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**COAT OF ARMS
OF KING FERDINAND
THE CATHOLIC**

Kingdom of Naples(?), 1504-1512

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Coat of Arms of King Ferdinand the Catholic

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Marble

113 x 73.5 cm

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Carved out of marble, this coat of arms of King Ferdinand the Catholic represents both his lineage and his sovereignties. It is rectangular, with rounded inferior angles, ending in a point at the base and three points at the chief, a common shape in early sixteenth-century Spain. It is a quartered coat of arms, with its first and fourth quarters counterquartered with the arms of Castile-Leon, and its second and third quarters tierced per pale with the arms of Aragon, counterquartered per saltire with Sicily and counter-tierced with the arms of Hungary, Anjou and Jerusalem referring to Naples, besides the *enté en point* for Granada. It is crested by an open royal crown that has lost its rosette cresting, and it was originally supported by an eagle, as shown by the claws on the third and fourth quarters and the springing of the wings and the neck above the crown.

Ferdinand the Catholic and the arms of Castile-Leon

The counterquartered for Castile-Leon features, in the first and fourth quarters, a crenelated castle with three merlons, an emblem for the Castilian monarchs adopted by Alfonso VIII shortly before 1176 and, in the second and third quarters, the crowned lion rampant of the monarchs of Leon, of pre-heraldic origins, around the mid-eleventh century. The combination emerged as a symbol for the union of the kingdoms of Castile and Leon in 1230 effected by Ferdinand III the Saint.



Master of the Virgin of the Catholic Monarchs, *Virgin of the Catholic Monarchs*, 1491-1493, Madrid, Prado National Museum

The Virgin Mary and the Infant Jesus are worshiped by the Catholic Monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand, two of their children (Prince John and an Infanta) and other figures.

Ferdinand the Catholic (1452-1516) ruled over Castile as Ferdinand V from 1475 to 1504 as a result of his marriage to Isabella I (1451-1504), who on December 13, 1474 proclaimed herself queen and owner of Castile, acknowledging Ferdinand as her lawful husband. Under the Segovia Agreement, executed on January 15, 1475, Ferdinand was appointed sovereign and hence was no longer merely a consort, so official documents, the currency, the seal, the proclamations, etc., issued by the couple would bear both names, albeit with Ferdinand's in the first place. However, it was decided that Castile and Leon should precede Aragon and Sicily both in listing their titles and in the coat of arms they adopted, where the arms would be laid out in the first and fourth and in the second and third quarters, respectively. Later, on April 28, 1475, in the prolegomena of the War of Castilian Succession, Isabella equaled her husband in the exercise of all government functions.

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Basing her legitimacy on the 1468 Treaty of the Bulls of Guisando, the Segovia Agreement ratified Isabella as the sole heiress of her stepbrother, Henry IV of Castile, with the dynastic rights passing on to her direct descendants. In fact, after the Queen's death in 1504, Ferdinand proclaimed their daughter Queen of Castile as Joanna I, while he remained in charge of government and administration according to his wife's will. But Joanna's spouse, Philip of Habsburg, refused to give up power, and the Treaty of Salamanca (November 24, 1505) established a joint rule exercised by Joanna and Philip, with Ferdinand acting as regent. The couple's arrival in the peninsula from Flanders aggravated the already bad relationships between father-in-law and son-in-law; under the Treaty of Villafila (June 27, 1506), Ferdinand retired to Aragon, and Philip, who had been supported by the nobility, was proclaimed King of Castile by the *Cortes* in Valladolid under the name of Philip I, while Joanna was declared incapable due to her mental disorders. This incapacity was the reason why, after Philip's death (September 25, 1506), Ferdinand confined his daughter to Tordesillas for life and took over the role of regent in 1507, with Cardinal Cisneros assuming the duties of government while Ferdinand focused on his Italian interests.



Eduardo Rosales Gallinas,
*Isabella the Catholic Dictating
her Will*, 1864, Madrid, Prado
National Museum.

Rosales recreated with his brushes, three and a half centuries later, the last moments of Isabella the Catholic. On her right sits a broken-hearted King Ferdinand, with a sorrowful face and a blank look.

Therefore, in order to interpret this coat of arms properly, it is essential to emphasize that, when it was carved, Ferdinand was the protector, but not the owner, of the territories of the Crown of Castile, which had reached overseas since the late fifteenth century. However, the arms of Castile and Leon kept on appearing in his coats of arms, seals and currency because he was a member of the Aragonese branch of the House of Trastámara, having inherited the arms through the male line. It is worth remembering that Isabella and Ferdinand were second cousins (their respective grandfathers, Henry III of Castile and Ferdinand I of Aragon, were the sons of John I of Castile), and that the acknowledgment of their marriage required a papal bull for dispensation of consanguinity. After 1504, Ferdinand maintained the order of precedence in the arms established under the Segovia Agreement.

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(Left) Anonymous, *Ferdinand II of Aragon*, ca 1500-1510. London, Hampton Court Palace. Royal Collection Trust.

(Right) Felipe Bigarny, *Ferdinand II of Aragon*, ca 1520. Granada, Royal Chapel.

Ferdinand, king of the Crown of Aragon

In the second and third quarters, the first pale represents the Royal Arms of Aragon, described as four pallets in gules on or. The earliest evidence available of this symbol is the series of seven equestrian seals of Ramón Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona and Prince of Aragon, dating back to as early as 1150, and hence considered one of the oldest heraldic emblems known. However, its origin (whether from Aragon or Barcelona) and meaning are still confusing and controversial. Its emergence is even attributed to an epic episode in the biography of Wifred the Hairy (840-897), the founder of the County House of Barcelona, who, after contributing in battle to a Frankish victory over the Normans, received as an award from emperor Louis the Pious (778-840) a yellow shield on which he painted, with Wifred's bloodstained fingers, the four red pallets – a legend with no historical grounds, since neither the heraldic use nor the protagonists matched in time. Furthermore, it was not until the 1344 drafting of the *Ordenaciones de su Casa y Corte* ("Provisions for the Management of his House and Court") on the initiative of Peter IV of Aragon that the number of four bars was permanently established.

The death of his half-brother Charles, Prince of Viana, in 1461 allowed Ferdinand to be acknowledged as heir to the Crown of Aragon, succeeding his father, John II, to the throne in 1479 as Ferdinand II. He started ruling as King of Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Sardinia and Sicily, and as Count of Barcelona. In later years, he added to those territories the kingdoms of Naples and Navarre and the counties of Roussillon and Cerdanya.

The alliance resulting from the marriage between Ferdinand and Isabella (which took place in secret on October 19, 1469 in Valladolid) laid the foundations of what would become after two generations the Spanish Crown. Both kingdoms maintained their political institutions, *Cortes*, laws, public administrations and currency, but united domestic and foreign policy, finance and the army. The union of Castile, Aragon and Navarre became effective under the reign of Charles I, who was the first to adopt, along with his mother Joanna I, the shortened title of "King of the Spains and the Indies".

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The kingdom of Sicily

The second pale of the second and third quarters represents the coat of arms of the kingdom of Sicily. It is counterquartered per saltire with the Royal Arms of Aragon in the first and fourth quarters, and the Hohenstaufen imperial eagle in the second and third quarters. It was created by Frederick II in 1296 by combining the arms of his father, Peter III of Aragon, and those of his maternal grandfather, Manfred I of Sicily, a member of the Hohenstaufen House.

The Crown of Aragon's claims to the kingdom of Sicily go back to 1262, when Peter married Manfred's daughter Constance. However, after 1266 the territory was under the sovereignty of Charles I of Anjou, who, with the support from Pope Clement IV (opposed to any Hohenstaufen in the south of Italy), was appointed king after defeating Manfred in Benevento, where the latter was killed in battle. Later he ordered that his male descendants should be annulled. Aragon's dominion over Sicily began in 1282 when Peter, exercising the dynastic legacy of his wife, turned for help to the people, which had violently revolted against French presence in the so-called Sicilian Vespers.

To improve his son's position for marrying Isabella, under a pragmatic sanction dated June 10, 1468, John II of Aragon conferred in advance on Ferdinand the title of King of Sicily.

The kingdom of Naples

The third pale in the second and third quarters represents the kingdom of Naples by means of a counter-tierced quarter made up of the arms of the kingdom of Hungary (a barry of eight), those of the House of Anjou (fleurs-de-lis) and those of the kingdom of Jerusalem (a cantoned cross potent with four crosslets).

Joanna II of Anjou-Durazzo, daughter of King Charles II of Hungary and III of Naples, was the Queen of Naples from 1414 to 1435. Near the end of her life without issue, in 1421 she adopted Alfonso V of Aragon as her heir, in return for his aid during the siege by the troops of Louis of Anjou. The kingdom of Naples was facing a dynastic dispute between two branches of the same family, the Anjou-Durazzos and the Anjous, which following Queen Joanna I's death without children in 1382 had caused the coexistence of two lines of monarchs in dispute over the throne.

However, in 1423 Joanna waived her claim in favor of Louis, and after he died in 1434 she appointed his brother René of Anjou as successor. This decision was not welcomed by Pope Eugene IV, which made Alfonso start a process of conquest, eventually managing to rule over Naples as Alfonso I from 1442 to 1458. His action meant the unification of the kingdoms of Sicily and Naples under the same crown. Upon his death, the Crown of Aragon, including the island of Sicily, was left in the hands of his brother John II, while the Neapolitan throne was successively held by his son Ferdinand I, his grandson Alfonso II, his great-grandson Ferdinand II and his grandson Frederick I.

Alfonso, Ferdinand and Frederick had to fight against the aspirations of Charles VIII and Louis XII of France, who claimed the rights inherited from their ancestor Marie of Anjou. In the fall of 1500, Louis and Ferdinand the Catholic signed the Treaty of Granada, whereby they partitioned the territory between themselves: the north was left to France, redefining the boundaries of the kingdom of Naples, whereas the south was left to Aragon, becoming united to the kingdom of Sicily. The disagreements between the two led to the War over Naples, during which Frederick was deposed and taken prisoner. On the last days of year 1503, the armies led by Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba (nicknamed the Great Captain) completely defeated the French troops. Under the Treaty of Lyon in 1504 Louis XII ceded Naples to Aragon, with Ferdinand the Catholic ruling as Ferdinand III.

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Federico de Madrazo y Kuntz, *The Great Captain Going Across the Cerignola Battlefield*, 1835. Madrid, Prado National Museum.

The Battle of Cerignola took place on April 28, 1503, and was one of the most celebrated victories by the troops sent by the Catholic Monarchs for recovering the kingdom of Naples. The next day after the combat, at the break of dawn, the Great Captain went with his officials through the scene of the battle, covered with nearly three thousand dead and wounded, among whom he found the corpse of Louis d'Armagnac, Duke of Nemours, Count of Guise and Viceroy of Naples. Overwhelmed by grief and sorrow, the Spanish general ordered that his body should be transferred to the church of St Francis in Barletta, where he was buried with all the honors of his rank.

Finally, the kingdom of Jerusalem emerged in 1099 following the conquest of the city by Godfrey of Bouillon, which put an end to the First Crusade. After the fall of Jerusalem in 1187, the capital was moved to Acre, where it remained until 1291, when it was taken by the Mamelukes, thereby finishing the Crusaders' presence in the East. The title of King of Jerusalem was associated with the kingdom of Naples ever since Charles I of Anjou bought in 1277 the claims to the throne from Maria of Antioch. Naples was a papal fief, so the crowns of Jerusalem and Naples were typically granted together. That is the reason why Ferdinand the Catholic, after recovering the territory, demanded to be proclaimed King of Jerusalem and had this title carved on his coat of arms—a prestigious appointment from the political and religious point of view, but merely nominal, since Ferdinand never exercised power over Jerusalem, as neither did he over Hungary.

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The pomegranate for Granada

After ten years' military campaigns, in 1492 the Crown of Castile incorporated the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, that is, the last Muslim stronghold not only on the Iberian Peninsula but also in Western Europe as a whole. This put an end to the historical process of the *Reconquista* started by the Christian kingdoms in the eighth century, whereby Pope Alexander VI acknowledged Isabella and Ferdinand as Catholic Monarchs in 1496. The ceremonious delivery of the keys to the city and of the Alhambra palace-fortress by sultan Boabdil took place on January 2, 1492.

The political and religious significance of the capture of Granada caused that Isabella and Ferdinand should immediately add the arms of Granada (a pomegranate with stem and leaves showing through a crack the grains inside) to their coat of arms *enté en point*.

In that same year, 1492, unconverted Jews were expelled from Castilian land and America was discovered, so the New World's territories were incorporated into the Crown of Castile under the *Inter caetera* brief issued by Pope Alexander VI on May 3, 1493.



Francisco Pradilla y Ortiz, *The Surrender of Granada*, 1882. Madrid, Palace of the Senate.

The canvas recreates the moment sultan Boabdil hands the keys to Granada over to the Catholic Monarchs on January 2, 1492.

The eagle

The haloed eagle is the figure associated with St John, since his Gospel is the most abstract and theological of the four. The deep devotion that Isabella of Castile professed for the Apostle made her include the eagle as support for her escutcheon while still a princess, and this use continued after the Segovia Agreement in the joint coat of arms adopted by the couple. Ferdinand continued using St John's eagle after his wife's death, as shown by the traces that remain in this coat of arms as well as in other contemporary examples, such as the Door of Forgiveness in the Granada Cathedral.

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The faith of the Catholic Monarchs in St John became physical with the building, under the Queen's direct sponsorship, of the Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes in Toledo, dedicated to the saint to celebrate the memory of Isabella's father (John II of Castile, who died in 1454), the birth of Prince John (1478) and the Battle of Toro (March 1, 1476), which secured the throne for Isabella in the context of the War of Castilian Succession.

The foregoing allows us to date this coat of arms to between 1504, once the kingdom of Naples had been recovered and Isabella had died (November 26, 1504), and 1512, the year in which Ferdinand conquered the kingdom of Navarre (he was acknowledged king by the *Cortes* on March 23, 1513), whose arms do not appear there yet. It was very probably carved for a building of "Patronato Real o Público" in some Neapolitan town, given the threefold representation of this kingdom, as if it were an act of vindicating propaganda.

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