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William D. Phillips and Carla Rahn Phillips
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A CONCISE HISTORY OF SPAIN

The rich cultural and political life of Spain has emerged from its complex history, from the diversity of its peoples, and from continual contact with outside influences. This book traces that history from prehistoric times to the present, focusing particularly on culture, society, politics, and personalities. Written in an engaging style, it introduces readers to the key themes that have shaped Spain's history and culture. These include its varied landscapes and climates; the impact of waves of diverse human migrations; the importance of its location as a bridge between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and between Europe and Africa. Religion also plays a role, including militant Catholicism and its centuries of conflict with Islam, Judaism, and Protestantism, as well as debates over the place of the church in Spain. Illustrations, maps, and a guide to further information including major cultural figures and places to see, make the history of this fascinating country come alive.

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and

CARLA RAHN PHILLIPS



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CONTENTS

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>List of maps</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
1 The land and its early inhabitants	1
2 Ancient legacies	21
3 Diversity in medieval Spain	47
4 The rise of Spain to international prominence	82
5 Spain as the first global empire	134
6 Toward modernity: from the Napoleonic invasion to Alfonso XIII	206
7 The struggle for the Spanish soul: Republic, civil war, and dictatorship	246
8 New Spain, new Spaniards: European, democratic, and multi-cultural	281
<i>Chronology and rulers</i>	305
<i>Guide to further information</i>	310
<i>Index</i>	330

ILLUSTRATIONS

Unless otherwise indicated, photos were taken by the authors.

1.1	The Picos de Europa (Peaks of Europe; Cantabria)	<i>page</i> 19
1.2	The Toros de Guisando (Bulls of Guisando) near Ávila	20
2.1	Remains of fortification walls in Tarraco (Catalonia). Photo courtesy of Lawrence V. Mott	43
2.2	The great aqueduct of Segovia	43
2.3	The elaborate proscenium of the Roman theatre in Mérida (Extremadura)	44
2.4	Roman road in the Gredos range of the Central Mountains	44
2.5	Crown bearing the name of King Recceswinth (mid seventh century CE). Courtesy of the Archivo Fotográfico, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid	45
2.6	San Pedro de la Nave, c. 680–711 (Zamora)	46
3.1	The Great Mosque at Córdoba (Andalusia)	79
3.2	The Torre del Oro (Tower of Gold) in Seville	79
3.3	The entry portico of the co-cathedral of Santa María in Guadalajara (Castile-La Mancha)	80
3.4	The graceful Romanesque bridge at Puente la Reina (Navarre)	81
3.5	Cloister of the convent of Las Dueñas (Salamanca)	81
4.1	The Alhambra palace, Granada	128
4.2	Frontier castle at Peñafiel (Castile-León), overlooking the Duero River valley	129
4.3	La Alberca near Salamanca (Castile-León)	129
4.4	Cathedral of Santa María, Burgos	130
4.5	Church of San Pablo, Valladolid (Castile-León)	131

	<i>Illustrations</i>	vii
4.6	Lonja de los Mercaderes (Merchants' Exchange) in Valencia. Photo courtesy of EFE News Service (US)	132
4.7	The palace of Infantado in Guadalajara (Castile-La Mancha)	133
5.1	The Roman bridge over the Tormes River in Salamanca (Castile-León). Photo courtesy of EFE News Service (US)	202
5.2	(a) Plaza mayor, Salamanca; (b) Plaza mayor, Mérida (Extremadura)	203
5.3	Kitchen hearth in the home of the painter El Greco in Toledo	204
5.4	Casa Lonja (House of Trade) in Seville	204
5.5	Seville by Antonio Sánchez Coello. Reproduced courtesy of the Museo de América, Madrid	205
5.6	The royal palace in Madrid	205
6.1	Paper factory in Prat de Llobregat (Barcelona). Photo by "Jordi" in <i>España en Blanco y Negro</i> , by Juan Miguel Sánchez Vigil and Manuel Durán Blázquez (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1998), p. 138. Reproduced courtesy of Archivo Espasa, Madrid	244
6.2	<i>Comida de bodas en Bergantiños</i> , by Fernando Álvarez de Sotomayor (1875–1960). Reproduced courtesy of the Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid	245
6.3	The building in Barcelona known as "la pedrera" (the stone quarry), by the architect Antoni Gaudí. Photo courtesy of EFE News Service (US)	245
7.1	Poster, produced by the Communist Party of Spain, urging voters to choose the affiliated parties of the Popular Front in the elections of 1936. Reproduced with permission from the Col·lecció Cartells del Pavelló de la República / Universitat de Barcelona	278
7.2	Falange Party poster. Reproduced with permission from the Col·lecció Cartells del Pavelló de la República / Universitat de Barcelona	279
7.3	Street sign in Oñate (Guipúzcoa)	280
8.1	The Roman bridge over the Guadiana River, Mérida	302
8.2	The Alamillo bridge over the Guadalquivir River in Seville	303
8.3	Street demonstrations after March 11, 2004, terrorist attacks. Photo courtesy of EFE News Service (US)	303

- 8.4 María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, vice-president under President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, with female reporters and government workers at Moncloa Palace, the seat of government, in 2004. Photo courtesy of EFE News Service (US)

MAPS

1.1	Physical Iberia. Adapted from NASA aerial photo; Bernard F. Reilly, <i>The Medieval Spains</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. ix; and Carla Rahn Phillips and William D. Phillips, Jr., <i>Spain's Golden Fleece: Wool Production and the Wool Trade from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century</i> (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997)	page 6
2.1	Roman Hispania. Adapted from Reilly, <i>The Medieval Spains</i> , p. x	24
3.1	Iberia, late eleventh century. Adapted from Reilly, <i>The Medieval Spains</i> , p. xi	63
3.2	Iberia, late thirteenth century. Adapted from Reilly, <i>The Medieval Spains</i> , p. xii	71
5.1	Spain, traditional regions. Adapted from David E. Vassberg, <i>The Village and the Outside World in Golden Age Castile</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)	135
5.2	Spanish America, c. 1790. Adapted from Leslie Bethell, ed., <i>The Cambridge History of Latin America</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), vol. I, p. 398	195
8.1	Map of current administrative divisions. Adapted from Peter J. Donaghy and Michael T. Newton, <i>Spain: A Guide to Political and Economic Institutions</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 99	286

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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

In modern times, Spain has often been perceived as different from other countries in Europe, with a pejorative connotation to that difference. In part, at least, that perception stems from a lack of knowledge about the history of Spain. Yet, in a certain sense Spain is different from the rest of Europe, in the diversity of its population and in its close contacts with civilizations outside Europe, in historical times and into the present as well. In writing this book, we have aimed to survey the long and complex history of Spain and its regions in a form accessible to an interested readership from various backgrounds. Whether those readers are serious students of Spain or casual travelers, we hope this book will provide a useful introduction to the complex history of a fascinating country. To best accomplish this, we pay due attention to all of the periods of the Spanish past, rather than concentrating on the more recent centuries. We also try to pay due attention to the many voices contending over the Spanish past.

As we planned and produced the book, we identified a series of themes that we could follow through the millennia. Among the themes we chose were the diverse population mentioned above and the difficult and varied ecology of the Iberian Peninsula. The location of Spain between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean – and, by extension, between Europe and Africa – placed it in continual contact and potential conflict with other countries and other civilizations, from prehistoric times through the medieval centuries. In the early chapters, we discuss how waves of in- and out-migration by a

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diversity of peoples shaped not only the demographic character of Spain but also its political and social character. For example, medieval Spain had a unique history in the coexistence of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities. At the same time, however, centuries of conflict between Christian and Islamic political power eventually forged religious militancy on both sides. In the Christian kingdom that emerged victorious at the end of the medieval period, religious identity permeated every aspect of Spanish life. The implications of that religious identity – and opposition to it – persist even into the present day, and one cannot understand Spanish history without taking it into account.

Another theme we follow is the challenge of power. During the early modern period, roughly from 1500 to 1800, the Habsburg dynasty and its Bourbon successors presided over the world's first global empire. In the process of administering that empire, the Spanish bureaucracy had to deal with issues emanating from all corners of the earth – a precursor to the modern challenges of globalization. By 1650, Spain had lost dominance in Europe to its rivals, but the Spanish Empire persisted until the early nineteenth century, and a few remnants lasted even longer. The legacy of Spain's history as a global power continues to color Spanish political life into the present, not least in its role as an intermediary between Europe and the Islamic world, and Europe and Latin America.

The rich cultural life of Spain emerged from the diversity of peoples who inhabited the land and from continual contact with outside influences as well. In a concise history, we cannot do justice to such diversity. As an attempt to remedy that lack, in the Guide to Further Information we mention major cultural figures and sites where interested readers can supplement the brief mentions in the text.

This book reflects our decades-long interest in Spain and its people over time. We have been studying, visiting, and teaching about Spain throughout our academic careers and have published both separately and together on a wide range of topics. In addition to learning from our own research and teaching, we have benefited from scholarship in related fields. In particular, we have learned from participation in the Society for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies (SSPHS)

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[More information](#)

Preface

xiii

(now the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies [ASPHS]), an international organization based in the United States that celebrated its fortieth anniversary in 2009. Throughout its existence, the SSPHS/ASPHS has provided an important venue for lively debate and intellectual exchange among established scholars and those starting out in their careers. In that organization, as well as in professional meetings and while doing research and writing, we have learned from so many scholars, archivists, librarians, and editors, that it is impossible to thank them individually. We are also grateful to the editorial team at Cambridge University Press, particularly Helen Waterhouse and Marigold Acland for inviting us to undertake this project, and to Leigh Mueller and the anonymous readers who helped us immeasurably in strengthening the text. This is a small book on a vast topic. We take full responsibility for choosing what to emphasize, what to leave out, and how to interpret the overall trajectory of Spanish history. We also take full responsibility for any errors that remain, despite our best efforts.

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