

The Past and Present Society

A Europe of Composite Monarchies

Author(s): J. H. Elliott

Source: *Past & Present*, No. 137, The Cultural and Political Construction of Europe (Nov., 1992), pp. 48-71

Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Past and Present Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650851>

Accessed: 25-01-2018 18:30 UTC

REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

http://www.jstor.org/stable/650851?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



Oxford University Press, The Past and Present Society are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Past & Present*

A EUROPE OF COMPOSITE MONARCHIES*

The concept of Europe implies unity. The reality of Europe, especially as it has developed over the past five hundred years or so, reveals a marked degree of disunity, deriving from the establishment of what has come to be regarded as the characteristic feature of European political organization as against that of other civilizations: a competitive system of sovereign, territorial, nation states. "By 1300", wrote Joseph Strayer in a highly perceptive little book, "it was evident that the dominant political form in Western Europe was going to be the sovereign state. The universal Empire had never been anything but a dream; the universal Church had to admit that the defense of the individual state took precedence over the liberties of the Church or the claims of the Christian commonwealth. Loyalty to the state was stronger than any other loyalty, and for a few individuals (largely government officials) loyalty to the state was taking on some of the overtones of patriotism".¹

Here in embryo we have the themes that form the agenda for the bulk of nineteenth- and twentieth-century historical writing on the political history of early modern and modern Europe: the collapse of any prospect of European unity based on dominion by a universal empire or a universal church, followed by the preordained failure of all subsequent attempts to achieve such unity through one or other of these two agencies; and the long, slow and often tortuous process by which a number of independent sovereign states succeeded in defining their territorial boundaries against their neighbours and in establishing a centralized

* This article was originally given as a talk at a one-day conference organized for the Royal Historical Society on 21 September 1991 by Conrad Russell on the theme of "Multiple Kingdoms and Monarchies". I should like to take this opportunity to thank Conrad Russell for his advice and encouragement, and the participants in this conference, together with members of the early modern European seminar at the University of Oxford, where the paper was subsequently given, for their many comments. I am especially grateful for the written observations sent to me by R. J. W. Evans, John Robertson and David Stevenson.

¹ Joseph R. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton, 1970), p. 57.

authority over their subject populations, while at the same time providing a focus of allegiance through the establishment of a national consensus that transcended local loyalties.

As a result of this process, a Europe that in 1500 included “some five hundred more or less independent political units” had been transformed by 1900 into a Europe of “about twenty-five”,² of which the strongest were judged to be those that had reached the highest degree of integration as fully-fledged nation states. Anomalies still survived — not least the Austro-Hungarian monarchy — but that they *were* anomalies was amply confirmed by the cataclysmic events of the First World War. The subsequent triumph of the “principle of nationality” in the Versailles settlement³ appeared to set the seal on the nation state as the logical, and indeed necessary, culmination of a thousand years of European history.

Different ages bring different perspectives. What seemed logical, necessary and even desirable in 1892 looks less logical and necessary, and somewhat less desirable, from the vantage-point of 1992. The development, on the one hand, of multinational political and economic organizations, and the revival, on the other, of “suppressed” nationalities and of half-submerged regional and local identities, have simultaneously placed pressure on the nation state from above and beneath. These two processes, no doubt connected in ways that it will be for future generations of historians to trace, are bound to call into question standard interpretations of European history conceived in terms of an inexorable advance towards a system of sovereign nation states.

This process of historical reinterpretation clearly involves a fresh assessment of earlier attempts to organize supranational polities. Indeed one such attempt, the empire of Charles V, received a semi-endorsement from an unexpected quarter shortly after the Second World War, when Fernand Braudel argued that, with the economic revival of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the conjuncture had become “consistently favourable to the large and very large state, to the ‘super-states’ which today are once again seen as the pattern of the future as they seemed to be briefly at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Russia was expanding under Peter the Great, and when a dynastic union at

² C. Tilly, “Reflections on the History of European State-Making”, in C. Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975), p. 15.

³ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 131.

least was projected between Louis XIV's France and Spain under Philip V".⁴

Braudel's perception that history is in turn favourable and unfavourable to vast political formations does not seem to have stimulated much enquiry among political and economic historians, perhaps because of the inherent difficulty in assessing the optimum size of a territorial unit at any given historical moment. Nor do historians of political thought seem to have accepted fully the implications of Frances Yates's insistence on the importance of Charles V's revival of the imperial idea.⁵ Ideas about the sovereign territorial state remain the principal focus of attention in surveys of early modern political theory, at the expense of other traditions concerned with alternative forms of political organization subsequently regarded as anachronistic in a Europe that had turned its back on universal monarchy⁶ and had subsumed its local particularisms into unitary nation states.

Of these alternative forms of political organization, one that has aroused particular interest in recent years has been the "composite state".⁷ This interest certainly owes something to Europe's current preoccupation with federal or confederal union, as submerged nationalities resurface to claim their share of the sunlight.⁸ But it also reflects a growing historical appreciation of the truth behind H. G. Koenigsberger's assertion that "most states in the early modern period were composite states, including more than one country under the sovereignty of one ruler". He divides these into two categories: first, composite states separated from each

⁴ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 2 vols. (London, 1972-3), ii, p. 660.

⁵ Frances Yates, "Charles V and the Idea of the Empire", in her *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1975), p. 1.

⁶ For a recent treatment of the theme of universal monarchy, see F. Bosbach, *Monarchia Universalis: Ein politischer Leitbegriff der frühen Neuzeit* (Schriftenreihe der historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, xxxii, Göttingen, 1988).

⁷ "Composite state" was the term used by H. G. Koenigsberger in his 1975 inaugural lecture to the chair of History at King's College London: H. G. Koenigsberger, "Dominium Regale or Dominium Politicum et Regale", in his *Politicians and Virtuosi: Essays in Early Modern History* (London, 1986). Conrad Russell, in applying the concept to British history, prefers to speak of "multiple kingdoms": see, for example, Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990), p. 27.

⁸ See, for instance, the reference to contemporary European developments in the preface to Mark Greengrass (ed.), *Conquest and Coalescence: The Shaping of the State in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1991), a collection of essays presenting case-studies of mergers, or attempted mergers, between larger and smaller political units in early modern Europe.

other by other states, or by the sea, like the Spanish Habsburg monarchy, the Hohenzollern monarchy of Brandenburg-Prussia, and England and Ireland; and, secondly, contiguous composite states, like England and Wales, Piedmont and Savoy, and Poland and Lithuania.⁹

By the period of which he is writing, some composite states, like Burgundy and the Scandinavian Union of Kalmar, had already dissolved or were on the point of dissolution, while others, like the Holy Roman Empire, were struggling for survival. On the other hand, it was Charles V's imperial successors, drawn from the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs, who were to fashion from their own inherited kingdoms and patrimonial lands a state whose composite character would stay with it to the end. While some early modern states were clearly more composite than others, the mosaic of *pays d'élections* and *pays d'états* in Valois and Bourbon France is a reminder of a historic process which was to be repeated once again when Louis XIII formally united the principality of Béarn to France in 1620.¹⁰ A state that was still essentially composite in character was only adding one further component to those already in place.

If sixteenth-century Europe was a Europe of composite states, coexisting with a myriad of smaller territorial and jurisdictional units jealously guarding their independent status, its history needs to be assessed from this standpoint rather than from that of the society of unitary nation states that it was later to become. It is easy enough to assume that the composite state of the early modern period was no more than a necessary but rather unsatisfactory way-station on the road that led to unitary statehood; but it should not automatically be taken for granted that at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries this was already the destined end of the road.

The creation in medieval western Europe of a number of large political units — France, England, Castile — which had succeeded in building up and maintaining a relatively strong administrative apparatus, and had at once drawn strength from, and fostered, some sense of collective identity, certainly pointed strongly in a unitary direction. But dynastic ambition, deriving from the deeply-rooted European sense of family and patrimony, cut across

⁹ Koenigsberger, "*Dominium Regale or Dominium Politicum et Regale*", p. 12.

¹⁰ For a succinct recent account of the events of 1620, see Christian Desplat, "Louis XIII and the Union of Béarn to France", in Greengrass (ed.), *Conquest and Coalescence*.

unitary tendencies and constantly threatened, through the continuing pursuit of new territorial acquisitions, to dilute the internal cohesion that was so laboriously being achieved.

For monarchs concerned with aggrandizement, the creation of composite states looked a natural and easy way forward. New territorial acquisitions meant enhanced prestige and potentially valuable new sources of wealth. They were all the more to be prized if they possessed the additional advantages of contiguity and what was known as "conformity". James VI and I would use the argument of contiguity to strengthen the case for the union of the crowns of England and Scotland.¹¹ It was also considered easier to make the new union stick where there were marked similarities in "language, customs and institutions", as Machiavelli observed in the third chapter of *The Prince*.¹² Francesco Guicciardini made the same point when he spoke of the *conformità* which made the newly conquered kingdom of Navarre such a fine acquisition for Ferdinand the Catholic.¹³ Yet contiguity and conformity did not necessarily of themselves lead on to integral union. Spanish Navarre remained in many respects a kingdom apart, and saw no major transformation of its traditional laws, institutions and customs before 1841.

According to the seventeenth-century Spanish jurist Juan de Solórzano Pereira, there were two ways in which newly acquired territory might be united to a king's other dominions. One was "accessory" union, whereby a kingdom or province, on union with another, was regarded juridically as part and parcel of it, with its inhabitants possessing the same rights and subject to the same laws. The outstanding example of this kind of union in the Spanish monarchy was provided by the Spanish Indies, which were juridically incorporated into the crown of Castile. The incorporation of Wales with England by the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543 may presumably also be regarded as an accessory union.

There was also, according to Solórzano, the form of union known as *aeque principaliter*, under which the constituent kingdoms continued after their union to be treated as distinct entities,

¹¹ See Brian P. Levack, *The Formation of the British State: England, Scotland and the Union, 1603-1707* (Oxford, 1987), p. 6.

¹² Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge, 1990), p. 8.

¹³ Francesco Guicciardini, *Legazione di Spagna* (Pisa, 1825), pp. 61-2 (letter xvi, 17 Sept. 1512).

preserving their own laws, *fueros* and privileges. "These kingdoms", wrote Solórzano, "must be ruled and governed as if the king who holds them all together were king only of each one of them".¹⁴ Most of the kingdoms and provinces of the Spanish monarchy — Aragon, Valencia, the principality of Catalonia, the kingdoms of Sicily and Naples and the different provinces of the Netherlands — fell more or less squarely into this second category.¹⁵ In all of them the king was expected, and indeed obliged, to maintain their distinctive identity and status.

This second method of union possessed certain clear advantages for rulers and ruled in the circumstances of early modern Europe, although Francis Bacon, in *A Brief Discourse Touching the Happy Union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland*, would later comment on its inadequacies.¹⁶ In any union, the problem was how to hold on to such new acquisitions in a ruthlessly competitive world. Of the two recommendations offered by Machiavelli in his laconic piece of advice about the treatment of conquered republics — "destroy them or else go to live there" — the first was liable to be self-defeating and the second impracticable. But he also suggested letting conquered states "continue to live under their own laws, exacting tribute and setting up an oligarchical government that will keep the state friendly towards you".¹⁷ This method was a natural consequence of union *aeque principaliter*, and was employed with considerable success by the Spanish Habsburgs over the course of the sixteenth century to hold their enormous monarchy together.

The greatest advantage of union *aeque principaliter* was that by ensuring the survival of their customary laws and institutions it made more palatable to the inhabitants the kind of transfer of territory that was inherent in the international dynastic game. No doubt they often felt considerable initial resentment at finding themselves subordinated to a "foreign" ruler. But a promise to

¹⁴ Juan de Solórzano y Pereira, *Obras póstumas* (Madrid, 1776), pp. 188-9; Juan de Solórzano y Pereira, *Política indiana* (Madrid, 1647; repr. Madrid, 1930), bk. iv, ch. 19, s. 37. See also J. H. Elliott, *The Revolt of the Catalans* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 8; F. Javier de Ayala, *Ideas políticas de Juan de Solórzano* (Seville, 1946), ch. 5.

¹⁵ The kingdom of Naples was something of an anomaly, since it constituted part of the medieval Aragonese inheritance, but had also, more recently, been conquered from the French. In practice it was classed in the *aeque principaliter* category.

¹⁶ Francis Bacon, "A Brief Discourse Touching the Happy Union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland", in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. J. Spedding, 14 vols. (London, 1858-74), x, p. 96.

¹⁷ Machiavelli, *Prince*, pp. 19, 17-18.

observe traditional laws, customs and practices could mitigate the pains of these dynastic transactions, and help reconcile élites to the change of masters. The observance of traditional laws and customs involved in particular the perpetuation of estates and representative institutions. Since sixteenth-century rulers were generally used to working with such bodies, this was not in itself an insuperable difficulty, although it could in time lead to complications, as it did in the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon. The traditional institutional restraints on kingship were so much stronger in the Aragonese territories than in sixteenth-century Castile that it became difficult for a crown grown accustomed to relative freedom of action in one part of its dominions to accept that its powers were so curtailed in another. The disparity in the two constitutional systems was also conducive to friction between the constituent parts of the union when it expressed itself in a widening disparity between their fiscal contributions. The difficulty of extracting subsidies from the Cortes of the crown of Aragon naturally persuaded the king to turn for financial assistance with increasing frequency to the Cortes of Castile, which were more amenable to royal direction. Castilians came to resent the higher tax burden they were called on to bear, while the Aragonese, Catalans and Valencians complained at the diminishing frequency with which their Cortes were summoned, and feared that their constitutions were being silently subverted.

Yet the alternative, which was to reduce newly united realms to the status of conquered provinces, was too risky for most sixteenth-century rulers to contemplate. Few early modern rulers were as well placed as Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, who, after recovering his war-devastated territories in 1559, was in a position to begin the construction of a Savoyard state almost from scratch, and passed on to his successors a centralizing bureaucratic tradition which would make Piedmont-Savoy, at least by the standards of early modern Europe, an unusually integrated state.¹⁸ In general it seemed safer, when taking over a new kingdom or province in reasonable working order, to accept the status quo and keep the machinery functioning. Some institutional innovations might be possible, like the creation in Spanish Naples of a collateral

¹⁸ For a brief summary of the fate of Piedmont and its representative institutions, see H. G. Koenigsberger, "The Italian Parliaments from their Origins to the End of the Eighteenth Century", in Koenigsberger, *Politicians and Virtuosi*, pp. 54-9.

council,¹⁹ but it was important to avoid alienating the province's élite by introducing too many changes too soon.

On the other hand, some initial degree of integration was called for if the monarch were to take effective control of his new territory. What instruments were available to secure this? Coercion played its part in establishing certain early modern unions, like the union of Portugal with Castile in 1580; but the maintenance of an army of occupation was not only an expensive business, as the English found in Ireland, but could also militate against the very policy of integration that the crown was attempting to pursue, as the Austrians were to discover towards the end of the seventeenth century in their attempts to bring Hungary under royal control.²⁰

Failing a more or less permanent military presence, the choice came down to the creation of new institutional organs at the highest level of government, and the use of patronage to win and retain the loyalty of the old administrative and political élites. Since royal absenteeism was an inescapable feature of composite monarchies, the first and most important change likely to be experienced by a kingdom or province brought into union with another more powerful than itself was the departure of the court, the loss of capital status for its principal city, and the replacement of the monarch by a governor or viceroy. No viceroy could fully compensate for the absence of the monarch in the face-to-face societies of early modern Europe. But the Spanish solution of appointing a council of native councillors attendant on the king went some way towards alleviating the problem, by providing a forum in which local opinions and grievances could be voiced at court, and local knowledge could be used in the determination of policy. At a higher level, a council of state, composed largely, but not always exclusively, of Castilian councillors, stood in reserve as at least a nominal instrument for final policy decision and co-ordination in the light of the interests of the monarchy as a whole. This was something notably absent in the British composite monarchy of the seventeenth century. Here the privy councils of Scotland and Ireland operated in Edinburgh and

¹⁹ I am grateful to Giovanni Muto of the University of Milan for his guidance on the affairs of Naples.

²⁰ John P. Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria* (New Brunswick, 1977), pp. 67, 132.

Dublin rather than at court, and neither James I nor Charles I attempted to create a council for all Britain.²¹

At the lower levels of administration the patrimonial approach to office in early modern Europe made it difficult to replace existing officials with others who might be regarded as more loyal to the new regime. Moreover there could well be strict constitutional rules governing appointment to office, as there were in parts of the Spanish monarchy. In the crown of Aragon, laws and constitutions forbade the appointment of non-native officials, and regulated the size of the bureaucracy. In Sicily, too, secular offices were reserved for natives of the island.²² In mainland Italy the crown had more room for manoeuvre, and it was possible to infiltrate Spanish officials into the administration of Milan and Naples. But here, as everywhere, there was no alternative to heavy dependence on provincial élites, whose loyalty could only be won, and kept, by patronage. This in turn gave provincial élites, like that of Naples,²³ substantial leverage, which could be used on the one hand to exert pressure on the crown, and on the other to extend their social and economic dominance over their own communities.

This suggests a brittleness about composite monarchies which is bound to raise questions about their long-term viability. There can be no doubt that for all of them royal absenteeism constituted a major structural problem, which not even the energetic itinerancy of that indefatigable traveller, Charles V, could entirely resolve. But those constant complaints of sixteenth-century Catalans or Aragonese about being deprived of the light of the sun,²⁴ while no doubt expressing a legitimate sense of grievance, may also be seen as useful strategies for getting more of what they wanted. The Catalans, after all, as partners in a medieval confederation, were no strangers to absentee kingship, and had learnt

²¹ Levack, *Formation of the British State*, p. 61; Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991), p. 30.

²² H. G. Koenigsberger, *The Government of Sicily under Philip II of Spain* (London, 1951), pp. 47-8.

²³ Rosario Villari, *La rivolta antispagnola a Napoli* (Bari, 1967). The degree to which the old nobility retained their dominance after the Neapolitan revolt of 1647-8 is the subject of current debate. See especially Pier Luigi Rovito, "La rivoluzione costituzionale di Napoli, 1647-48", *Rivista storica italiana*, xcvi (1986), pp. 367-462. But provincial élites that included a strong component of *togati* also possessed ample opportunities for political leverage.

²⁴ Elliott, *Revolt of the Catalans*, pp. 12-14.

to accommodate themselves to this not always unfortunate fact of life even before the union of the crowns.

In return for a degree of benign neglect, local élites enjoyed a measure of self-government which left them without any urgent need to challenge the status quo. In other words, composite monarchies were built on a mutual compact between the crown and the ruling class of their different provinces which gave even the most arbitrary and artificial of unions a certain stability and resilience. If the monarch could then go on from here to foster, especially among the higher nobility of his different kingdoms, a sense of personal loyalty to the dynasty transcending provincial boundaries, the chances of stability were still further improved. This was something that Charles V sought to achieve when he opened the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece to aristocrats from the various kingdoms of his composite monarchy. It was also something that the Austrian Habsburgs of the seventeenth century would accomplish on a much more lavish and systematic scale through their development of a spectacular court culture.²⁵

It was easier to generate a sense of loyalty to a transcendent monarch than to a wider community created by political union, although it no doubt helped if the wider community was acceptably named. Monarchs uniting the crowns of Castile and Aragon sought to revive shadowy memories of a Roman or Visigothic *Hispania* in order to suggest a wider potential focus of loyalty in the form of a historically revived "Spain". But "Union in Name", as Bacon called it,²⁶ was not easily achieved. For some seventeenth-century Scots, the name "Britain" still possessed adverse connotations.²⁷

Closer association, especially where it brought economic or other benefits, could help promote this wider loyalty, as it did among the Scots in the eighteenth century. So, too, could the magnetic attraction for local nobilities of a dominant court culture and language — as early as 1495 an Aragonese noble translating a book from Catalan into Castilian spoke of the latter as the language

²⁵ See R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Oxford, 1979), esp. pp. 152-4.

²⁶ Bacon, "Brief Discourse", p. 96.

²⁷ See Roger A. Mason, "Scotching the Brut: Politics, History and National Myth in Sixteenth-Century Britain", in Roger A. Mason (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815* (Edinburgh, 1987). I am indebted to John Robertson for this reference.

of “nuestra Hyspaña”.²⁸ But “Spain”, although capable of arousing loyalty in certain contexts, remained distant in comparison with the more immediate reality of Castile or Aragon.

Yet a community’s sense of identity is neither static nor uniform.²⁹ Strong loyalty to the home community — the sixteenth-century *patria*³⁰ — was not inherently incompatible with the extension of loyalty to a wider community, so long as the advantages of political union could be considered, at least by influential groups in society, as outweighing the drawbacks. But the stability and survival prospects of sixteenth-century composite monarchies based on a tacit mutual acceptance of each other by the contracting parties were to be jeopardized by a number of developments during the course of the century. Potentially the most dangerous of these was the religious division of Europe, pitting subject against monarch and subject against subject. If the great religious changes of the century constituted a threat to every kind of state, the larger composite states were especially at risk, although the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, fortified by the 1569 Union of Lublin, and based on a high degree of aristocratic consensus, successfully weathered the storm. It was the awareness of this risk that encouraged the increasingly desperate search of the later sixteenth-century Austrian Habsburgs for an ecumenical solution to the problems of religious division — a solution that would not only reunite a divided Christendom, but would also save their own patrimony from irreparable disintegration.

The effect of the religious changes of the sixteenth century was to add a new, and highly charged, additional component to those elements — geographical, historical, institutional and, in some instances, linguistic — which together helped constitute the collective sense of a province’s identity in relation to the wider community of the composite state and to the dominant territory within it. Protestantism sharpened the sense of distinctive identity in a Netherlands always conscious of the differences that set it apart from Spain, just as Catholicism sharpened the sense of

²⁸ Cited in Alain Milhou, *Colón y su mentalidad mesiánica en el ambiente franciscanista español* (Valladolid, 1983), p. 14.

²⁹ For a suggestive discussion of the multifaceted character of a sense of identity in the process of European state-building, see Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, 1989), esp. pp. 110-13.

³⁰ See J. H. Elliott, “Revolution and Continuity in Early Modern Europe”, *Past and Present*, no. 42 (Feb. 1969), pp. 35-56; repr. in J. H. Elliott, *Spain and its World, 1500-1700* (New Haven and London, 1989).

distinctive identity among an Irish population subject to Protestant English rule. Pressures from the centre to secure religious conformity were therefore liable to produce explosive reactions in communities which, for one reason or another, already felt their identities at risk. When the explosion occurred, the rebels could hope to exploit the new international network of confessional alliances to secure outside help. Here the rulers of extended composite states were highly vulnerable, since outlying provinces under imperfect control, like the Netherlands or Ireland, offered tempting opportunities for foreign intervention.

The consequences of the new religious dynamics of the sixteenth century, however, were not confined to peripheral provinces anxious to conserve their distinctive identities against pressures from the centre. Both Castile and England, as strong core states of composite monarchies, sharpened their own distinctive identities during the religious upheavals of the sixteenth century, developing an acute, and aggressive, sense of their unique place in God's providential design. In helping to define their own position in the world, their aggressive religious nationalism inevitably had its impact on relationships within the composite monarchies of which they formed a part. Unique responsibilities carried with them unique privileges. The Castilians, wrote a Catalan in 1557, "want to be so absolute, and put so high a value on their own achievements and so low a value on everyone else's, that they give the impression that they alone are descended from heaven, and the rest of mankind are mud".³¹

The sense of self-worth was increased, in both instances, by the acquisition of overseas empire, a further indication of divine favour. The Castilians, by acquiring an empire in the Indies and reserving its benefits for themselves, enormously enhanced their own wealth and power in relation to the other kingdoms and provinces. The English, too, in acquiring an American empire, widened the gulf between themselves on one side and the Scots and the Irish on the other. The kings of Scotland had earlier sought to counter English claims to an imperial crown by adopting one of their own;³² in the seventeenth century, as "empire" came to include the possession of overseas dominions, Scottish colonization projects in the New World might serve to reinforce the counter-claim to "empire" in its new, more modern, sense. In

³¹ Cristófol Despuig, quoted in Elliott, *Revolt of the Catalans*, p. 13.

³² I am grateful to David Stevenson for advice on this point.

general, imperialism and composite monarchy made uncomfortable bedfellows. The possession of overseas empire by one party to a union encouraged it to think in terms of domination and subordination in a way that militated against the whole conception of a composite monarchy united *aeque principaliter*.³³

Where one component part of a composite monarchy is not only obviously superior to the others in power and resources, but also behaves as if it is, the other parts will naturally feel their identities to be increasingly under attack. This is what happened in the Spanish monarchy in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as the non-Castilian kingdoms and provinces saw themselves at a growing disadvantage in relation to Castile. Levels of anxiety were raised by the disparaging or threatening comments of highly placed Castilians, and by the tightening Castilian grip on office after Madrid became the permanent home of the court in 1561. The financial needs of a king who more and more tended to be perceived as exclusively Castilian were also a source of growing disquiet. Even where, as in the crown of Aragon, the presence of representative institutions and assemblies acted as an effective restraint on new fiscal initiatives, there was widespread and understandable suspicion of Madrid's long-term intentions. Kingdoms which feared for the erosion of their liberties scrutinized every move by royal officials which might be interpreted as a violation of their laws, and fortified their constitutional defences whenever possible. It is not by chance that the famous "medieval" Aragonese oath of allegiance, with its resounding formula "If not, not", was in fact a mid-sixteenth-century invention.³⁴ Jurists in Aragon, as in other parts of Europe,³⁵ were hard at work rediscovering or inventing customary laws and constitutions. The Aragonese revolt of 1591 was the revolt of a ruling élite, or a section of it, which sought and found the justification for its resistance to the crown in a defence of the just (but not always justly interpreted) Aragonese liberties.

Philip II's response to that same revolt was framed with a restraint which no doubt owed something to natural caution reinforced by the experience of the Netherlands revolt. But it

³³ Cf. the equation between Italians and Indians made by an official of Philip II, as cited in Koenigsberger, *Government of Sicily*, p. 48.

³⁴ See Ralph A. Giesey, *If Not, Not* (Princeton, 1968).

³⁵ See Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law and History in the French Renaissance* (New York, 1970).

also seems expressive of the dynastic and moral attitudes that governed the traditional Habsburg vision of the world. In spite of contemporary and later assumptions to the contrary, the kingdom of Aragon, although shorn of some of its privileges and institutional arrangements, retained its essentially constitutionalist and contractual character.³⁶ A few years earlier a similar willingness to accept existing constitutional and institutional arrangements had informed Philip's policies for union between Castile and Portugal. In the traditional Habsburg style this union of the crowns in 1580 was another dynastic union, *aeque principaliter*, carefully designed to ensure the survival of Portugal's separate identity, along with that of its empire. The only specifically integrating measure was the abolition of customs posts between the two kingdoms, and this attempt at a customs union was abandoned in 1592.³⁷

It is significant that Sir Henry Savile, in considering a series of historical examples of union when discussing Jacobean projects for Anglo-Scottish union (Lithuania and Poland, Norway and Sweden, Aragon and Castile, Brittany and France, and the England of Mary Tudor with Spain), should have singled out the union between Castile and Portugal in 1580 as "in mine opinion the likest to ours".³⁸ While hardly the kind of perfect union to which James I aspired, a dynastic union, *aeque principaliter*, preserving the separate identities of the uniting kingdoms, remained the form of union most easily achieved, and its most far-reaching integrationist measure — the abolition of customs barriers — proved as impossible to maintain in the Scottish union as in the Portuguese.³⁹

The test of kingship thereafter, as James I was wise enough to realize, was to seek out every opportunity to nudge the two uniting kingdoms towards closer uniformity — in law, religion and government — while working, above all, to suppress the mutual

³⁶ For the survival of Aragonese constitutionalism, see, most recently, Xavier Gil Pujol, "Las cortes de Aragón en la edad moderna: comparación y reevaluación", *Revista de las Cortes Generales*, no. 22 (1991), pp. 79-119.

³⁷ For a brief survey of the sixty years' union between Castile and Portugal, see J. H. Elliott, "The Spanish Monarchy and the Kingdom of Portugal, 1580-1640", in Greengrass (ed.), *Conquest and Coalescence*.

³⁸ Sir Henry Savile, "Historicall Collections", repr. in *The Jacobean Union: Six Tracts of 1604*, ed. Bruce R. Galloway and Brian P. Levack (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 229.

³⁹ Levack, *Formation of the British State*, p. 148. The commercial reciprocity between England and Scotland, introduced in 1604, had to be abandoned in 1611.

hostility that accompanied every union of independent states. This same pragmatic policy was to be pursued by Louis XIII in the 1620 union of Béarn to France,⁴⁰ and was very much in line with contemporary thinking in, and about, the Spanish monarchy. Theorists like Giovanni Botero, Tommáso Campanella and Baltasar Alamos de Barrientos were much exercised by the problem of how to conserve a composite monarchy, and were well primed with suggestions, like the intermarriage of nobilities and an equitable distribution of offices, which would conduce to “fair correspondence and friendship” between the peoples of Spain, and would allow them to be “brought to a familiarity one with another”.⁴¹ This idea of “familiarizing”⁴² the peoples of the monarchy with each other, in order to end what he called their “dryness and separation of hearts”,⁴³ was to be taken up by the count-duke of Olivares in his great reform projects of the 1620s, which included closer union through mutual defence. A union of hearts — James I’s “union of love”⁴⁴ — was to be the natural consequence of a union of arms.⁴⁵

Seventeenth-century rulers, imbued with Lipsian teachings about the ordered and disciplined state, in which unity of religion was seen as indispensable for the maintenance of political and social cohesion,⁴⁶ were everywhere talking the language of union. But Lipsius had also warned against undue zeal in introducing change.⁴⁷ Yet by the 1620s there are indications among these rulers of growing impatience with the system of union *aeque principaliter*, and its corollary of unification by slow, pragmatic, methods. A new generation of statesmen had come to power, with high notions of the royal prerogative and with less tolerance than their predecessors for a diversity that was felt to stand in

⁴⁰ Desplat, “Louis XIII and the Union of Béarn to France”.

⁴¹ Thomas Campanella, *A Discourse Touching the Spanish Monarchy* (London, 1654), p. 125.

⁴² Elliott, *Revolt of the Catalans*, p. 204 n. 2.

⁴³ *Memoriales y cartas del conde duque de Olivares*, ed. J. H. Elliott and J. F. de la Peña, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1978–80), i, p. 187.

⁴⁴ “Introduction”, to *Jacobean Union*, ed. Galloway and Levack, p. xli.

⁴⁵ For the Union of Arms, see J. H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven and London, 1986), ch. 7.

⁴⁶ “Therefore this is my unshakeable opinion: that one religion be observed in one kingdom”: *Iusti Lipsi politicorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* (Leiden, 1589), iv.3, cited in Mark Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius* (Princeton, 1991), p. 108.

⁴⁷ Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 47.

the way of effective government. The activities of Protestant-dominated estates in the Austrian patrimonial lands, culminating in the revolt of Bohemia, reinforced in the eyes of Ferdinand II and his advisers the fundamental importance of religious unity for the survival of their own composite state; and even if post-revolt Bohemia was permitted to preserve some measure of its earlier autonomy,⁴⁸ the pursuit of uniformity of religious belief and practice seemed — as it seemed to Charles I in Scotland — a natural concomitant to the proper exercise of princely power.

Above all, war and economic depression appeared to strengthen the case for the concentration of power. Resources had to be mobilized, economic activity directed, and crown revenues increased to meet the costs of defence. All this made a higher degree of union the order of the day. For Michel de Marillac and probably, too, for Richelieu — at least until he seems to have had second thoughts in the 1630s⁴⁹ — the system of the *pays d'élections* needed to be extended to the *pays d'états*. For Olivares, always ready with his aphorism “many kingdoms but one law”,⁵⁰ the institutional and legal diversity of the kingdoms of the monarchy represented an intolerable impediment to his plans to maximize resources and ensure the military co-operation among them that was essential to survival.

These moves in the direction of a more unitary state structure, with union conceived primarily in terms of uniformity of religion, laws and taxation, vindicated the warning given by Bacon that “unnatural hasting thereof doth disturb the work, and not dispatch it”.⁵¹ By appearing to challenge outlying kingdoms and provinces at their most sensitive point, their sense of distinctive identity, they unleashed counter-revolutionary movements, above all in the British and Spanish monarchies. The earl of Bedford, for one, showed himself aware of the parallels between the revolts of Scotland and Portugal.⁵² The parallels, of course, were not entirely exact. Religion, although it played its part in the Portuguese revolt, as also in the contemporaneous revolt of Catalonia

⁴⁸ See Evans, *Making of the Habsburg Monarchy*, ch. 6; R. J. W. Evans, “The Habsburg Monarchy and Bohemia, 1526-1848”, in Greengrass (ed.), *Conquest and Coalescence*.

⁴⁹ See R. J. Knecht, *Richelieu* (London, 1991), pp. 139-41, for a brief and balanced survey of the current debate over Richelieu's intentions.

⁵⁰ Elliott, *Count-Duke of Olivares*, p. 197.

⁵¹ Bacon, “Brief Discourse”, p. 98.

⁵² Russell, *Fall of the British Monarchies*, p. 240.

against the government of Olivares, was not at issue in Portugal as it was in Scotland. But the revolt of the Scots against the government of Charles I was more than a purely religious revolt. Essentially it was a revolt to defend the integrity of a historic, and to some extent idealized, community, which perceived itself in mortal danger from the actions of a dominant partner to which it had been somewhat uneasily united within living memory. In this fundamental respect it closely resembled the Portuguese revolt.

Composite monarchies based on loose dynastic union, *aeque principaliter*, could only hope to survive if systems of patronage were maintained in careful working order, and if both parties kept close to the ground rules laid down in the original agreement of union. In both respects the governments of Philip IV and Charles I had failed disastrously. They had drawn up, for reasons good or bad, agendas dictated by a set of priorities which made more sense in Madrid and London than in Lisbon and Edinburgh. Then, by failing to keep open adequate lines of communication and patronage, they had deprived themselves of the local knowledge required to save them from egregious mistakes of execution. Once those mistakes had been made, the range of options was reduced to two: retreat, or a conquering, integrative, union in the style of Bohemia, in which a greater or lesser degree of uniformity was imposed by force of arms.

In Scotland, Charles I was driven into humiliating retreat, while Cromwell's later attempt at a forced, integrative union — a union designed to bring about legal and religious identity among the British kingdoms — not only failed to survive his own regime, but destroyed any future prospects for such a comprehensive style of union by reinforcing the very sense of separate Scottish and Irish identities that he had been so anxious to efface.⁵³ In the Iberian peninsula, Castile, the core state, similarly proved incapable of imposing a permanent integrative solution by force of arms, and with comparable results. Catalonia, after twelve years of separation, returned to allegiance, but with the same constitutional rights as before its revolt. Portugal, with the help of foreign

⁵³ H. R. Trevor-Roper, "The Union of Britain in the Seventeenth Century", in his *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (London, 1967), p. 464. On the other hand, however, as John Robertson pointed out to me, the Cromwellian "conquest" in some respects facilitated the later union of the crowns, not least by sweeping away the independent hereditary jurisdictions of the great nobility, and encouraging a climate in which the Scots would be able to reassess the case for union.

military assistance, survived twenty-eight years of warfare to achieve definitive independence from Castile. In both instances the collective sense of separate identity had been strengthened by the shared experiences and memories of Castilian oppression and of the struggle for survival.

The disastrous failure of Olivares's experiment at a closer integration of the kingdoms and provinces of the Iberian peninsula appeared to vindicate the wisdom of the traditional Habsburg approach to provincial rights and privileges. It is significant that a younger generation formed in the Olivares school — men like Juan de Palafox and Diego Saavedra Fajardo — now insisted on the recognition of diversity as a necessary condition of successful government. If God, they argued, had created provinces that were naturally different from each other, it was important that the laws by which they were governed should conform to their distinctive character.⁵⁴ The argument from nature, therefore, which had been used by Bacon at the beginning of the century in favour of union, was now being employed in the middle of the century by Spanish theorists in favour of the acceptance of diversity.

Yet continuing diversity was beginning to look like an expensive luxury in a competitive state system in which the most powerful state, France, was also the most united. Seventeenth-century France in practice shared many of the problems of the more obviously composite monarchies. But, once religious unity had been restored, and the crown had overcome its mid-century troubles, it was well placed to bind outlying provinces more closely to the centre. Much of this process of national unification was achieved, as in Languedoc,⁵⁵ by the skilful use of patronage, but in his treatment of newly acquired provinces Louis XIV adopted a conscious policy of political, administrative and cultural Gallicization. "In order", he wrote in his memoirs, "to strengthen my conquests by closer union with my existing territories . . . I

⁵⁴ Diego Saavedra Fajardo, *Empresas políticas: idea de un príncipe político-cristiano*, ed. Quintín Aldea Vaquero, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1976), p. 614 (*empresa* 61); Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, "Juicio interior y secreto de la monarquía para mí solo", appended to José María Jover Zamora, "Sobre los conceptos de monarquía y nación en el pensamiento político español del XVII", *Cuadernos de historia de España*, xiii (1950), pp. 138-50.

⁵⁵ See William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge, 1985).

tried to establish French customs in them".⁵⁶ This policy, never as systematic as the memoirs would suggest, was more successful in some provinces than others. In French-occupied Flanders it seems to have been counter-productive until the Anglo-Dutch occupation of 1708-13 proved to the inhabitants that the alternatives were worse.⁵⁷ In the Cerdagne, acquired in the peace settlement of 1659, political and administrative uniformity were imposed, but policies of cultural and linguistic assimilation — at best tentatively pursued — were to be abandoned after the War of the Spanish Succession.⁵⁸

The relative degree of national unity achieved by the France of Louis XIV contrasted sharply with the markedly composite character of its rivals, Great Britain, the United Provinces and the Spanish and Austrian monarchies. The pressures for unification, therefore, were once again building, as in the 1620s. The first ruler to respond, although with all the ambiguities associated both with his Habsburg inheritance and with the conflicting demands of war with France on the one hand and the Ottoman empire on the other, was the emperor Leopold I of Austria.⁵⁹ As Hungary was recaptured from the Turks, a lobby in Vienna pressed for it to be treated, like Bohemia in the 1620s, as a conquered kingdom. But magnates and gentry were too strong, and the imperial administration too weak, for the traditional Magyar liberties to be easily suppressed; and the Rácocki rebellion of 1703-11 drove the message home.

Neither the government of Charles II of England nor that of Charles II of Spain, both of them haunted by memories of the 1640s, was in a position to move more than obliquely towards a closer union of their disunited kingdoms, although revolt in Sicily in 1674-8 provided an opportunity for the Spanish crown to reduce Messina's privileges.⁶⁰ It would take the accession of the new Bourbon dynasty to the Spanish throne in 1700, and the subsequent refusal of the Catalans, Aragonese and Valencians to accept its legitimacy, to create a situation in which the abolition

⁵⁶ Cited in Sahlins, *Boundaries*, p. 117.

⁵⁷ Alain Lottin, "Louis XIV and Flanders", in Greengrass (ed.), *Conquest and Coalescence*.

⁵⁸ Sahlins, *Boundaries*, pp. 113-23.

⁵⁹ See Spielman, *Leopold I*, ch. 6; Evans, *Habsburg Monarchy*, ch. 7.

⁶⁰ For the background to these Sicilian troubles, see Luis Ribot García, *La revuelta antiespañola de Mesina: causas y antecedentes, 1591-1674* (Valladolid, 1982).

of the traditional constitutional arrangements of the crown of Aragon could once again be seriously contemplated by Madrid.

In Scotland Charles II had recourse to the well-tried techniques of patronage employed to such effect by his grandfather, but could get no further.⁶¹ As in Spain, it was to be dynastic upheaval that provided the catalyst in Britain for new moves towards unification. The need to protect the Glorious Revolution and the Protestant settlement, and the continuing anxiety over national security in time of warfare as long as the union of the crowns remained incomplete, combined to create the conditions in which a more firmly grounded Anglo-Scottish union could again be seriously discussed. Ireland, as a savagely reconquered kingdom, remained a different matter.

Given the vast differences in their internal balance of forces and their international situation, it is not surprising that these three composite monarchies — the Austrian, the Spanish and the British — should have reordered themselves in very different ways. But this general reordering, which occurred between 1707 and 1716, was in each instance a reordering that bound their component parts closer to each other. The Austrian solution of 1711 was to strike a deal with the Hungarians, in which continuing religious diversity and the survival of the Magyar constitution were guaranteed in return for acknowledgement of hereditary succession in the Habsburg male line. The road now lay open to the Dual Monarchy. Four years earlier the English, too, had struck a deal, by which the Scots, like the Magyars, preserved their own laws and religious identity. But in its unique establishment of a parliamentary union, and in its measures to promote economic unification, the Anglo-Scottish union went much further than the Peace of Szatmár towards the creation of a cohesive and unitary state.

The most unitary solution of the three was that adopted by Madrid. Its victory over the rebels had given it a free hand, and the *Nueva Planta* of 1707-16 suppressed for ever the distinctive regimes of the provinces of the crown of Aragon. But even here the measures for unification, which included the suppression of old institutions and the abolition of customs barriers, were not all-embracing. The Catalans, in spite of their pre-eminent role in the rebellion, kept their civil, and most of their penal, law; and

⁶¹ Trevor-Roper, "Union of Britain", p. 466.

the compulsory use of the Castilian language was confined to the world of official acts and correspondence.⁶²

In spite of such survivals, and in part because of them, there would be an accelerating European trend over the next two centuries towards the creation of unitary nation states. Composite monarchy, by contrast, looked weak and unimpressive. Its weaknesses were obvious, and have indeed been much emphasized in recent accounts: the inevitable resentments over royal absenteeism, the distribution of offices and exclusion from domestic and colonial markets; the difficulties inherent in securing an equitable apportionment of the costs of war and defence; the problem of religious diversity in kingdoms owing allegiance to a single monarch; and the danger of foreign intervention when grievances accumulated.⁶³

Yet for all these weaknesses the composite monarchies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had shown a remarkable resilience and capacity for survival. It is striking that over the period between the dissolution of the Union of Kalmar in 1523 and the establishment of the Anglo-Scottish union of 1707, there were only three successful secessions from a composite monarchy — those of the northern provinces of the Netherlands from Spain in the 1570s; that of Sweden from Poland, with the renunciation of allegiance to Sigismund III in 1599; and that of Portugal from Spain in 1640.

How did unions so artificial in conception and so loose in articulation hold together for so long? Contiguity, as contemporaries asserted, was obviously a help, but it proved insufficient to keep Portugal within the Spanish monarchy. "Conformity", no doubt, was also a help; but conformity is a vague and ambiguous term. Did Scotland — another partner in a contiguous union — have more conformity with England than Portugal with Castile? Was the permanency of its union with England inevitable, in a way that Portugal's union with Castile was not? This seems hard to believe.

If we look at the general character of early modern Europe, with its profound respect for corporate structures and for tradi-

⁶² For the *Nueva Planta* in Aragon and Valencia, see Henry Kamen, *The War of Succession in Spain, 1700-1715* (London, 1969), chs. 12-13; for Catalonia, see Joan Mercader i Riba, *Felip V i Catalunya*, 2nd edn. (Barcelona, 1985).

⁶³ See Conrad Russell, "The British Problem and the English Civil War", *History*, lxxii (1987), pp. 395-415.

tional rights, privileges and customs, the union of provinces to each other *aeque principaliter* seems to fit well with the needs of the times. The very looseness of the association was in a sense its greatest strength. It allowed for a high degree of continuing local self-government at a time when monarchs were simply in no position to bring outlying kingdoms and provinces under tight royal control. At the same time it guaranteed to provincial élites continued enjoyment of their existing privileges combined with the potential benefits to be derived from participation in a wider association.

The extent to which such benefits actually materialized varied from union to union and from one period to another. In terms of military security and economic advantage, the benefits to Portugal of union with Castile looked much greater to the generation of 1580 than to that of 1640. The hopes of provincial élites for increased economic opportunities and a steady flow of offices and honours were all too often disappointed, but the seductions of the court and of a dominant rival culture could make them willing accomplices in the perpetuation of a union from which they still hoped for better things to come. The pressures for perpetuation, indeed, might come as much, or more, from provincial élites than from the central government. Even if disillusionment came, as it often did, where else were they to turn? As the provinces of the northern Netherlands found during the early years of their struggle against Spain, secessionist movements culminating in some form of republic were looked at askance in the monarchical world of early modern Europe. One reason for the success of the Portuguese revolt was that, in the duke of Braganza, Portugal had a potentially legitimate king in waiting.

In so far as the perpetuation of these unions also depended on the deterrent of coercion, the rulers of multiple kingdoms possessed an advantage over those of single kingdoms in the additional resources on which they could draw in emergencies. The forces of one kingdom could be used to put down trouble in another. The financial and military reserves of Castile helped Philip II to keep control over Naples and Aragon; those of England enabled the Tudors to persist in their expensive attempts to tighten their hold on Ireland; the Austrian Habsburgs could draw on the resources of their patrimonial lands to keep up the pressure on the Magyars. Multiple monarchies presented multiple opportunities as well as multiple constraints.

The test of statesmanship for early modern rulers was whether they could realize the opportunities while remaining aware of the constraints. Forms of union which in the sixteenth century seemed adequate enough were beginning by the early seventeenth to seem inadequate. But the pressures exerted by the state apparatus to achieve a more perfect union — conventionally conceived in terms of closer legal, institutional and cultural conformity to the model provided by the dominant partner in the association — only served to reinforce the sense of separate identity among populations threatened with absorption. This in turn raised the possibility of recourse to more drastic measures, including outright conquest and the large-scale transfer of peoples. Sir William Petty proposed a massive exchange of populations between England and Ireland; Leopold I's commissioners on the government of Hungary recommended preferential treatment for Germans in the resettlement of lands taken from the Turks, in order to temper unruly Hungarian blood with the loyal Germanic strain.⁶⁴

The eighteenth-century fiscal-military state, with more power at its disposal than its seventeenth-century predecessor, also had more to offer in terms of employment and economic opportunities. Yet the "enlightened" monarchies of the eighteenth century remained essentially composite; and closer integration, where sought, remained difficult to achieve, as Joseph II discovered to his cost. The sudden upsurge of nationalism at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would give a greater impetus to the creation of a unitary nation state than royal decrees and the actions of bureaucrats had given it over many decades. Yet ironically, at this same moment, the beginnings of the Romantic movement were endowing diversity with a fresh aura of legitimacy by providing it with stronger literary, linguistic and historical foundations. In consequence, in the unitary state as much as in its predecessor, the relationship of component regions and provinces both to each other and to the state itself would involve complex and constantly changing shifts in the balance of loyalties — shifts based on political calculation, economic realities and changing cultural attitudes.

Now that the inadequacies of that creation of the nineteenth century, the integrated nation state, are themselves in turn being painfully exposed, and union *aeque principaliter* again becomes

⁶⁴ M. Perceval-Maxwell, "Ireland and the Monarchy in the Early Stuart Multiple Kingdom", *Hist. J.*, xxxiv (1991), p. 295; Spielman, *Leopold I*, pp. 139-40.

the order of the day, the composite monarchy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can begin to be seen for what it was — not simply as an unsatisfactory prelude to the construction of a more effective and permanent form of political association, but as one among several attempts to reconcile, in terms of contemporary needs and possibilities, the competing aspirations towards unity and diversity that have remained a constant of European history. As such, it had its successes as well as its failures. More perfect union, after all, is likely to have its imperfections in a world in which, to quote Bishop Palafox in the aftermath of the catastrophe of Olivares's plans for the union of Spain, Valencia grows oranges but not chestnuts, and Vizcaya chestnuts but not oranges, and that is how God made them.⁶⁵

Oriel College, Oxford

J. H. Elliott

⁶⁵ Palafox y Mendoza, "Juicio interior", pp. 145-6.