

National Worldview and Charles V'S Image in Spanish and Russian Wikipedia

By

Natalia Vasilievna Antonova

Kazan Federal University; PhD in history, senior lecturer at the Department of Foreign languages for International Relations

Tlf: +79270370281

Scopus ID: 56236796400

ORCID: 0000-0002-3547-9459

Email: Natalia.Antonova@kpfu.ru

José Antonio García Muniz

Kazan Federal University, teacher

Email: MKGarsiya@kpfu.ru

Abstract

The present article looks at the national variations in the way to interpret Charles V's deeds and see his image in mainstream media, namely, Wikipedia. The authors focus on the basic facts and characteristics attributed to the monarch in both entries, choose the most revealing pieces of information and undertake a comparative analysis. The issue under scrutiny is primarily the way to interpret the same events by both nations which leads to variations in perception of the royal image of the sovereign. In order to hold the analysis, the authors identify the milestones in Charles V's biography and compare the way they are represented in both versions, opposing the discording ones. As a result, they reveal several features, typical of each nation.

Keywords: Charles V, royal image, Wikipedia, mainstream media, national worldview.

1. Introduction

Charles V was one of the most powerful sovereigns of Europe in his times, but still the attitude to this historical personage as a monarch is rather ambiguous¹. What is more, his image has been oscillating over the course of history between undeniably positive and rather negative one². On the one hand, just a glance at the street index makes it evident, that almost every town and city has at least one street or square called after Charles V. You can often hear historians speak of the king as an extremely important personage in Spanish history. On the other hand, in Russian historiography this monarch was long considered as nothing extraordinary, if not to say negative, although nowadays the image has significantly altered (Antonova, 2016).

Such varieties in image can be easily explained by changes in political and cultural context, which provoke appearance of certain mental chiches that color the image in different

¹ A pesar de que la Monarquía hispana alcanzó su máximo esplendor durante el período en que los monarcas de la Casa de Austria reinaron (siglos XVI y XVII), la dinastía Habsburgo no ha gozado de una valoración benévola en la historiografía española de los siglos XIX y XX [1].

² J. Moreno Luzón points out that: "Cualquier identidad, individual o colectiva, constituye un fenómeno cambiante, en absoluto inmutable o perpetuo, y para persistir necesita renovarse periódicamente, actualizarse de acuerdo con las circunstancias y con los intereses de los actores presentes en cada situación" [2]. The views on Charles V as the founder of a new dynasty and new culture on Iberian Peninsula, as well as the ways of evaluating his contribution to the development of Iberian culture have varied during the whole period of researching this problem [3].

ways³. In this article the image of Spanish monarch will be studied as it is viewed by the current mainstream media, namely, Wikipedia.

2. Methods

In order to study the political image of the king we will hold a comparative analysis of two Wikipedia entries about Charles V, one in Spanish and another in Russian. First, the entries will be compared as structures, with the view to detect variations. Then each of the parts will be exposed to content analysis with the view to establish logical accents and emotional shades. Afterwards, the features of each version will be compared in order to identify peculiarities and similarities that exist between them and draw a conclusion as to the driving forces that induce creators of the texts.

3. Results and Discussion

First thing, it is important to notice that the entries have a slight controversy in their titles. Spanish title is “Charles I of Spain”, with a subsequent extension, “V of the Holy Roman Empire”, while Russian heading focuses only on his title as the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. This fact might reveal national attitude to Charles as a political leader. While Russians show more interest in the international aspect of his activities, the Spanish seem to be more concerned about his Spanish origins and connections, the title of an emperor being complementary to the national one.

What is more, referring to the comments, placed on Talk page we can see a number of controversies concerning the point, one of them regarding Charles’ status as a Spanish king⁴. The talk page contains many more comments in this respect, but the general attitude remains intact. Despite the ambiguity of Charles’ status as a king of Spain it is widely used and recognized, which reveals national pride of the powerful sovereign.

On Russian wiki talk page there is also a comment, calling to name the king in accordance with the customary trend, which consists in adding the country of origin. However, determining native country the author did not show complete confidence. Despite being just a particular case, this fact testifies to existence of a general tendency among Russian common citizens not to associate Charles V with Spain.

By correlating the contents of each version, we can clearly see differences in the way they are organized. Spanish version is initially more extensive, has more items and includes numerous details. Nevertheless, the general structure remains comparatively similar. Spanish version is divided into several large blocks each of which in their turn include several parts, while Russian one has a more linear structure.

The first chapters maintain comparatively similar order, but the period, related to Spanish reign, is represented in the most different ways. In Russian Wikipedia the only aspect addressed is that of his title. Meanwhile, Spanish Wikipedia disposes of a large variety of details, such as his succession to Ferdinand II of Aragon, riots in Castile, las Comunidades,

³ Kalinin defines image as “an intentionally generated by frequent reproduction emotionally colored type of a political figure, in possession of high informative value y ability to affect general public” [5].

⁴ Firstly, because Spain was not the state we know today, for this reason Charles Habsburg in fact did not use the title “King of Spain”. Hence, it is a great historical error to name Charles V “Charles I of Spain”. Therefore, I follow to eliminate the title mentioned above.; Hi! I wanted to contribute to the discussion. I am doing a research work in history of science, and here in Argentina, at least to me he was presented as Charles V” and offer a relevant explanation. It would be appreciated if you substituted the title for that of “Charles V”.[6]

conflicts in Aragon, las Germanías, the war in Navarra, the structural arrangement of Spanish monarchy, its reign in America, control over the church. This fact supports the above-mentioned idea of particular interest to Spanish roots, typical of this entry. The next point appears rather revealing as well, but this time it highlights a feature of Russian historiography. The block, dedicated to Charles V as the Holy Roman Emperor, is mainly identical to Spanish version, but is supplemented with a paragraph dedicated to his transformational acts. This aspect of historical analysis is typical of Russian historiography and reveals national interest in meaningful changes. It would be an error to say, that Spanish version lacks information about Charles' reforms, they are described in the paragraph about Spanish monarchy. Nevertheless, the attention paid to the issue in Russian version appears more intent.

There is another minor feature that might appear significant for revealing difference in national attitudes. Spanish entry presents the period of the Protestant Reformation as "appearance of Protestantism", which sounds quite natural for Spanish mindset as a Catholic country with rich historical legacy. Taking into account the fact that the issue of relations between Catholic and Protestant church has long been discussed nationwide, this aspect seems the most relevant to characterize Charles' policy with respect to German nobility. As for Russian version, the paragraph holds the title of "Wars and external policy with Germany". In fact, the essence remains the same, but this generalized reference poses the issue in quite a different way. Abstention from specifying the problem in question might result from atheist tradition of the soviet era, when the questions related to religion were to be avoided. In Spain, on the contrary, religious sphere was rather open and nothing could prevent from openly discussing the topic.

Another important feature, that might undercover differences in national attitudes is that of the way to present the issue of the Americas. Authors of Spanish entry chose to highlight the idea that Charles governed on American continent as well and gave the paragraph an appropriate title: "His reign in America". Meanwhile, Russian entry is more concerned with discoveries, being titled "Maritime navigation and getting settled in America". We can clearly see how the same event is treated differently in order to emphasize certain aspects, that prevail in the national way of seeing the world.

The way to present the chapter related to Charles' abdication and death also varies. Spanish title is quite a detailed description, which apart from the king's abdication includes his seclusion, death and relocation of his body. Russian interpretation is fairly concise: "Retirement", which makes evident, that the long history of Charles' seclusion in Yuste monastery, his death and the testament to rebury him in a new religious foundation are not of such interest as in Spain. Spanish entry, on the contrary, demonstrates vivid interest in the emperor's last years and his death as a crown to his whole life.

Russian Wikipedia contains another curious paragraph, which includes historians' judgements with regard to Charles V. Spanish version lacks such a paragraph, although Iberian historians who study or studied the monarch's reign are much more numerous. Another paragraph, which is, unlike Russian entry, not presented in Spanish one is that of popular culture and commemoration. This feature might testify to certain tendency to internalization, typical of Spanish version of the article, that is, its overall view of the matter from inside, as an intrinsic element of national history. Russian interpretations, in its turn, appears more succinct, dry and externalized.

Moving on to the content of the entries, it is evident, that the article in Spanish is

much more expanded. As was mentioned before, Charles' infancy and early years are described with high precision, especially concerning his Spanish lineage and kinship with Catholic monarchs of Spain.

Russian text is quite brave, it lacks any details about Charles' early years or Spanish connections and focuses on the facts essential to outline the king's origins. The long dynastic relations are summarized in a short paragraph, which specifies the overseas possessions, first being those inherited from his father, namely, Burgundy, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Artois and Franche-Comte, followed by his mother's lands in Spain, his grandfather's lands in Spain and Italy and concluded by Austrian possessions inherited from Maximilian I.

These facts make it possible to assume that for Spanish people Charles' kinship with their royal family is of great interest, while Russians are more concerned with his northern lineage.

The same trend can be easily followed in the subsequent paragraphs, which in Spanish Wikipedia provide a detailed analysis of the king's stay in Spain, his reforms and policy. An important feature of the text is an evident tendency to associate Charles with Spain and pose this country as the native one, positioning other terrains as possessions of Spanish crown:

Durante el reinado de Carlos I, la corona de Castilla expandió sus territorios sobre gran parte de América

During Charles I's reign Castile crown expanded its lands to a major part of America

La mayoría de expediciones fueron empresas privadas, realizadas con el permiso de Carlos V, pero declarando siempre la soberanía de la Corona española sobre todos los territorios conquistados...⁵

The paragraph titled "Control over the church" just adds to the previously stated prevalence of Spain over any other states in Charles V's biography.

Despite the predominantly Europe-oriented interpretation of Charles V's status, authors of Russian version of the entry do not ignore his Spanish possessions. They mainly focus on the fact, that it was Charles I, who became the first king of united Spain, therefore paying more attention to his unification mission than his belonging to Spanish Royal house. What is more, his power over the land is described as rather feeble if not to say almost nonexistent:

Попытка поставить страну перед свершившимся фактом спровоцировала бунт — так называемое восстание комунерос в Кастилии в 1520—1522 годах. Собрание кастильских кортесов в Вальядолиде напомнило ему, что у матери, заточённой в монастыре, больше прав, чем у сына. В конце концов Карл достиг согласия в переговорах с кортесами. Хуана формально оставалась королевой Кастилии⁶.

Another curious detail is the same title, conceded to the emperor. Russian version opts for the customary "emperor of the Holy Roman empire", whilst Spanish title expands to the "emperor of the Holy Roman-German empire". The reason that caused this deviation might reside in some historical twists and turns and is to be subject to a particular scrutiny.

⁵ The expeditions were mainly private undertakings, held with Charles V's permission, but they always declared Spanish Crown as the sovereign of the conquered lands... [6]

⁶ His attempt to confront the country with an accomplished fact caused a riot, the so-called Comuneros riot in Castile between 1520 and 1522. Castile Cortes committee appealed to the fact that his mother, imprisoned in a monastery, possessed more rights than her son. By and large, Charles managed to reach consensus in his negotiations with the Cortes. Juana technically remained Castile queen [7].

The way to describe imperial coronation and the details of accession to the throne deserve special attention. The interpretation presented in Spanish entry seems more solemn and meaningful:

El 24 de febrero de 1530, el mismo día de su cumpleaños, en Bolonia, Carlos fue coronado como emperador del Sacro Imperio Romano Germánico por el papa Clemente VII, quien se convirtió en aliado de la causa imperial.—Previamente, dos días antes, con solemnidad, pero casi en privado, para que no quitara importancia a su coronación imperial, fue coronado como rey de los borgoñones o rey de Italia⁷.

The entry presented in the article in Russian seems rather critical, highlighting Charles' high-handedness in naming himself the emperor and ignoring Papa as the person entitled to appointing and proclaiming the king.

23 октября 1520 года Карл коронован в Ахене. При этом Карл V провозгласил себя и «избранным» императором Священной Римской империи, таким образом лишая папский престол прерогативы назначения и коронации императоров. Общего признания за собой этого титула он добился позже, после побед над Францией и Римом⁸.

Referring to the Ottoman affair, the way to interpret the events by the Spanish appears more comprehensive, although concise. While the article in Russian describes quite in detail the failure of Spaniards in Tunis, leaving out their victory in the first campaign, the entry in Spanish provides a brief description of them both.

Charles V's relations with Germany are an issue of paramount importance for interpreting his national status as a monarch. Spanish authors state their idea of the emperor's Castilian origin with even more precision:

La Monarquía Católica o Monarquía Hispánica del rey Carlos I se completó cuando el monarca fue proclamado emperador del Sacro Imperio bajo el nombre de Carlos V⁹.

Russian article lacks both such references and numerous details, focusing on the pure events. As was mentioned above, religious aspect is not articulated with such precision in Russian version as it is in Spanish. Nevertheless, historical background in both entries appear rather identical.

The paragraph in Russian Wikipedia, dedicated to America, is far less comprehensive than its Spanish analogue. It does include the fact of the conquest of Mexico and Inca territory, but does not hold these as Spanish possessions, but rather as a source of gold to fund their wars. This fact reveals another feature that differentiates both visions of Charles V and his reign, namely, the attitude to American colonization.

Another important milestone in Charles V's biography described in both articles is his abdication and death. Interestingly, narrating this seemingly plain event the authors present

⁷ On February, 24, 1530, exactly on his birthday, Charles was crowned as the emperor of Holy Roman-German Empire by Papa Clemente VII, who became his ally in the imperial cause. He had been previously crowned as the king of Burgundy o king of Italy two days earlier, in solemnity, but almost in private, in order not to deprive of importance his imperial coronation [6].

⁸ On October, 23,1520 Charles was crowned in Aachen. Besides, Charles V proclaimed himself the chosen emperor of the Holy Roman empire, thus depriving the papacy of the sole power to appoint and proclaim emperors. Only later on, after his victories in France and Rome, did he become widely recognized as such [7].

⁹ Charles I's Catholic monarchy or Spanish monarchy became complete, when the monarch got proclaimed the emperor of the Holy Empire, bearing the name of Charles V [6].

before the audience quite different images of the king in both languages. Russian entry provides a short description of the sovereign's last years, mentioning only his abdication, retreat, death and burial. What is more, it does not even mention the existence of Charles V's testimony and his reburial in the Escorial more than a decade later.

The entry in Spanish seems more detailed. It contains a short summary of the monarch's reflections about his life, his concept of empire and the destiny of Europe, which uncovers the sovereign's inner feelings, dreams and aspirations. Besides, the author points out the importance of religious aspect in his retirement, which may result from Catholic background of Spanish culture. Special attention is paid to Charles V's testimony and his reburial, the fact that testifies to Spanish bent for dynasty and continuity.

The entry in Spanish lacks Charles V's commemoration, present in the article in Russian (and very richly represented in its English version). There might be various explanations, but we consider this fact a testimony to particular admiration and interest of the Spanish to the monarch, which put his personality and deeds above any secondary details, making them irrelevant.

4. Summary

Having conducted a comparative analysis of both entries, we can infer that attitude to Charles V and his image are not identical in Spanish and Russian culture. The Spanish tend to focus on the following

1. Charles V's Spanish possessions and belonging to Spanish royal house.
2. Charles V's succession to the Catholic monarchs¹⁰.
3. Charles V's relations with church and the Papa.
4. Charles V's confrontation with Protestants.
5. Charles V's unification mission¹¹.
6. Spanish possessions in Americas, these lands being considered a part of Spanish reign.
7. Charles V's consideration for Spain, Europe and their future¹².
8. The idea of dynasty and continuity¹³.

These features create quite a heroic image of the king¹⁴.

Russians appear to be more interested in the following:

1. Charles V as the Holy Roman emperor.
2. Vast territories inherited by the monarch.
3. Charles V's numerous titles.
4. Transformation acts, harsh legislative norms.
5. Participation in discovery of new lands.
6. Various assessments by historians depending on the political context.
7. Charles V in popular culture (cinema, philately)

5. Conclusion

¹⁰ Zamora even called him "arquetipo de lealtad histórica" [8]

¹¹ J. Martínez Millán, for example, points out, that "Carlos V, quien consiguió formar un Imperio mundial al reunir bajo su corona extensos reinos y territorios a través de los diversos continentes" [9].

¹² Menéndez Pidal, a prominent Spanish historian, expresses a similar view: "La efectividad principal de tal imperio —hace pensar Menéndez Pidal— 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" [10]

¹³ The strategy of legitimizing political power is described by O.N. Kondratyeva [11]

¹⁴ Which is especially relevant today, when "the problem of obtaining a currently topical cultural hero is especially acute". [12]

The above-mentioned facts reveal a breach in the ways to assess Charles V as a monarch in Russian and Spanish tradition, each of which having its national features and focusing on the facts relevant to their worldview¹⁵. Russians almost lack the consideration for dynasty and continuity typical of the Spanish. Interest in church and the religious aspect of Charles V's reign, clearly articulated by Spanish authors, seems rather dim in Russian entry. As a result, Charles V's dealings with Protestants and his last years in retirement do not appeal to Russian text writers. A natural consequence of national-oriented attitude to Charles V by the Spanish is their particular attention to Charles' victories. It does not imply their neglect on the part of Russian counterparts, but a lesser prominence granted to these events. American colonies, considered as Spanish overseas lands and an object of pride by Iberian text writers, for Russians are rather another landmark on the path of world discovery. This fact reveals on the one hand, Russian natural curiosity to the new, which overlaps other more pragmatic interests. On the other hand, it demonstrates the pride, the Spanish feel for the former grandeur of their country. Love of speculation and reflection can be clearly seen in the last section of Spanish version of the entry, dedicated to Charles V's years in Yuste. Meanwhile, Russian text shows more official attitude, which might partly result from lower intent interest in this historical figure or be caused by a more serious and less emotional attitude to history as a national feature.

Acknowledgements

This paper has been supported by Kazan Federal University Strategic Academic Leadership Program.

References

- “Carlos I de España”, URL: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlos_I_de_España
- “Karl V (imperator Svyashennoy rimskoy Imperii)”, URL: [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Карл_V_\(император_Священной_Римской_империи\)](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Карл_V_(император_Священной_Римской_империи))
- J. M. Jover Zamora, “La Alta Edad Moderna”, *Arbor*, N° 26, Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953, pp. 204-222.
- J. Martínez. Millán, “La dinastía Habsburgo en la historiografía española de los siglos XIX y XX” *Librosdelacorte.es*, no 7, año 5 Otoño-invierno, pp. 33-58, 2013. ISSN 1989-6425.
- J. Millán, “V Centenario de Carlos V. Carlos V en la historia de España”, *Anales de mecánica y electricidad*, ISSN 0003-2506, Vol. 77, Fasc. 4, 2000, págs. 67-72.
- J. Moreno Luzón, “Mitos de la España inmortal”, *Claves de razón práctica*, N° 174, pp. 26-35, 2007.
- N.L. Zykhevskaya, A.Yu. Pavlova, Modern literature in search of the new cultural hero”, *Kniga, Cultura, Obrazovanie, Innovatsii*, 2018, vol. pp. 119-124.
- N.V. Antonova, “Spanish Renaissance art and mentality in Russian historiography (from the origins to the present day)”, *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies (IJHCS)*. 2016. Pp. 231-237
- N.V. Antonova, A.A. Khafizova, “The black legend and the image of Charles V in Spanish historiography if the XIX - XX centuries”, *The Journal of Social Sciences Research*. 2018. pp: 424-427.
- N.V. Ufimtseva, “Ethnic character, self-image and linguistic identity of Russians”,

¹⁵ Ufimtseva points out that “we are living a troublesome period... when the role of ethical values increases in response to social insecurity” [13].

- Yazykovoe soznanie: formirovanie y funktsionirovanie, Moscow, 2000, pp. 135-170.
- O.I. Kalinin, “Political image as an object of linguistic studies”, *Filologicheskie nauki. Voprosy teorii y praktiki*, Tambov: Gramota, 2015, N° 10, pp. 79-83.
- O.N. Konratyeva, “Strategies for legitimization of the Royal power in the old Russian Publicism (on the material of the letters of Ivan the Terrible)”, *Vestnik Tomskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, Filologia, Tomsk State University journal of Philology*, 2021, pp. 74-90.
- R. Menéndez Pidal, *Idea imperial de Carlos V*, Madrid: Espasa Calpe, p. 20 (163 pp), 1971.

Authors' biography

Natalia Antonova is a senior lecture at Kazan Federal University. She started with studying Spanish cultural history, her thesis being dedicated to Spanish Renaissance culture and its representations by contemporary scholars. Later on, her interests took a turn and got more focus on political image and cultural peculiarities of political discourse. Nevertheless, the subject of interest remains unchanged, she still pays special attention to Spanish culture, particularly, to its Renaissance sovereigns.

Jose Antonio

García Muniz is a teacher at Kazan Federal University. He did a BA course in political studies, and then a MA course in linguistics. Nowadays he studies political discourse and its features in various languages, combining the studies of political linguistics and international relations. The countries of particular interest are Russian and Spain.