious unity of the whole western Christendom. On the other hand, Valdés was well aware that at least some of the complaints voiced against Roman curia were justified and he openly supported the convocation of the general council as early as in 1521, which was also one of the demands of German critics of the papal curia, and which in the course of 1520s also became one of the key objects of the imperial policy of Charles V. Although Alfonso de Valdés did not endorse radical opinions of Martin Luther or any other key figures of the Protestant movement, his opinions on certain issues in some cases nonetheless resembled the opinions held by the Protestants. This is the case of his stance towards the veneration of saints, holy relics and other aspects of external cult such as pilgrimages, as well as his positive stance towards clerical marriage. Unlike most Protestants, Alfonso de Valdés however did not deny the sanctity of relics, nor did he fully reject veneration of saints and other deeds performed in order to attain salvation, but he recognize their potential to mislead regular Christians and emphasized the need of internal faith and living a life with accordance to the teachings of Christ. The fact is that Alfonso de Valdés never denied any principal Catholic dogma, which was even recognized in two *censuras* written for the purposes of the Spanish Inquisition.

Two years before his death, Alfonso de Valdés attempted to heal the ever-growing rift between the Catholics and the Protestants when he attempted to mediate some kind of compromise, while he personally took part in the negotiations of the imperial diet in Augsburg in 1530. His importance is attested by the fact that he negotiated with Philip Melanchthon, one of the leading figures of the Protestant party, with whom he had allegedly come close to reaching some kind of settlement. This compromise was then however rejected by other members of the Catholic party, including papal theologians, whose obstinacy Valdés bitterly criticised.

In his writings, Alfonso de Valdés unfortunately did not present a detailed vision of the future of the universal empire, but rather focused on contemporary political matters such as the religious crisis in Germany, the conflict with the papacy and ensuing sacking of Rome, as well as the struggle against Francis I of France and his temporary ally Henry VIII. This could be in part explained by the fact that during the time of his imperial service, the emperor was still young man in his twenties and



early thirties. Did Valdés expect that his son, future Philip II, would succeed Charles V not only as the king of Spain, but also as the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire? We do not know, but we may assume that this did not seem entirely impossible at the time when Valdés wrote his dialogues, although the election of emperor's brother Ferdinand as the king of Romans in 1531 made it clear who is going to rule empire after Charles's death, or as it turned out, after his abdication, which came in 1556.<sup>678</sup> On the other hand, Charles V himself had toyed with the idea that Philip would in turn succeed Ferdinand, thus once again uniting the kingdom of Spain together with the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>679</sup> As it turned out, this idea did not prove to be viable, as it is indeed difficult to imagine in which way would Philip, who preferred to rule his kingdoms from the palace of Escorial located near Madrid, could actually act also as the emperor.

In retrospect, the hopes that Alfonso de Valdés, Mercurino di Gattinara and others put in Charles V and the establishment the universal empire, whose ruler would fulfill the biblical saying *fiet unum ovile et unus pastor*, may seem naive. But this perception comes mostly from the fact that in the end, Europe "chose" another way. As Ramón Menéndez Pidal noted: "The reign of this Euro-American emperor remains isolated, inimitable, without possible continuation. After him, all the universality was rejected."<sup>680</sup> The way of more or less equally strong powers, who would adhere to carefully orchestrated balance of power, which was established after the end of The Thirty Years War in 1648, and which, despite being at one point nearly shattered by Napoleon Bonaparte, eventually endured until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it perished in a cataclysm of two world wars, only to be replaced by a new system of international relations based on realities of the cold war.

The fact that history took another route however does not mean that the idea of universal empire was inherently flawed. On the contrary, it represents a legitimate alternative presented by men who were sincerely, as far as we can judge from afar, trying to resolve numerous problems affecting the society in which they lived.

When assessing the career of Alfonso de Valdés, it is important to note that his work remained incomplete. His relatively early death at the age of some forty-two years prevented him from elaborating his philosophy further, whether in form of additional dialogues or other writings. It is also true that if Alfonso de Valdés had not died in Vienna in the autumn of 1532, he would have inadvertently found it difficult to publish his writing in Spain, where, as we have already seen, the inquisitorial pressure against Erasmians and other nonconformist intellectuals greatly increased after 1530. We may only speculate whether this pressure would have eventually forced him to seek an exile, just like his brother Juan, who spent the rest of his life in Italy, or not.

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<sup>678</sup>Álvarez, *Carlos V: el Cesar y el hombre*, p. 204.

<sup>679</sup> Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, p. 259-261.

<sup>680</sup> Pidal, *Idea Imperial de Carlos V*, p. 35.

What would have Alfonso de Valdés thought about the posterior political and religious development? He would have certainly lauded Charles V for his successful military campaign against Tunis, which took place in 1535. Otherwise, Valdés would have faced a series of disappointments. When it comes to the defense of Christianity against the Muslim menace, the conquest of Tunis was followed only by another expedition, which took place six years later in Algiers, and which ended in failure, mainly because of bad weather. Otherwise, the energies of Charles V continued to be spent in wars against other Christians, be it his French nemesis or German Lutheran princes, the same wars, which were supposed to end with the victory at Pavia in 1525. Neither the conquest of Constantinople, not to mention of Jerusalem, in which many at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century placed their hopes, did take place. On the other hand, the Ottoman invasion to Italy, against which Valdés warned in 1525, did not materialize either. The fight between the Ottoman Empire and forces of the Christianity thus ended in a stalemate, which continued well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Ottoman armies in 1683 for the last time came on verge of capturing Vienna, only to be repulsed for good.

As we have already stated, the philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés was deeply influenced by his mentor Mercurino di Gattinara, and though him most likely by the work of Dante Alighieri, one of the main proponents of the imperial universalism, and although direct proof that he was familiar with his work is missing, it is highly likely that he was aware of its content, especially considering the fact that this work was known to Gattinara. Whether, and if yes, then to which extent, was Alfonso de Valdés familiar or influenced by other late medieval authors, who rejected the temporal power of the papacy and acted as proponents of the imperial rule, such as William Ockham or Marsilius of Padua, is difficult to assess. What is undeniable is the fact that the philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés was also heavily influenced by the ideas of Erasmus of Rotterdam, as was noted by his contemporaries such as Pedro Olivar. As we have already argued, it is also possible that the philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés drew on the ideas of the alumbrado movement, as was suggested by his contemporary doctor Vélez and present-day author Rebecca Ard Boone.

Alfonso de Valdés was very critical of the state in which Christianity found itself in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Besides the criticism directed towards the ecclesiastical hierarchy, Valdés also criticized wider sectors of population, claiming that only small part of population was capable to actually live a life in accordance with the doctrine of Christ. The core of Valdés's criticism lay in his rejection of "visible things", as he himself put it, in favour of "invisible things", that is the internal faith and intellectual understanding of Christian doctrine. In other words, Valdés refused the religion which was centred on the external aspects of the cult, such as holy relics, holy images, pilgrimages, religious feasts, the cult of saints and others. Although Valdés did not categorically refuse these external aspects nor did he called for their entire abolishment, he suggested that their overall importance was low and that they should not interfere, nor could they possibly compensate, the lack of internal faith and

morality. Valdés's perception of the critical state of the Christianity was closely tied to his support for the establishment of the imperial hegemony, since he expected that the emperor Charles V would have acted as the highest secular authority, which would be able not only to prevent the worst abuses committed by secular as well as religious authorities, but what is more important, he would also initiate a reform of the church, which would lead to the renewal of Christian life.

Although Alfonso de Valdés was accused of Lutheranism by men such as Lalemand or Castiglione, these accusations were showed to be baseless, as was recognized even by Pedro Olivar, who assessed his *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* for the purposes of the Spanish Inquisition. Although Alfonso de Valdés held certain opinions which were closed to those of early Protestants, he did not deny any basic Catholic dogma regarding the salvation or sacraments. Alfonso de Valdés continuously warned about possible dire consequences, which the Protestant movement could have and correctly perceived the threat of religious wars between the Catholics and the Protestants. During the imperial diet of Augsburg in 1530, Valdés tried to orchestrate the compromise between both sides and personally negotiated with leading members of the Protestant faction. He emphasized not only the necessity of the religious reform, but also promoted granting certain concessions to the Protestants, while criticizing the performance of the papal legate.

The philosophy of Alfonso de Valdés is distinctive for its relative tolerance, which clearly contrasts with the attitude, which soon prevailed on both sides of the European religious conflict. This tolerance however cannot be viewed in modern sense of the word. Valdés clearly wasn't tolerant to Protestant sects such as the Anabaptists or the Sacramentalists, who negated some of the most central Catholic dogmas.

It is nonetheless certain that the life and work of Alfonso de Valdés attest to relative great diversity of Spanish intellectual life of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The diversity manifested itself by receptivity to some foreign influences, like the ideas of Erasmus, and its ability to develop those ideas further. The career of Alfonso de Valdés is unique especially thanks to the fact that he combined the service in the imperial administration with his own intellectual accomplishments.

The ideas of Alfonso de Valdés however did not gain the notoriety or fame of some other intellectuals. The most probable cause of this is the fact that after his writings aroused the suspicion of the Spanish inquisition, their dissemination, especially in Spain itself, was greatly limited. This in turn caused that both Alfonso as well as his brother were relatively unknown on the Iberian peninsula well until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was noted by the Spanish historian of the Fermín Caballero, who wrote that "The foreign authors, and especially those who concentrated on the religious reform of that time, have written sufficiently about those notable Spaniards, and for a reason which was contrary to

the silence which in their respect was held by our countrymen.”<sup>681</sup> Caballero attributes this to the lingering influence of the Spanish Inquisition, when he says that “[...] few here dared to praise or even to study an author, no matter how notable, if the anathema of the Holy Office [of the Inquisition] fell upon him, or if it was mentioned in some stretchy note that his doctrine was *known* for or that it *smelled* of heresy.”<sup>682</sup>

In this respect, the goals outlined by Pedro Olivar in his *censura* of one of Valdés’s dialogues were fulfilled. Spain indeed managed to protect itself from “the new things” and after 1521, it avoided any large-scale social upheaval which affected Germany, as well as domestic religious conflict such as those that took place in Germany or France. This relatively stability, however, came with a price. Spanish orthodoxy, embodied by the king Philip II, made it impossible to reconcile with his Dutch Protestant subjects, who rebelled against his rule in 1576. This inflexibility plunged Spain into eight decades long conflict, which eventually ended only in 1648, and which took its heavy toll on Spanish military as well as economic strength, and in overall greatly contributed to the decline of the power of Spain itself.

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<sup>681</sup>Caballero, *Alonso y Juan de Valdés*, p. 14. “Los literatos extranjeros, y señaladamente los que se han ocupado de la reforma religiosa de aquel tiempo, han escrito bastante de estos españoles señalados, por una razón contraria al silencio que de ellos guardaron nuestros compatriotas.”

<sup>682</sup>Idem p. 15. “[...] pocos se atrevieron aquí á elogiar, ni aun á estudiar siquiera, á un autor, por notable que fuese, si le había alcanzado el anatema del Santo Oficio, ó llegaba á estar comprendido en la nota elástica de que su doctrina *sabía* ú *olía* á herética.”

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