

The Soldier, the Bureaucrat, and Fiscal Records in the Army of Ferdinand and Isabella

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THE SHREWDEST of Renaissance observers recognized that Ferdinand the Catholic could achieve his ambitious military and diplomatic goals only by carefully husbanding his resources—here lay the explanation of his proverbial parsimony.¹ In this royal economy the value of fiscal records seems obvious. Their role in the army's growth from feudal horde to something like a department of state may be less obvious, but it is only a little less important.

Because the great commanders, the heart and backbone of the Spanish armies, retained a much freer attitude about money than the king, they resented having to keep records and developed animosity against the bureaucrats who required the records. Two conceptions of government strove with each other—one essentially personal with a medieval indifference to fiscal matters, the other essentially anonymous and rooted in a concern about finances. Ferdinand himself was always torn between the two positions. He sponsored the records and supported the bureaucracy as necessary to his immediate ends. But he apparently never recognized their full potential, and he reverted to traditional practices when it seemed useful. Yet almost as if by plan the very process of keeping records shaped the development of the royal army, and the anonymous bureaucracy pointed the way not only for the military commander, but for the monarch himself.

Ferdinand and Isabella learned financial prudence early. Having inherited an empty treasury and a disputed succession from Henry IV of Castile, they had to resort to desperate measures during the wars of Castilian succession in 1474-1479.² The famous Granadan cam-

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¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapter XVI; Paolo Giovio, *Delle istorie del suo tempo*. . . (Vinegia [Venice], 1581), 95R.

² Agreement drawn up by Pedro González de Mendoza and Alonso Carrillo, Segovia, January 15, 1475, in Antonio Vallecillo, *Legislación militar de España*

paigns in 1482-1492 also required harnessing all the resources of their kingdoms. A year before the outbreak of fighting in Granada, Isabella ordered a survey of all cavalymen in royal service according to the places from which they came, making it clear that money to pay them should come from local sources of revenue and not from the royal treasury.³

During the war against the Moors, Ferdinand at the front and Isabella behind the lines commanded a second army of suppliers and bureaucrats in an effort to make sure that every man received pay and provender and that each district contributed its allotted share.⁴ Early in the war, for example, the captain in charge of Almería, the first established Christian stronghold within the Kingdom of Granada, wrote to request royal troops accompanied by a paymaster (*pagador*). He cited a contingent sent earlier by the crusading order of Santiago, which was so short of money that its men had had to pawn their arms and starve their horses.⁵ Such conditions rendered the tireless, personal efforts of the monarchs vitally important.

As a result, while the crusading armies consisted as always of troops from the miscellaneous sources characteristic of medieval levies, the royal hand controlled them as never before. Royal orders divided contingents into standard units of fifty and one hundred for convenience in keeping records, and *pagadores* themselves came to be paid according to standard groupings rather than the exact number of men on their pay list. Units of fifty and one hundred men were common, with one hundred the largest unit under one paymaster, a pattern suggesting the fifty- and one-hundred-man units of later

... (13 vols., Madrid, 1853-1856), VI, 501-505; Cortes of Toledo, 1480, in *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla* (Madrid, 1882), IV, 167; Hernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los reyes católicos* in *Colección de crónicas españolas*, Vols. V-VI (Madrid, 1943), V, 194. More generally on the financial crisis see: Jean H. Mariéjol, *The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella* (New Brunswick, 1961), 209-222; Roger B. Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and the New*. Vol. II: *The Catholic Kings* (New York, 1918), 131-136.

³ Cédula, n.p., March 21, 1481, Simancas MS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 1, leg. 1.

⁴ Pulgar, *Crónica*, VI, 19, 161-162, 232-233, 410-412; Merriman, *The Catholic Kings*, 62-63. For a sampling of Ferdinand's direction of supply operations from the front, see his correspondence with royal agents in *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España* (112 vols., Madrid, 1842-1895), XI, 461-469. (The series is hereafter cited as *CODOIN*.) A good critical account of the Granadan wars is Antonio de la Torre, *Los reyes católicos y Granada* (Madrid, 1946). The recent, statistically careful work of Miguel Ladero Quesada, *Milicia y economía en la guerra de Granada; el cerco de Baza* (Valladolid, 1964) makes abundantly clear the quantity of records involved in this campaign.

⁵ Pedro Fernández de Córdoba to Isabella, (Almería?), n.d., Simancas MS, Guerra antigua, leg. 1.

captaincies in the standing army.⁶ In one case royal orders decreed that a contingent from Seville should be divided and subdivided, with unit commanders wearing uniforms different from those of their men. The specific purpose here was to keep pay records on two levels, so that bookkeeping requirements acted to establish standard subordinate units and distinctions of rank characteristic of the modern army.⁷

Fernando de Zafra, a royal secretary and Ferdinand's chief civilian lieutenant at the front, made suggestions for converting the army in Granada to a peacetime basis. In doing so he pointed out major problems which continued to dominate military accounting for the rest of the reign.⁸ Zafra pleaded that a central bureaucracy should control and administer a special fund covering campaign expenses. Reliance during the Granadan war on regular, fixed sources of income, administered by regular officials as much as possible, had resulted in financial chaos. Pay for the soldiers, for instance, came from funds of the household (*cámara*) or of the royal guards (*cuenta de las guardas*); money for their provender came from the alcaldes of certain designated towns. Zafra and his subordinates, charged with drawing up a financial account of the whole war and settling outstanding debts, controlled neither officials nor their books, and they found their task impossible.

Zafra also warned that garrisons set up in Granada were not

⁶ A number of decrees say about the same thing: Ordenanza de los dineros que se han de descontar. . . , n.p. (ca. 1496f), Simancas, MS., Contaduría del Suelo, ser. 2, leg. 1; Cédula, Madrigal, April 27, 1476, in Vallecillo, *Legislación militar*, V, 591-593; Lib. VI, tít. 2, ley 13, RRCC, in Alonso Díaz de Montalvo (ed.), *Ordenanzas reales de Castilla* (3 vols., Madrid, 1779-1780), II, 1177-1178. The development of the "standard" military unit in terms of size is very complicated and uncertain in this period, but, for instance, the *guardas viejas*, a regular standing army, was divided in 1493 into captaincies of fifty and one hundred men. Serafin María de Soto, Conde de Clonard, *Historia orgánica de las armas de infantería y caballería españoles desde la creación del ejército permanente hasta el día* (16 vols., Madrid, 1851-1859), II, 264-265. Cédula, n. p., (ca. 1503), Simancas MS., Guerra antigua, leg. 1; Ferdinand to Gonzalo de Córdoba, Medina del Campo, November 3, 1504, in *Revista de archivos bibliotecas y museos*, XXVII (1912), 514-515. The journal is hereafter cited as *RABM.*

⁷ Cédula, Córdoba, July 12, 1490, Simancas MS., Registro general del Sello, fo. 57. This was read in the papers of the Conde de Clonard, carpeta 45, leg. 4. Clonard is the author of the standard nineteenth-century work on the Spanish army. His papers, which are stored in the Biblioteca Central Militar in Madrid, are chiefly useful in the period of the Catholic Kings for notes and documents copied from the Simancas archives.

⁸ Zafra was chief treasurer (*contador mayor*) of the Kingdom of Granada from its conquest and was senior secretary of the Chancellery of Castile at the time of his death in 1507.

being maintained at full strength, for during inspections people from neighboring villages filled gaps in the ranks. Instead of turning money over to army officers who kept garrisons below full strength and pocketed the extra pay, he suggested that a special bureaucracy should be created to pay the men.⁹

With the demobilization after the Granadan wars, even courtiers stopped wearing side arms. Only when the Italian wars broke out in 1495 did military reform come into focus.¹⁰ Zafra's suggestions in favor of control by a central bureaucracy are reflected in general regulations for the royal guards drawn up in 1495 and modified in 1503, which became a pattern for governing all troops in royal pay.

Under these regulations each captaincy had assigned to it an accountant (*contador*) who supervised the *pagadores* and an inspector (*veedor*) specifically identified with the army who supervised them both. Only with special royal permission could these bureaucrats assume regular places in the captaincies. Musters held at three-month intervals were witnessed by the *contador*, the *veedor*, the captain of the unit being inspected, the captain general of the army, and an inspector-general (*visitador*).¹¹ The *veedor* and *contador* submitted reports to an accountant-in-chief (*contador mayor*) and a chief inspector (*veedor mayor*), equal in rank to the captain general. These higher officials in turn forwarded reports to the *contadores mayores* at the royal court. The filing of duplicate accounts provided yet another precaution against fraud; for, besides records kept by *veedores* and *contadores* assigned to captaincies, each of two higher officials kept complete records of all money paid out.¹²

Even more than the regular army, the militia, reorganized in 1495,

⁹ Zafra to Ferdinand and Isabella, Granada, December 8, 1492, *CODOIN*, XI, 496; to Ferdinand and Isabella, Granada, February 25, n.y., *ibid.*, XIV, 469-475.

¹⁰ Pragmática, Valladolid, July 20, 1492, Vallecillo, *Legislación militar*, VI, 242; Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *Libro de la cámara real del príncipe don Juan é ofiçios de su casa é servijço ordinario* (La sociedad de bibliófilos españoles, Vol. VII, Madrid, 1870), 169.

¹¹ In the revision of 1503 the interval between inspections was reduced to two months, in line with the general tightening of control.

¹² Cédula, Valladolid, September 23, 1514; Cédula, Valladolid, February 3, 1515; Cédula, Segovia, September 7, 1515, all Simancas MSS., Mar y tierra, leg. 1, Clonard papers. *Cortes de Castilla*, IV, 137-138. The General Ordinance of 1496 is in the Simancas archives, Cámara de Castilla, Libro encuadernado de cédulas, number 2, fo. 158V-159V; it is briefly described in Clonard, *Historia orgánica*, II, 268-269. The General Ordinance of 1503 is at Simancas in *Diversos de Castilla*, leg. 1; Clonard describes and quotes it in some detail, II, 395-406. The significant articles here are: 1-5, 31, 34, 47, 48. The standard source on the military bureaucracy is the booklet, Antonio Blázquez y Delgado Aguilera, *Bosquejo histórico de la administración militar española* (Madrid, 1891).

came under bureaucratic control. Civilian officials in charge of local government took charge of musters held in their towns. It was through these officials that men joined the militia or resigned from it, and they submitted reports of musters to *contadores mayores* at the royal court.¹³

This emphasis on keeping records went considerably beyond Zafra's suggestions, and again records themselves came to have a special influence on the development of the regular army. After three years in a captaincy *contadores* became *veedores* in the same unit. Ultimately they left the captaincy altogether, but the unit's records were passed on to succeeding *contadores*. Thus permanent records of the unit accumulated and tended to give it a new identification apart from the captain who commanded it.¹⁴

As central control was established over military finances, a dilemma arose from the need to allow military commanders considerable freedom to do their jobs. Emergencies could not be foreseen, and they grew more frequent, because during the second half of his reign Ferdinand could not maintain overseas expeditions on the lavish scale of the Granadan war. As a rule a military commander retained full authority in overseas expeditions where government was on a temporary basis and the needs of the moment had to dominate. When it seemed time to establish permanent control of an area—i.e. to set up a local civilian government whose revenues might support troops—then the larger needs of the state and the bureaucrats began to take over. Thus in Spain military accounting passed into civilian hands soon after the fall of Granada and chiefly remained there despite some experimentation with a mixed system. In Africa army officers continued to keep accounts. This helps to explain why the crown accepted Pedro Navarro's efforts to take control of the finances of the 1509 Oran expedition from Cardinal Jiménez against the whole trend toward civilian control.¹⁵

¹³ Memorandum, Marvella, March 13, 1505, Simancas MS., Contaduría del Suelo, ser. 1, leg. 5; letter of Diego Osorio, corregidor, Carmona, February 15, 1512, Simancas MS., Guerra antigua, leg. 1; Cédula, Tarragona, September 18, 1495, in Juan Ramírez (ed.), *Las Pragmáticas del Reyno* (Sevilla, 1520), 84R. Royal interest in renovation of the militia stems from 1492, but apparently no action was taken until 1495. Memorandum, Alonso de Quintanilla, n.p., 1492, in *Memorias de la Real Academia de la Historia* (Madrid, 1821), VI, 601-603.

¹⁴ General Ordinance of 1503, Art. 24; Blázquez, *Bosquejo*, 22-23.

¹⁵ Cédula, Toledo, August 20, 1508, in Vallecillo, *Legislación militar*, XI, 122-124; Cédula, Valladolid, August 16, 1509, in *ibid.*, 130; Cédula, n.p., December 29, 1508, in Modesto la Fuente y Zamalloa, *Historia general de España*. . . (25 vols., Barcelona, 1887-1890), VII, 276; Jerónimo Yllan? to Juan Cazalla?, Alcalá, June 12, 1509, in *Biblioteca de autores españoles* (Madrid, 1870), LXII, 231-232; "Memoire du corregidor d'Oran sur la manière dont cette ville est

In Italy, scene of the reign's second great series of campaigns, difficulties arose because bureaucrats began to make the change before the day was won. Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, "el Gran Capitán," had almost viceregal powers as captain general in the Italian wars of 1495-1496 and 1500-1504. After the conquest of Naples he rather naturally assumed the viceroyalty of the state, and Ramón de Cardona, who succeeded him as viceroy in 1509, served as captain general in subsequent Italian campaigns.¹⁶ Yet with all of his power, Gonzalo depended on bureaucratic assistance; and his appeal for more civilian personnel soon after arriving in Sicily in 1500 echoes that of the commander at Almería during the Granadan war.¹⁷ Subsequently, despite the power of the commander, antagonism developed between civilian officials and the captain general, each considering that he alone understood the king's true interests.

During the difficult winter of 1502-1503, with the main Spanish army shut up in Barletta, a clash occurred between Gonzalo and Juan Claver, Ferdinand's ambassador to Naples, who was a member of Gonzalo's staff. Claver complained because Captain Diego Hurtado de Mendoza had distributed booty to men who had performed particularly well in battle. He thought that the property, worth about 1500 ducados, belonged by right to the monarchs, and he sent a treasury agent (*abogado fiscal*) to recover it. Claver persisted in urging the matter even after Gonzalo himself told him to drop it. He went so far as to suggest that Gonzalo's authority was limited to strictly military matters, and that he would soon be replaced as captain general.¹⁸

This kind of bickering obviously endangered military effectiveness, particularly with troops perennially on the verge of revolt because of delays in pay; yet royal policy continued to foster tensions between military commanders and bureaucrats. The 1503 revision of

administrée," in F. Elie de La Primaudaie, *Documents inédits sur l'histoire de l'Occupation Espagnole en Afrique, 1506-1574* (Alger, 1875), 26-27.

¹⁶ Cédula, n.p., April 14, 1500, *EABM*, XX (1909), 458-460; Ferdinand and Isabella to Gonzalo, Madrid, November 29, 1494, in Vallecillo, *Legislación militar*, VI, 271-272; Nómima, Alcalá de Henares, June 30, 1503, Simancas MS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 2, leg. 1; Ferdinand to Gonzalo, Zaragoza, October 12, 1502, *EABM*, XXII (1910), 116; Ferdinand to Ramón de Cardona, Naples, April 23, 1507, in Vallecillo, *Legislación militar*, XI, 85-86. A good account of the Italian campaigns is Frederick Lewis Taylor, *The Art of War in Italy, 1494-1529* (Cambridge, 1921).

¹⁷ Ferdinand and Isabella to Gonzalo, Granada, November 7, 1500, *EABM*, XXI (1909), 345.

¹⁸ Gonzalo to Ferdinand and Isabella, Barletta, March 23, 1503, *EABM*, XXXV (1916), 429-432.

the general regulations for the guards required that *contadores* take particular note of captains and captains general to make sure that they were not paid for time spent away from their men without specific royal authorization.¹⁹ About the same time royal orders established the general director (*conservador general*) of Sicily as economic czar for the Spanish army in Italy. No official could pay out money without his authorization. Even Gonzalo, with all of the prestige of his recent monumental victory in the battle of Cerignola and facing the crucial winter campaign of 1503-1504, had to comply.²⁰

Gonzalo de Córdoba conformed to royal requirements, but resentment about keeping records and counting maravedís must have accumulated. Financial records exist for both of his Italian expeditions, and the greater detail of those for the 1500-1504 campaigns seems to conform with the growing emphasis on the keeping of accounts. Yet these later accounts, preserved in the archives of Simancas, remain in the form of receipts and orders for payment—materials on which a formal statement would be based.²¹ Francisco Sánchez, who served as treasurer and quartermaster general (*tesorero and despensero mayor*) in Gonzalo's army during the second Italian campaign, had received his captaincy through Gonzalo's recommendation and had fought heroically. Assigning bureaucratic chores to such a man should have eased tensions, but when Gonzalo's formal accounts were lost, he blamed Sánchez. Enmity grew up between the men, and the "Great Captain" apparently never bothered to draw up another formal statement.²²

The proverbial anecdote of his accounts, almost certainly apocryphal, but dating from the era itself, preserves this tension. When Ferdinand visited Naples after the war, in 1506-1507, the royal accountants asked Gonzalo for his ledger. The next day he presented

¹⁹ General Ordinance of 1503, Article 6.

²⁰ Pragmática, n.p., n.d., *Hispania*, III (1943), 80-81. The date seems clearly established both by internal evidence and by other material published in this article, cf. *ibid.*, 82. In 1505 Juan Bautista Spinel, count of Cariati, was *conservador general* of Naples; previously and subsequently he served Ferdinand as ambassador to Venice. Ferdinand to Gonzalo, Toro, February 24, 1505, *BABM*, XXVIII (1913), 110-111.

²¹ For the 1495 expedition Gonzalo's accounts are represented by a book of 20 sheets showing receipts and expenditures in an orderly way for a four-year period; the 1500 expedition is represented by a collection of 924 sheets of various documents—presumably the raw materials from which an orderly statement could be drawn up. Antonio Rodríguez Villa, "Las cuentas del Gran Capitán," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, LVI (1910), 281-286.

²² Antonio Rodríguez Villa (ed.), *Crónicas del Gran Capitán in Nueva biblioteca de autores españoles* (Madrid, 1908), X, 137, 339; Jerónimo Zurita y Castro, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón* (Zaragoza, 1610), V, 222V, 254R.

a list beginning with obviously exaggerated sums supposedly given to monks and nuns and to spies who had helped to win his battles by prayers and information respectively.²³ It is the last cry of an outmoded way of life, but its appeal remains almost universal.

Crisis and anecdote emerged at this time because the relationship between the king and his general became confused after the death of Isabella, when Juana *la loca* succeeded in Castile. Though Ferdinand's ambitions and responsibilities kept growing, he never again had so sure a control of Castilian revenues. Armies stationed in Italy could no longer spend twice the normal revenues of the Kingdom of Naples as they did in 1504.²⁴ But more important than mere economy, the emphasis on keeping records now made military affairs in general more impervious to shifting loyalties, much as continuing records rendered military units independent of personal loyalty to a captain. Commanders like Gonzalo de Córdoba had always been personally loyal to their feudal sovereign. But this sort of allegiance to the crown became suddenly clouded when Juana succeeded her mother and the policies of Juana's Hapsburg husband, Philip I, threatened to conflict with those of Ferdinand. The need for regular reports of money received and money paid out remained clear, however, and there was present a body of men devoted to these reports. Thus the bureaucracy continued to function and helped to hold the army together when Spain broke into its component parts, when Gonzalo ceased to write to his king, and even when hints appeared of different Italian policies for Aragón and Castile.

Army fiscal records and especially records of money paid out to soldiers not only made possible the ambitious military achievements of Ferdinand and Isabella, but also gradually established central control as opposed to control by captains in the medieval fashion. Yet the whole development has about it that air of tentativeness and experimentation which gives the reign of these monarchs its special fascination. As in the cases of the captaincies and the army itself the military bureaucracy had not yet fully emerged; only in retrospect does the process seem quite clear. A closer look at two particular aspects of the reforms will illustrate their tentative nature.

Zafra had written in 1492 of the danger that garrisons in Granada might not be maintained at book strength, and indeed dead-pay (*pagas muertas*) continued to plague national monarchies into the

²³ *Crónicas del Gran Capitán*, 244-245, 443, 542-543; see also Rodríguez Villa, "Las cuentas del Gran Capitán."

²⁴ The cost was about 850,000 ducados; the net rents were about 450,000 ducados. Zurita, *Anales*, 331R.

sixteenth century.²⁵ Officers of the period regarded it as a perquisite of their rank to keep for themselves the pay of men on the lists who were not actually in service. As an alternative they sometimes substituted a boy or unfit man for an able-bodied soldier. Certainly reform of the army under the general regulations drawn up in 1495-1503 had as one of its main purposes the elimination of this abuse. Nevertheless, dead-pay had legitimate uses. For instance, it provided a reserve against the financial emergency which could easily arise under a budget-minded king. It could also be used to finance reinforcements or to reward men for exceptional valor.²⁶

Eventually a considerable effort was made to provide captains with a measure of financial latitude by incorporating something like the dead-pay into the regular accounting system. A cédula dated September 26, 1511, instructed Álvaro Vasques Noguero, the paymaster assigned to troops commanded by Colonel Cristóbal de Villalba, always to pay out all money due according to the pay list. Villalba would use whatever extra money he received to keep his regiment supplied with artillery.²⁷ A cédula of 1512 utilized the device of double pay, allotting fourteen of these to captaincies of 200 men in the regular army. Three of the double pays went to captains, so that they might reward men of special valor, a practice which seems to relate them to the need for financial leeway.²⁸ Indeed, the report of a payment made in January 1513 to captains serving under Cristóbal de Villalba calls the extra money given to captains "dead-pay."²⁹

Almost inevitably captains took advantage of the new dispensation. Villalba's command grew in size, as reflected by increased payment to him, from 1,014,907 maravedís in July 1511, to 1,631,264 mrs. in May 1512.³⁰ In 1515 extra payment to Villalba for artillery

²⁵ For the problem of dead-pay in the England of Queen Elizabeth, see C. G. Cruikshank, *Elizabeth's Army* (London, 1946), 100-104; for the France of Louis XII and Francis I, see Ferdinand Lot, *Recherches sur les effectifs des armées françaises des guerres d'Italie aux guerres de religion, 1494-1562* (Paris, 1962), 37, 196-197.

²⁶ Gonzalo to comptroller of Valencia, n.p., n.d., *EABM*, XXXV (1916), 305.

²⁷ Cédula, Burgos, September 26, 1511, Simancas MS., Contaduría general, época 1, leg. 1600, Clonard papers.

²⁸ Cédula, Burgos, May 29, 1512, Simancas MS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 1, leg. 39, Clonard papers.

²⁹ Nómina, Pamplona, February 20, 1513, Simancas MS., Gobierno general, época 1, leg. 261, Clonard papers.

³⁰ By January 1513, the figure was down to 1,279,513 mrs., only 34,650 mrs. of which went officially for men not paid. Cédula, Burgos, September 20, 1511, and appended nóminas of August 4, 1511, May 1, 1512, Simancas MS., Clonard papers; Nómina, Pamplona, February 20, 1513, Simancas MS., Clonard papers.

stopped, and the whole effort to adapt dead-pay seems to have ended at this time. But although captains went back to the old frauds, they continued to ask for the abandoned double pays.³¹ Experimentation with dead-pay had involved an aberration from the general direction of royal policy in army accounting, and its abandonment reaffirmed the policy which Zafra had suggested in 1492.

Accumulated records brought soldiers into a rather complicated relationship with the central government, well beyond mere payment for their day-to-day services. According to the records, consideration for these services came to extend into the period after separation from the army and even beyond a man's death. The crown became guarantor of each man's pay, requiring that it be given to him alone or to his heirs. If he had no heirs, the government made sure that his money was spent for the good of his soul.³² Men honorably discharged from the army retained special rights, receiving preferment for militia positions or vacancies among the regulars.³³ Veterans and widows and orphans of veterans had always made some claim on royal attention and on that of the captains; now it became a matter of right and not of special favor.³⁴

Yet royal officials themselves, unable to see the full implications of a system based on fiscal records, showed the same uncertainty about using muster records that was evident in their experimentation with dead-pay and financing of Villalba's regiment. Instead of depending on the records themselves, officials regularly inquired of army officers about the service of their men before granting pensions or preferments. Men thus queried recognized the inconsistency involved. On one occasion a veteran testified to having seen another man's name in the record books during a period of twenty years;

³¹ Cédula, Valladolid, February 3, 1515; Cédula, Segovia, September 7, 1515, both Simancas MSS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 2, leg. 1; Cédula, Segovia, September 7, 1515, Simancas MS, Clonard papers.

³² Article 42 of the General Ordinance of 1503; lib. 6, tit. 2, ley 13 in Díaz de Montalvo, *Ordenanzas*, 1176; Instructions for Pedro de Luxán, n.p., n.d. (after (1504), Simancas MS, Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 1, leg. 5.

³³ Cédula, Burgos, January 8, 1508, Simancas MS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 1, leg. 5; "Consulta e respuesta sobre lo de los hijos de los gente de acostamiento," n.p., 1503, Simancas MS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 1, leg. 5; Nómima, Burgos, January 8, 1508; Cédula, Valladolid, September 23, 1514; Cédula, Valladolid, February 3, 1515, all Simancas MSS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 2, leg. 1.

³⁴ Nóminas of 1485 in Antonio de la Torre y del Cerro and E. A. de la Torre (eds.), *Cuentas de Gonzalo de Baeza, tesorero de Isabel la Católica* (2 vols., Madrid, 1955-1956), I, 87, 91; Cédula, April 4, 1494, *ibid.*, II, 164; Cédula, December 12, 1494, *ibid.*, 192-193; Cédula, February 14, 1495, *ibid.*, 237; *CODOIN*, CVI, 271; *Crónicas del Gran Capitán*, 515; Ferdinand to Antonio de Cardona, Toro, March 12, 1505, *RABM*, XXVIII (1913), 372.

another suggested that records of past musters should sufficiently prove his comrade's army service without additional testimony.³⁵ Can the difficulty have been bad filing? In any case, a discrepancy existed between the actual and potential utility of the new records.

Always, then, uncertainty surrounded the whole question of central control through military accounting by a bureaucracy, as against control by individual commanders. In part this uncertainty came from continuous experimentation and a nagging realization that the commander himself could best assess his needs. In granting Villalba the right to use dead-pay for buying artillery, the monarchs were abandoning an earlier attempt to establish a whole separate bureaucracy to control artillery expenditure, a system which could only have proved cumbersome.³⁶ On the other hand, this experimentation with the armament of a regiment seems related to the contemporary requirement that troops stationed in the Kingdom of Naples should maintain their own books and depend for support on fixed local revenues.³⁷ Villalba's colonelcy represented a new practice of assigning command over a large number of variously armed men. Perhaps it also represented experimentation with a rather large military unit which had no fixed base, but was otherwise quite as self-contained as the army in Naples, with respect to assigned revenues and control over those revenues.

The captain continued to retain nearly complete control over his men. Records notwithstanding, he made the essential decision to keep or dismiss a man in his command.³⁸ Pay records for men in the reserves stored in the archives of Simancas differ significantly from records of men in regular service. The former give full descriptions of men and weapons in accordance with regulations; for here the individual soldier had a contract with the government and was in bureaucratic hands. However, the records of men in regular army captaincies seem hardly more than lists of names. From the royal point

³⁵ Memorandum, Andújar, March 19, 1501; Petition of Pedro de Pardave, n.p. (after 1520), both Simancas MSS., Guerra antigua, leg. 1; Ferdinand to Gonzalo, Toro, December 24, 1504, *Hispania*, III (1943), 83; Memorandum, n.p., 1514, Simancas MS., Guerra antigua, leg. 1.

³⁶ Jorge Vigón Suero-Díaz, *Historia de la artillería española* (Madrid, 1947), I, 117-120, 126-127; *RABM*, XXV (1911), 251-252.

³⁷ Cédula, Valladolid, February 3, 1515, Simancas MS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 2, leg. 1; Cédula, Segovia, August 30, 1515, Simancas MS., Guerra antigua, leg. 1; Ferdinand to Pedro Beltrán and Ramón Cardona, n.p., (1512?), Simancas MS., Patronato real, leg. 42.

³⁸ Cédula, Ferdinand to García Alonso de Ulloa, *veedor general*, Segovia, n.d., Simancas MS., Mar y tierra, leg. 1, Clonard papers; Cédula, Burgos, January 8, 1508, Simancas MS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 1, leg. 5.

of view, the basic contract here remained between the man and his captain, or between captain and king.

Certainly, too, many soldiers and some bureaucrats just ignored the rules. Although all Spanish commanders in the field kept copies of the general regulations of 1495-1503 along with an additional file of orders relevant to their own duties, men sent out as paymasters received extensive additional instructions.³⁹ This very multiplicity of instructions indicates what the letters themselves confirm, that abuses continued in spite of all precautions. The persistence of abuses without notable punishment and continuing experimentation with local control, both show that royal policy always concerned itself more with achieving immediate results than with establishing a long-range bureaucracy.

Despite all wavering and uncertainty, the battle of the account books figured significantly in the campaigns of Ferdinand and Isabella both at home and abroad. It determined their ability to respond successfully at a time when a perennial shortage of money and an unprecedented need for extensive military activity confronted the Spanish monarchy with its greatest crisis and challenge. The development of bureaucratic techniques, communications, methods of supplying troops with money and food—the whole complex equipment of modern centralized government—remained too imperfect for complete centralization. Yet the need for keeping accurate records helped to shape army development from decentralized to centralized control and thus to forge the army into a reliable instrument of national policy. Clear records required an army made up of standard units and men in authority devoted to the specifically civilian interests of the state. Commanders during the generation of Gonzalo de Córdoba and Cristóbal de Villalba, including Ferdinand himself, never really comprehended the transformation. Probably royal readiness to meet the needs of the moment and to yield when the bureaucratic system broke down explains the success of the developing system. Nevertheless, the growing importance of account books already suggested that the future belonged to the bureaucrats.

³⁹ General Ordinance of 1503, art. 62; Cédula, Madrid, August 4, 1503; Cédula, Valladolid, September 23, 1514; Cédula, Valladolid, February 3, 1515, all Simancas MSS., Contaduría del Sueldo, ser. 2, leg. 1; Cédula, Segovia, September 7, 1515, Simancas MS., Mar y tierra, leg. 1; all Cédulas: Clonard papers.