

## Council of the Indies and Royal Patronage

### The Council of the Indies

Created in 1524, it reported to the Council of Castile, which could filter its statements before they reached the king. Under King Philip II (r. 1556-98), this council reported directly to the King. It appears to have been seen as a stepping stone to the more prestigious Council of Castile, and regulations in the later 1500s restricted the power that its councilors would have, so it was difficult to retain the best talent in the Council of the Indies.

### Development of *real patronato* (royal patronage)

Such patronage was earlier granted to Portugal, which preceded Spain into the Atlantic down the coast of Africa, as well as to the East Indies (islands such as Indonesia). In addition to helping create continents full of Roman Catholics, the Popes had other reasons for co-operating with the Spanish kings. In the late 1490s and early 1500s, French armies were often in Italy threatening the Pope (during wars, fought from 1494 to 1498; and 1508-16), and the co-operation of the Spanish was a major source of support for the Pope.

And so in 1493, Pope Alexander VI granted to Spain, the same privileges that the Portuguese had enjoyed in their conquests.

In 1539, Charles V forbade writing of any dispute about the Spanish right (just title) to control the Americas. In the 1570s, Philip II forbade the translation of the Bible into native languages, and the writing of native histories. The Inquisition (which had recently been established in the Americas) confiscated the writing of the regular priests (members of orders, not parish priests) that dealt with this issue.

### Powers granted to the Spanish kings:

1. nominating bishops
2. approving all priests who traveled to the Americas (without a pass to go to a specific area, even priests could be arrested). The Spanish government went so far as to pay for the oceanic travel of these priests, and providing them with everything they would need to perform their duties as priests (such as books and vestments, religious clothing). The Council of the Indies decreed that licenses would not be given to priests who were not Spanish.
3. a royal tax on church personnel
4. right to review all correspondence between the Pope and the Americas (the Spanish crown refused to allow at least two documents into the Americas: a papal statement condemning governments interfering in churches, and a declaration that bullfighting was sinful!).

The Council even reserved the right to call councils of bishops in the Americas, to those bishops themselves; their conclusions had to be approved by the Crown in Spain, before being published.