

# MILITARY *HABITUS* AND NETWORKS IN PRINCE ALFONSO DE BORBÓN EDUCATION (1857-1874)<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** This article analyses the relationship between the monarchy and the army by examining the military education received by Prince Alfonso. The aim is two-fold: to gauge the political importance of the military *habitus* instilled in Alfonso in pursuit of army support to consolidate the monarchy, and to assess the influence of military networks in the prince's close circle in order to determine the extent to which their behaviour was similar to that of other factions at court.

**KEYWORDS:** Alfonso XII – Court – Networks – Army – Education – Restoration – Cánovas del Castillo

## *HABITUS* MILITAR Y REDES CASTRENSES EN TORNO A LA EDUCACIÓN DEL PRÍNCIPE ALFONSO DE BORBÓN (1857-1874)

**RESUMEN:** Este artículo trata de analizar la relación entre la corona y el ejército a partir de la educación militar recibida por el príncipe Alfonso. El objetivo es doble. Por un lado, se pretende calibrar la importancia política del *habitus* militar en el que se formó Alfonso en la búsqueda del apoyo del ejército para la consolidación del trono. Por otro, se quiere conocer el grado de influencia de las redes militares en el entorno del príncipe para saber hasta qué punto su conducta fue semejante a la de otros grupos de presión cortesanos.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Alfonso XII – Corte – Redes – Ejército – Educación – Restauración – Cánovas del Castillo

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## THE FUNCTION OF ALFONSO XII'S MILITARY EDUCATION

The military occupied a key position throughout Alfonso XII's life<sup>2</sup>. Since his infancy, a strong bond was formed between the future ruler and the armed forces which intensified significantly during his exile. Throughout this time, first as the Prince of Asturias and subsequently as claimant to the throne, Alfonso gradually acquired the *habitus* of his close circle, establishing ties of brotherhood and fellowship with the military. Sociology defines the concept of *habitus* as the acquisition of the value system and forms of behaviour shared by a social group<sup>3</sup>. This idea, perfected in the pioneering studies by Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, who included the human body in this concept, suggests that physical appearance and behaviour are not ahistorical concepts immutable in time, but rather are subject to contextual changes. Application of this theoretical framework enables us to trace Alfonso's gradual internalisation of a lifestyle linked to the military and closely related to the construction of a way of understanding the concept of masculinity associated with a martial code and the principles of nationality. The hypothesis here is that in acquiring this military *habitus*, Alfonso XII adopted the three dimensions of a modern monarch: masculinity, a military vocation and commitment to the homeland.

The first part of this article analyses the way in which Alfonso's developing military *habitus* assimilated him into the military world. This will entail examining the reasons that led to the officers responsible for the heir to the throne's education to guide him in this direction in order to transform the king—at least symbolically—into a soldier in the service of the nation<sup>4</sup>. The basic question that arises is to what extent they tried to make the heir to the throne one of them, and what benefits they hoped to gain from this. Thus, we will assess not only the extent to which the image of Alfonso was shaped by members of the Spanish armed

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2 The main biographies of the king are those by Pedro de RÉPIDE, *Alfonso XII. La restauración de un trono*, Madrid: Libros y Revistas, 1947; Carlos DARDÉ, *Alfonso XII*, Madrid: Arlanza, 2001 and Carlos SECO SERRANO, *Alfonso XII*, Barcelona: Ariel, 2007. For an exploration of the challenges posed by a biography of the king, see Carlos DARDÉ, "En torno a la biografía de Alfonso XII: cuestiones metodológicas y de interpretación", *Ayer* 52 (2003), p. 39-56. For an overview of the Spanish army in the nineteenth century, see Miguel ARTOLA (coord.), *Historia Militar de España IV. El Siglo XIX*, Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2015.

3 Marcel MAUSS, "Les techniques du corps", *Journal de Psychologie* XXXII (1936), p. 271-293; Max WEBER, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1922. Bourdieu defined it as a set of "principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to obtain them" (Pierre BOURDIEU, *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990, p. 53).

4 This issue is examined in greater depth by Javier MORENO LUZÓN in "El rey patriota Alfonso XIII y el nacionalismo español" in Ángele Lario (ed.), *Monarquía y República en la España contemporánea*, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2007, p. 269-294.

forces, but also how this military *habitus* was created through his education and used by members of the military elite for more purely political objectives. Secondly, we will study the extent to which Alfonso's military *habitus* was intended to place the monarch in a position that would allow him to appeal to the military and obtain their support. We will therefore analyse whether Alfonso's military instruction and image were deliberately directed towards the army in order to tie him closely to the restoration of the monarchy after the revolution of 1868. Lastly, we will see how attempts to attract the army to Alfonso's cause would become increasingly important for the restoration of the monarchy in 1874. It was then that the long-term goal of imposing civilian rule over the military became apparent. This dual strategy was primarily driven by Cánovas, and Alfonso's education would play a central role in it. Hence, we will discuss the acute tension that existed between the conservative leader and the military chiefs as both tried to bend the young monarch to their respective wills. This conflict was resolved thanks to the prestige gained by the king: having acquired a military *habitus* since childhood, he was able to identify with the army and assume its leadership, and this allowed him to reconcile safeguarding the interests of the latter with the defence of government decisions. Thus, the king himself became an important arbiter between civilian and military institutions<sup>5</sup>.

The sources used for this study come mostly from Spanish archives. Contemporary memoirs and reports from the British embassy (The National Archives, Foreign Office) have also been used. The criteria followed for the selection of the sources have followed two lines, based on their feasibility for the analysis of the proposed study. The first line of work has tried to analyse the letters addressed to the kings by the preceptors of the prince. The information of these letters, with a more private character, has allowed to know the process of formation as a soldier of the prince from the inside. The second line of work has aimed to know the same process through the official reports. In this way, we wanted to combine the personal opinions of the military teachers, the parents of Prince Alfonso and agents outside the court circle with the data of military and official reports. Likewise, those sources that could provide information on the personal and professional trajectories of the prince's educators have also been taken into account.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SOLDIER-KING

The idea of giving Alfonso a military education emerged in his infancy. As early as 1860, Queen Isabella II and her husband Francis of Assisi asked the

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<sup>5</sup> In this regard, see the book by Ángeles LARIO, *El Rey, piloto sin brújula. La Corona y el sistema político de la Restauración (1875-1902)*, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1999.

Minister of Public Works for advice about their son's education, expressing their desire for Alfonso to become a "pious, brave, magnanimous man instructed in all questions related to peace and war"<sup>6</sup>. The minister's reply reflected similar aspirations, arguing that lessons on matters of war, military strategy and combat tactics should take priority in the young heir's education. He further contended that these theoretical lessons should be complemented by practical learning because "his life should be active, and of the masculine pursuits, he should learn about weapons and military theory in action, participating in exercises alongside more experienced captains"<sup>7</sup>. The military would play an important role in implementing these ideas, transforming the heir into a soldier as a means to strengthen the bond between the future monarch and the armed forces. Thus, military subjects and attitudes constituted an important part of Alfonso's early education, immersing him from childhood in a martial world and facilitating the prince's internalisation of a military *habitus*. As mentioned earlier, sociologists have used this concept to define individual habits, skills and tastes. Both Bourdieu and Foucault argued that these principles are modulated by historical context, structures and memories, rendering *habitus* an extremely dynamic concept subject to wide variations over time<sup>8</sup>. Applying this theoretical framework to the monarchy reveals the acquisition and projection by nineteenth century male heirs of a *habitus* strongly associated with masculine, martial and national qualities<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, its strongly dynamic nature enables comparisons over time, as well as the projection of the ideals of masculinity as a result of social, political and technological change<sup>10</sup>.

Thus, from his early childhood, the military were heavily involved in Alfonso's education through what were known as his "military tutors", who even received special permission to wear uniforms when they were in the royal chambers<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, when the team of teachers who would be responsible for the royal pupil's education was formed, it was an officer, General Alvarez

6 Real Biblioteca (PRRB), II/3380: letter from Isabella II and Francis of Assisi to the Minister of Public Works, Rafael del Busto y Castilla, about the education of the Prince of Asturias (28th November 1860).

7 RB, II/3380: reply from the Minister of Public Works to the letter from Isabella II and Francis of Assisi about the education of the Prince of Asturias (15th October 1861).

8 See Pierre BOURDIEU, *Masculine Domination*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001 and Michel FOUCAULT, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979.

9 The pioneering study in this area was that by Ernst H. KANTOROWICZ, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton: New Jersey, 1957, who established the difference between the "political body" and the "biological body" of the monarch. For an interesting discussion on the role of the female body of the queen, Regina SCHULTE (ed.), *The Body of the Queen: Gender and Rule in the Courtly World, 1500-2000*, New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006.

10 Svenja GOLTERMANN, *Körper der Nation. Habitusformierung und die Politik des Turnens 1860-1890*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998.

11 Archivo General de Palacio [AGP], *Sec. Histórica*, caja 114, exp. 1: order of the High Steward (8th November 1864).

Ossorio, who was appointed to the post of “Head of Studies”<sup>12</sup>. Consequently, the heir was surrounded and instructed by senior officers who were always dressed in military uniform. The fact that members of this military elite accepted responsibility for teaching the young prince is a clear indication not only of the prestige but also of the enormous importance attached to the task. It is therefore reasonable to assume that these officers believed they had a significant influence on the future monarch. This close link between education and the military is patently evident in Alfonso’s curriculum and activities. Military instruction included knowledge of fencing, shooting practice and a series of military exercises, which although they were not specified and detailed until 1866, nevertheless bore witness to the military’s deep involvement in Alfonso’s earlier general education<sup>13</sup>. The heir’s military training was considered very seriously as a crucial element in his education by the High Steward to the Prince of Asturias, the Marquis de Novaliches, who suggested to Alfonso the idea of receiving a “larger sword” made expressly for him<sup>14</sup>. At least five of his teachers were high-ranking military officers who frequently accompanied the young prince<sup>15</sup>. Military personnel were thus ubiquitous not only in Alfonso’s education but also in all the other public and private dimensions of his life. This was especially important for the military because ultimately, it meant that the future head of state would identify closely with them and their interests, which they considered indistinguishable from those of the entire nation, as evidenced by various military declarations<sup>16</sup>.

This relationship with Alfonso also contained a significant symbolic element in that it associated the heir to the throne with the armed forces, or at least, such was the intention<sup>17</sup>. On the 30th September 1862, shortly before Alfonso’s fifth birthday, he was officially enlisted as a volunteer in the King’s

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12 Isabel MARGARIT, *La vida y la época de Alfonso XII*, Barcelona: Planeta, 1998, p. 45.

13 AGP, *Sec. Histórica*, caja 114, exp. 2: timetable for HRH the Prince of Asturias (23rd November and 3rd December, 1866).

14 AGP, *Sec. Histórica*, caja 114, exp. 2: note from the High Steward of HRH the Prince of Asturias (13th January 1868).

15 This is illustrated, for example, by a note from Alfonso’s High Steward to his teachers, giving the date and time to attend a church ceremony. The officers listed there as teachers were Lieutenant Colonels Emilio Bernáldez, Enrique Sola, Martiniano Moreno, José Sanchiz and Captain César Fournell, AGP, *Sec. Histórica*, caja 8654, exp. 1: circular from the High Steward of HRH the Prince of Asturias (1st April, 1868).

16 For a discussion of the military mentality of the time, see Pablo GONZÁLEZ-POLA DE LA GRANJA, *La configuración de la mentalidad militar contemporánea, 1868-1909*, Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2003 and Geoffrey JENSEN, *Cultura militar española. Modernistas, tradicionalistas y liberales*, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2014.

17 See in this regard David SAN NARCISO MARTIN, “Viejos ropajes para una nueva Monarquía. Género y nación en la refundación simbólica de la Corona de Isabel II (1858-1866)”, *Ayer* 108, (2017), p. 203-230.

First Immemorial Infantry Regiment and assigned to the first battalion of grenadiers. He would continue to be a member of the regiment until the exile of the royal family, and was promoted four times to reach the rank of sergeant first class in a supernumerary role<sup>18</sup>. Although he never actively served in the regiment, his appointment and promotions followed the usual official channels. Therefore, the prince progressed “without privileges” in the army, not skipping any rank and receiving an ordinary official military record, known as the Service Record<sup>19</sup>. In joining the armed forces, the young Alfonso officially formed part of the institution. The unspoken goal behind this measure was to foster the heir’s sense of camaraderie with the soldiers, an *esprit de corps*. One could say that the strategy was successful because when the sergeants who had revolted on 22nd June at the San Gil Artillery Barracks were sentenced to death in 1866, it seems that the heir asked to be shot alongside the sergeants from his regiment<sup>20</sup>. It is unlikely that this story is true, but it is revealing that it has passed into the collective imagination and was narrated as late as 1947 by Pedro de Répide, one of Alfonso XII’s first biographers. In the end, the image created of Alfonso was that of a comrade in arms, a simple member of the regiment ready to die with his comrades<sup>21</sup>.

Alfonso’s exile with his family in 1868 significantly complicated the situation of both the prince and the army. Alfonso’s possibilities of serving in the Spanish army were abruptly terminated. However, some of the military followed Isabella II into exile or maintained a frequent correspondence with the royal family, and consequently continued to be closely involved in Alfonso’s education. This was partly a result of their loyalty to the crown but also partly due to disappointment with the new regime, and they followed his development as a soldier with interest, in the hope of one day seeing Alfonso become king of Spain. Thus, the army continued to be a presence in the prince’s life in exile, either directly as tutors and instructors, or indirectly, through their correspondence with him.

One of the members of the military elite who remained loyal to the royal family in exile was the Marquis de Novaliches, a general who had unsuccessfully opposed the 1868 revolution. He had previously served as High Steward to the heir, and maintained close contact with Alfonso during the latter’s exile.

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18 AGP, *Sec. Histórica*, caja 114, exp. 2: entry of his majesty into the King’s First Immemorial Infantry Regiment (register from 30th September 1861 to 26th November 1864).

19 Archivo General Militar de Madrid [AGMM], *Expedientes Personales, Célebres*, Caja 4, Exp. 11: Alfonso XII, King of Spain. Service Record: King’s First Immemorial Infantry Regiment (30th September 1864).

20 Pedro de RÉPIDE: *Alfonso XII...*, p. 7.

21 This image is in intriguing contrast to his later one as the peacemaker king. This has been studied by Rafael in his articles “De ‘Rey soldado’ a ‘pacificador’. Representaciones simbólicas de Alfonso XII de Borbón”, *Historia Constitucional* 11 (2010), p. 47-75 and “Alfonso XII, el rey del orden y la concordia” in Emilio La Parra (coord.), *La imagen del poder. Reyes y regentes en la España del siglo XIX*, Madrid: Síntesis, 2011, p. 335-388.

In his letters, the marquis constantly urged the prince to become a man, and expressed the pleasure he felt at seeing him receive a military training<sup>22</sup>. Similarly, from an early date he would remind Isabella II of the crucial role that the army played in Spanish politics, which meant that its participation would be essential for the success of any attempt to restore the monarchy<sup>23</sup>. For Alfonso, the marquis was someone with whom he could discuss specific and advanced military strategies and regulations and who was a source of information on the civil wars that had engulfed Spain<sup>24</sup>. The general remained closely involved in the young Alfonso's education through Colonel O'Ryan, who sought advice from Novaliches and reported to him on the prince's progress<sup>25</sup>. The senator and general, Fernández San Ramón, was another member of the military establishment who advised on and stressed the importance of Alfonso's military education. As he said in a letter to the young prince, Alfonso should "aspire to become a past master in the theory and practice of war"<sup>26</sup>.

However, other officers were more directly and closely involved in the education of Alfonso in exile. During his successive stays in Paris, Switzerland and Bavaria between 1868 and 1871, Colonel Thomas O'Ryan would play a major role in guiding his education. It was he who would accompany the young Alfonso at all times, selecting his schools and teachers and planning his educational programme<sup>27</sup>. At the time, O'Ryan was an experienced officer who had served in Cuba and participated in the African campaigns, and had also held important positions in the military administration. In an interesting parallel with Isabella's old tutor, Colonel Francisco Luján, O'Ryan's history also included a combination of experience in military education, the study of foreign military academies and participation in the administration of the armed forces<sup>28</sup>. As can be seen, a mixture of experience in education and compelling

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22 AGP, *Archivos Personales y Familiares: Novaliches*, caja 19.100, Exp. 8: letter from Alfonso XII to Novaliches (18th February 1874).

23 AGP, *Archivos Personales y Familiares: Novaliches*, caja 19.100, Exp. 1: letter from Novaliches to Isabella II (3rd July 1869). On the army's role in the restoration, see Manuel ESPADAS BURGOS, *Alfonso XII y los orígenes de la Restauración*, Madrid: CSIC, 1990, p. 265-354.

24 AGP, *Archivos Personales y Familiares: Novaliches*, caja 19.100, Exp. 8: letter from Alfonso XII to Novaliches (27th December 1873).

25 AGP, *Archivos Personales y Familiares: Novaliches*, caja 19.100, Exp. 8: letters from O'Ryan to the Marquis of Novaliches (19th October and 5th December 1870).

26 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 22, Exp. 32: letter from Eduardo Fernández de San Román to Alfonso XII (19th September 1873).

27 See for example AGP, *Archivos Personales y Familiares: Novaliches*, caja 19.100, Exp. 8: letter from O'Ryan to the Marquis of Novaliches (5th December 1870) and PRRB, II/4557, Doc. 728: letter from Alfonso to Isabella II (4th October 1871).

28 AGP, *Sec. Personal*, caja 15.975, Exp. 10: biographies of the generals appointed after 1st January 1875. Field Marshal Tomas O'Ryan y Vázquez. For more on Isabella's education, see Isabel BURDIEL, *Isabel II. Una biografía (1830-1904)*, Madrid: Taurus, 2010.

military credentials were of the utmost importance when finding tutors for the prince. O’Ryan introduced strong military elements into Alfonso’s education, emphasising practical science to endow him with an understanding of the mechanisms of the machinery of war and the use of firearms<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, when he was commissioned to visit and evaluate various European schools with a view to Alfonso’s future attendance at one of them, he was guided by the same criteria. Thus, for example, he liked the fact that the *Pagèrie* near Munich was directed by a respected lieutenant colonel, Baron Lerchenfeld, although the institution’s multi-faith stance constituted a problem<sup>30</sup>. He was not responsible for making the final decision, but his opinions held considerable weight. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that the men such as O’Ryan who surrounded the young Alfonso were not merely acting out of simple altruism. Rather, they hoped to obtain considerable personal benefits from teaching the prince, as well as the possibility of wielding enormous influence in the future if they succeeded in instilling in Alfonso the feeling of being a soldier and comrade. In March 1875, a few months after Alfonso’s return to Spain as king, O’Ryan was promoted to field marshal and the following month he was appointed Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces<sup>31</sup>. Although his military credentials were an important factor in his promotion, another compelling reason would have been his close connection with the monarch, who would take a personal and public interest in the army during his reign.

Although he was assigned to a civilian company during his time at the *Theresianum*, the royal schoolboy never lost his interest in military activities while attending school abroad. During his stay in Austria, he visited various munitions factories, participated as an observer in military exercises and received riding lessons<sup>32</sup>. When his time there came to an end, it was decided that Alfonso should enter a military academy and Juan Velasco Fernández de la Cuesta was appointed to accompany him. As is clear from his service record, this latter was a highly respected officer who had participated in numerous campaigns and was particularly appreciated for his hard work and the confidence he inspired in the young Alfonso’s parents<sup>33</sup>. As with his predecessor in this post, Velasco

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29 AGP, *Archivos Personales y Familiares: Novaliches*, caja 19.100, Exp. 8: letters from O’Ryan y Vázquez to the Marquis of Novaliches (5th December 1870).

30 Real Academia de la Historia [RAH], *Archivo de Isabel II*, Leg. 6962: reports on the prince’s studies, November 1870 - April 1871. Regarding these doubts about the schools, see Manuel ESPADAS BURGOS, *Alfonso XII...*, p. 49 ff.

31 AGP, *Sec. Personal*, caja 15.975, Exp. 10: biographies of the generals appointed after 1st January 1875. Field Marshal Tomas O’Ryan y Vázquez.

32 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 25, Exp. O: on Alfonso XII of Spain’s youth (by his German tutor in Vienna) (1st February 1872).

33 Archivo General Militar de Segovia [AGMS], 1a/B-1501, Personal Record of Juan Velasco y Fernández de la Cuesta.

combined professional experience and technical skills: noteworthy among his many other merits, he had been “head of all geographical works” at the War Depository from 1866 to 1868.

As the internal situation in Spain changed, becoming more favourable to the restoration of the monarchy, Cánovas sought the approval of the most important generals who sympathised with the Bourbon cause before taking such an important decision in the direction of the claimant to the throne’s military education<sup>34</sup>. Velasco was well regarded by his colleagues, who saw him as the best person to exercise the privilege of such close contact with the aspiring king. Their close relationship would survive the years of exile, and in the future, would bring him great rewards within the military. Shortly after acceding to the Spanish throne, Alfonso granted him a post at court in which he would work closely with the king, appointing him his aide-de-camp on 5th February 1875. This close contact also led to other important positions. Over time, he would reach the rank of major general<sup>35</sup>. The senior officers’ monarchical and ideological loyalty combined with the proximity to power and future possibility of influencing the monarch to their personal benefit unquestionably contributed to the high-ranking elite’s willingness to assume these responsibilities. They could not be certain that Alfonso would become king, but were well aware of the enormous benefits they would obtain if he did, which explains their personal commitment to the Bourbon cause.

Before analysing the extent to which the image of Alfonso as a soldier was intended as a means to control the armed forces, it is worth examining the personal beliefs of Isabella II as regards her son’s education. From these, it can be deduced that she not only actively encouraged Alfonso’s military training, but also exhibited a firm belief in the crucial importance of the heir’s participation in military affairs. In a letter to her son, Isabella expressed her desire to “see you on horseback, leading the troops, being an accomplished gentleman and a distinguished general”<sup>36</sup>. A few years later, she wrote to Alfonso saying that once he had finished his examinations, it would be “necessary for you to be very much a man and very much a soldier”<sup>37</sup>. However, despite expressing her agreement with Cánovas in this regard, Isabella conceived of a more emphatically military role for Alfonso than Don Antonio, almost equivalent to his full incorporation into the armed forces rather than simply being a symbolic instrument through which to control the generals. The former queen wanted Alfonso to acquire the military skills, aptitudes and behaviour that would identify him as a soldier, which implied a marked military *habitus* to be instilled

34 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 24, Exp. 5-B: letter from Cánovas to Isabella II (13th April 1874).

35 AGMS, 1a/B-1501, Personal Record of Juan Velasco y Fernández de la Cuesta.

36 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 19, Exp. 21: letter from Isabella II to Alfonso XII (25th April 1872).

37 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 24, Exp. 5-F: letter from Isabella II to Alfonso XII (19th June 1874).

through his education. Isabella argued this opinion frequently, independently of the negotiations held with other senior army officers to seek ways to restore the monarchy and the insistence of some of her advisers on the crucial role played by the military in this situation<sup>38</sup>.

## ENSURING THE ARMY'S LOYALTY

What was the political and symbolic role of Alfonso's military education? Was it intended to win the loyalty of the military? Alfonso's acquisition of a military *habitus* served to create a close bond between the army and the monarchy and ensure the army's support, but to what extent? It seems indisputable that Alfonso was accepted as a member of the army and sought the military's loyalty to his cause and his person. However, this success would have entailed the monarch's identification with the army's position, rendering his interests indistinguishable from those of his fellow officers. Therefore, it is essential to ask to what extent the Bourbon cause gained the army's loyalty through the symbolic projection of the king's military *habitus*.

Alfonso had already been used as an instrument to promote pro-monarchical sentiments among the armed forces before he was one month old. On the day he was born, the prince was greeted with 25-gun artillery salute, followed by numerous official receptions and three days of general festivities<sup>39</sup>. In addition, to celebrate the birth of a male heir to the Spanish throne, a royal decree was issued granting various benefits to the military, such as the extraordinary promotion of several officers, including 22 colonels to the rank of brigadier, and the award of various honours<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, the troops received numerous rewards in cash and kind. Sergeants, corporals and soldiers were awarded 10, 6 and 4 Spanish *reales*, respectively, and the garrisons in Madrid received extra rations of meat, bread and wine, costing a total of 91,153 Spanish *reales*. These ceremonies marked the first step towards creating a symbolic link between the future ruler and the military.

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38 Her correspondence reveals evidence of her opinions on this matter. In a letter to the Duke of Baena (ARAH, Leg. 6953, 22nd November 1981), Isabella II stressed the need for a military education, while in another sent to Cánovas on 18th January 1874 (AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 19, Exp. 19), she expressed her conviction of the army's irresistible strength and unity. There is also evidence of contact between the queen and General Martínez Campos before his famous declaration in December 1874 (in this regard see Enrique DOMÍNGUEZ MARTÍNEZ CAMPOS, *Martínez Campos "vs" Cánovas del Castillo*, Madrid: Edición personal, 2006).

39 David SAN NARCISO MARTIN, "Celebrar el futuro, venerar la Monarquía. El nacimiento del heredero y el punto de fuga ceremonial de la Monarquía Isabelina (1857-1858)", *Hispania* 255 (2017), p. 185-215.

40 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 12.830, Exp. 4: royal decree giving thanks, of the 7th December 1857, on the occasion of the birth of his Majesty the Prince of Asturias.

In addition, his enlistment in the above-mentioned infantry regiment was used as an instrument not only to link Alfonso with the military, but also to symbolise the monarchy's commitment to the army, strengthening the latter's loyalty to the future monarch. As the Captain General of Andalusia said when Alfonso joined the King's First Immemorial Infantry Regiment, the heir to the throne would "learn about its [the Spanish army's] glory, courage and loyalty, which one day may lead him down the path of honour"<sup>41</sup>. At the same time, he asked the following of the Andalusian army soldiers: "never forget the new links that have been forged today that bind us to our queen and the Prince of Asturias". The brigadier in charge of the regiment echoed these sentiments, describing the fact that "the Prince of Asturias, Alfonso de Borbon y Borbon, heir to the throne, is wearing our uniform" was "the greatest proof of deserved affection towards the infantry, and especially towards this regiment"<sup>42</sup>. With this honour, the army understood that "today more than ever, we must faithfully fight for and serve our queen and country". The declaration ended with cheers for the queen, the king and the Prince of Asturias.

While these statements may have contained much rhetoric, it is reasonable to assume that these were the words that the queen and her husband hoped to hear. Alfonso's connection with the regiment did not end with his enlistment, but rather was strengthened in several ways. As it was impossible for a four year old to participate in exercises, he took part with his parents in military parades. There is also photographic evidence of Alfonso at a very young age dressed in a regimental uniform specially made for him<sup>43</sup>. The photograph shows a small, serious-looking prince dressed in military uniform and armed with a small sabre. It is not clear whether this was one of the monarchy's private, family photographs or if it was intended for wider distribution, but the subsequent request of one of the regiment's commanders for a reproduction of the portrait suggests that copies may have been made for the troops<sup>44</sup>. In addition, the commanders of the regiment were awarded many honours (such as the award of the Order of Charles III), and monetary rewards from the prince's "personal fund" were distributed among the soldiers<sup>45</sup>. Alfonso's bond with the regiment was maintained through the various promotions that he received, which were

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<sup>41</sup> AGP, *Sección Histórica*, caja 114, Exp. 2: general order of the Captain General of Andalusia (1st October 1862).

<sup>42</sup> AGP, *Sección Histórica*, caja 114, Exp. 2: Order of the Corps, King's First Immemorial Infantry Regiment.

<sup>43</sup> PRRB, FOT/719, No. 10185039: album with portraits of Alfonso XII from birth until 1885, and of some family members, s.d.

<sup>44</sup> AGP, *Sección Histórica*, caja 114, Exp. 2: confidential letter from Colonel Joaquín Vitoria to the Marquis of Novaliches (High Steward to HRH Alfonso) (22nd November 1866).

<sup>45</sup> See AGP, *Sección Histórica*, caja 114, Exp. 2: letter from Francisco Díaz y Soler to the High Steward (3rd February 1867) and note from the High Steward (13th December 1867).

often accompanied by congratulatory messages from the officers<sup>46</sup>. This symbolic connection was carefully nurtured until the royal family went into exile, underscoring the importance it was given. The prince's active participation at this time would have been rather limited, which only reinforced the symbolic importance of his membership of the regiment and its essential role in the creation of close ties, of soft power, between the monarchy and the army.

However, a central question emerges in the analysis in relation to the effectiveness of this method of creating a bond between these institutions: the very same soldiers who declared their unswerving loyalty to the crown in response to Alfonso's enlistment and the many favours received, were also the ones who participated in the failed uprising of San Gil in 1866. It should not be forgotten that this revolt constituted one of the first military protests that challenged the legitimacy of the monarchy and clamoured for its overthrow<sup>47</sup>. Two conclusions can be drawn from the nature of the military insurrection, led mainly by the sergeants rather than the officers, and inspired by the dissatisfaction of those with opportunities for promotion. The first is that the heir's appeal to the army was directed mainly towards the officers, who benefited disproportionately from all the rewards in exchange for maintaining an unwavering loyalty. The second is that although the symbolic link was very important, it was not always sufficient to compensate for deeper and more serious grievances within the army. It is important to recognise these limitations regarding the efficacy of the monarchy's symbolic ties with the military, which were not always reciprocated on a material level.

The revolution of 1868 and subsequent exile of the royal family wrought radical changes in the relationship between the monarchy and the military. The traditional channels of patronage and symbolic representation were temporarily closed, and it was necessary to find new ways to instil a military and masculine *habitus* in the young Alfonso that would enable him to establish himself as an ideal model of a virile soldier. As previously indicated, this was achieved through the people in his immediate circle and through his instruction and education. After taking charge of the political direction of Alfonso's cause and rendering the restoration a more realistic possibility, Cánovas undertook a series of measures to strengthen and emphasise the symbolic dimension of the heir as a soldier.

Even before the abdication of Isabella II in the summer of 1870, it was clear to some of her closest advisers that the army would play an essential role in the potential restoration of the Bourbons. Thus, the aforementioned Marquis

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46 AGMM, *Expedientes Personales, Celebres*, Caja 4, Exp. 11: Alfonso XII, King of Spain. Service Record: King's First Immemorial Infantry Regiment (30th September 1864).

47 Jorge VILCHES GARCÍA, *Progreso y libertad: el Partido Progresista en la revolución liberal española*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2001, p. 68-70.

of Novaliches warned the queen that a transfer of dynastic rights to her son Alfonso would only make sense if the army could be counted on for its support. This was not entirely the case at the time the letter was written, in 1869, and hence there was no compelling reason to abdicate<sup>48</sup>. At the other extreme, the Marquis of Alcañices, José Osorio y Silva, one of Isabella's main financial protectors and the person in charge of Alfonso's education, did not share this view. In short, Alfonso had a greater chance of winning over the military because his image was not associated with anything that the leaders of the 1868 revolution had rejected. As he wrote, he felt it would be "very difficult for any military uprising to achieve victory without the support of some of the same generals who had been committed to the revolution"<sup>49</sup>. In addition, Alfonso's youth was a strong asset that relieved him of all responsibility and produced a positive effect. He shared Novaliches's appreciation of the central role of the army, but in his opinion, only Alfonso could win over the revolutionary leaders and ensure a successful uprising. This situation placed the heir at the centre of attempts to gain the loyalty of the military.

Therefore, it is no surprise that after the abdication of Isabella, those loyal to the dynasty continually emphasised the importance of a virile physical education that reflected the widely held concept of masculinity at the time. Novaliches told the queen that it was very important for Alfonso to acquire a "character and manner that would endow him with a virile appearance, so useful for his highness"<sup>50</sup>. As Goltermann has shown, strenuous physical exercise and its reflection in a masculine appearance were often associated with a military *habitus*, which testified to men's ability to fight or *Wehrhaftigkeit*<sup>51</sup>. This idea was reiterated by all the people responsible for Alfonso's education, both those who instructed him in military tactics (such as O'Ryan and Losa, another officer in this circle) and those responsible for his physical training. During his time in Switzerland between 1870 and 1871, O'Ryan informed Novaliches of Alfonso's daily life, reporting that the claimant to the throne spent two hours in the gym twice a week, and was instructed by a colonel in the Swiss Federal Army<sup>52</sup>. The military were thus responsible for ensuring that Alfonso exhibited a virile physique and manner, and represented an ideal of masculinity associa-

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48 AGP, *Archivos Personales y Familiares: Novaliches*, caja 19.100, Exp. 1: letter from Novaliches to Isabella II (3rd July 1869).

49 "Appendix to the letter from Alcañices to Isabella II, 4th July 1869". For the full citation, see Julio QUESADA CAÑAVERAL, *Memorias Del Conde de Benalúa, Duque de San Galatino*, Madrid: Blass, 1924, p. 65.

50 AGP, *Archivos Personales y Familiares: Novaliches*, caja 19.100, Exp. 1: letter from Novaliches to Isabella II (7th November 1870).

51 Svenja GOLTERMANN: *Körper der Nation...*

52 AGP, *Archivos Personales y Familiares: Novaliches*, caja 19.100, Exp. 8: letter from O'Ryan to Novaliches (5th December 1870).

ted with the potential exercise of power due to attributes beyond pure political and dynastic legitimacy.

## CÁNOVAS AGAINST MILITARY CLIQUES

Although military aspects played an important role in the years of exile, it was not until the period in which Cánovas assumed the leadership of Alfonso's cause that they became more explicit and pronounced. In short, Cánovas encouraged the acquisition and internalisation of a military *habitus* in order to win the armed forces over to his cause. However, this was a long-term goal, and the link forged between the monarch and the army was intended as a means to control the political ambitions of the military, openly expressed in the reign of Isabella II.

We will first examine how Alfonso's military education continued to serve as a tool to attract military leaders, thus securing their support in a hypothetical Bourbon restoration under his leadership. Although many in the army had remained loyal to the royal family, others collaborated with the democratic monarchy established under Amadeo I of Savoy, and after its failure, with the First Republic<sup>53</sup>. Over time, many of the latter became disillusioned with the failed models of state assayed during these turbulent times. However, no one could reliably guarantee that the majority of the armed forces would support a declaration in favour of the Bourbon claimant to the throne. Consequently, Cánovas believed that the young Alfonso should "become a soldier" in order to attract the military and gain their loyalty<sup>54</sup>. The leader of Alfonso's cause informed Isabella II about consultations with Spain's top generals and received her approval to appoint Juan de Velasco as Alfonso's new "assistant tutor". Similarly, Cánovas adopted the measures suggested by the military as regards Alfonso's education. Having lived through the decline of the previous reign, there was one thing that Cánovas wished to avoid at all costs: the presence of old cliques around the heir. Thus, he wrote the following to the exiled queen: "All the generals I have consulted, even the Count of Cheste, agree that it is a good idea for the assistant tutors to be new officers who have not been with the prince before, and they even think that after a time, these should be replaced by other officers so that there is not the slightest indication of favouritism"<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Rafael FERNÁNDEZ SIRVENT, "El 'partido Alfonsino' y la restauración de la Monarquía constitucional en España: en torno al Manifiesto de Sandhurst (1 de diciembre de 1874)", 2011, [www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmcdz0t7](http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmcdz0t7).

<sup>54</sup> This phrase appears repeatedly in the correspondence between Cánovas, Alfonso and Isabella in 1874, emphasising the need to highlight Alfonso's membership of the army through use of a uniform and the adoption of military behaviour and customs.

<sup>55</sup> AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 24, Exp. 5-B: letter from Cánovas to Isabella II (13th April 1874).

Cánovas wanted Alfonso to be ready, should his presence become necessary, to serve as a “guarantee for the [army] chiefs and an encouragement to the soldiers”. Thus, the ultimate goal was none other than to “unite, temper and conserve the intentions” of the armed forces. Not surprisingly, the conservative politician wrote: “Most of my time and all of my strength is dedicated to this”. In sum, the wishes of the military would have to be taken into account in order to guarantee their loyalty.

Alfonso’s military training played an essential role in this strategy. As mentioned a few lines earlier, Cánovas put pressure on Alfonso to go to England and study at a British military college<sup>56</sup>. As he made clear to Isabella in March 1874, it was “very urgent that Alfonso becomes a soldier, and there are good training camps and military bases in England”<sup>57</sup>. Furthermore, Alfonso should become a soldier “beside real men of war”, in order to reinforce this image. As he would write during discussions on the need to transform Alfonso into a virile soldier, this was intended to ensure that “he will return prepared to play his role with dignity and to make a good impression on everyone”<sup>58</sup>. On this point, he had the full support of Isabella II, who said in a letter to her son that she completely agreed with Cánovas that it was “necessary for you to be very much a man and very much a soldier”<sup>59</sup>. The close association between the construction of masculinity on the one hand and military elements on the other is rendered explicit in this statement. Simultaneously with being transformed into a soldier and leaving behind his role as a student, Alfonso was becoming a man. The connections established between the military *habitus* and notions of masculinity and maturity are clearly evident<sup>60</sup>.

Once again, this symbolic appeal to the military remained fundamental in these years. The Marquis of Molins, a loyal monarchist involved in the political and cultural aspects of the restoration, argued that Alfonso “must be a man of war; not a strategist or a sage, not a *troupier*, but a brave man familiar with all things military”<sup>61</sup>. He was neither to instruct the soldiers nor overshadow the officers. His role was primarily to enthuse them and win all of them over to

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56 In contrast, Alfonso’s personal inclinations leaned more towards university studies. See Ángeles LARIO, “Alfonso XII. El rey que quiso ser constitucional”, *Ayer* 52 (2003), p. 15-38.

57 RAH, *Archivo de Isabel II*, Leg. 6955: letter from Cánovas to Isabella II (12th March 1874).

58 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 24, Exp. 5-B: letter from Cánovas to Isabella II (2nd May 1874).

59 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, caja 19, Exp. 21: letter from Isabella II to Alfonso XII (9th June 1874).

60 For more on the relationship between the construction of contemporary masculinity and the role of the army, see Stefan DUDINK, Karen HAGEMANN and John TOSH (eds.), *Masculinities in politics and war. Gendering modern history*, Manchester-New York: Manchester University Press, 2004; Jean-Paul BERTAUD, “La virilité militaire” in Alain Corbin (dir.), *Histoire de la virilité. 2. Le triomphe de la virilité. Le XIXe siècle*, Paris: Seuil, 2011, p.161-206 and the classic study by George L. MOSSE, *The image of Man. The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

61 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 24, Exp. 5-F: letter from Mariano Roca de Togores (Marquis of Molins) to Isabella II (19th June 1874).

his cause. For the political leaders of the restoration, Alfonso's acquisition of a military *habitus* (with the aforementioned components: instruction in war, a military image and internalising behaviours associated with the military) was an important means to construct an image that would prove attractive to the armed forces and thus gain their support. Despite everything, it was never the intention to transform the king into a soldier. Cánovas's long-term strategy was to control the army and master their interventionist tendencies through their loyalty to the soldier-king. He thought that Spain faced something worse than Carlism; "MacMahonism, the perpetual aspiration to supreme power of a soldier of fortune"<sup>62</sup>. Cánovas sought to avoid the emergence in Spain of a military figure with a similar level of popularity as that of Marshal MacMahon. In a letter to Alfonso XII, Cánovas explained that military rule was now deeply rooted in Spain, "having taken advantage of the long reign of a lady (the august and kind-hearted mother of your highness)". Thus, the sex of the monarch played an important role in Cánovas's critical analysis of the preceding period: as the sovereign had been a woman, she had lacked the necessary charisma, and therefore her judgements and opinions had not been taken into consideration<sup>63</sup>. This circumstance should not be repeated with Alfonso, and consequently he had to transform from a boy to a man, from a young student to a virile king. The desired result was that "the nation would begin to understand, and it is essential that it should do so as soon as possible, that it does not need to entrust its safety and peace to the leaders who between you and me parody America, since it can rely on the firmness, courage and wisdom of its own legitimate sovereign".

Cánovas's extremely critical attitude is striking. As is clear from his writing, he never wanted Alfonso to become completely absorbed into the military world, but rather intended that he should project a credible image of a virile soldier, in order to serve as a counterpoint to the militaristic tendencies that in his opinion had developed in Spain due to the absence on the throne of a man who symbolically formed part of the army. Even when he was able to win over the main generals, Cánovas attempted to limit their excessive participation as far as possible. Although he expressed his satisfaction and held the same opinions as some of the military leaders (e.g. General Primo de Rivera, Captain General of New Castile, or the Count of Balmaseda, who fought in the Army of the North against the Carlists), Cánovas never wanted to cede them too much influence. As he wrote in his correspondence with Isabella, "I agree with

62 In AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 21, Exp. 14-A: letter from Cánovas to Alfonso XII (17th January 1874). Until further reference, all quotations allude to this note.

63 On these concepts, see Isabel BURDIEL, "El descenso de los reyes y la nación moral. A propósito de *Los Borbones en pelota*", estudio introductorio de *SEM, Los Borbones en pelota*, Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2012, p. 7-74.

the Count of Balmaseda, and I think he may be of service, but he must not try to be the only or the first of the generals”<sup>64</sup>. The army needed to be won over as a whole, and not led by a few who could later claim political authority. Cánovas wanted to personally control the army, not turn it into the driving force of the state, and hence Alfonso’s education was an important part of his plan.

The decision to send Alfonso to Sandhurst underlines the symbolic nature of his military training. Cánovas was clear that this stage in his education was not strictly necessary, believing —as he wrote to Isabella II— that Alfonso could learn everything required in relation to military affairs in only 15 days<sup>65</sup>. Cánovas’s lack of concern about what Alfonso would learn is corroborated by his correspondence with the director general of the military institution. General Duncan Alexander Cameron warned of the initial difficulties that Alfonso might experience in adapting to the academy, and more particularly to the new language<sup>66</sup>. These concerns proved well founded just a few weeks after admission, as evidenced by Alfonso’s poor examination results<sup>67</sup>. Nevertheless, in a letter to Isabella, the director reported that “*l’affabilité de ses manières, la franchise de son caractère et ses dispositions lui ont conquis l’estime et l’affection de tous les jeunes officiers*”<sup>68</sup>. There is no evidence that either Cánovas or anyone else was really concerned about the military training at Sandhurst, in stark contrast to the rest of Alfonso’s education in previous years. Ultimately, what really mattered was that Alfonso’s physical presence in the prestigious Sandhurst Military Academy should endow him with a symbolic dimension capable of attracting the army to his cause at a time when the possibility of a monarchist restoration seemed closer.

The foregoing raises the question of the effectiveness of this symbolic appeal and its importance in the control of the military. In other words, to what extent did the monarchy and civil institutions manage to assert their authority over the army using this allegorical recourse? In April 1874, Federico Argüelles, a supporter of Alfonso’s cause and close to Cánovas with excellent contacts in the military, informed Isabella that several generals were passionately in favour of the Bourbon restoration. He wrote that “there is hardly a leader or officer in the army today who does not support Alfonso’s cause”, and that he was wai-

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64 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 24, Exp. 5-B: letter from Cánovas to Isabella II (8th May 1874).

65 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 24, Exp. 5-B: letter from Cánovas to Isabella II (2nd May 1874).

66 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 12.830, Exp. 27: letter from D.A. Cameron to the Director of Sandhurst Royal Military Academy (9th October 1874). This letter must have been sent by Alfonso’s close circle and was probably read by Cánovas.

67 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 12.830, Exp. 27: examination results for the Marquis of Covadonga (1st November 1874). Alfonso used the title Marquis of Covadonga when travelling in Europe and when at Sandhurst in a far from discrete manner.

68 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 12.830, Exp. 27: examination results for the Marquis of Covadonga (21st November 1874).

ting for “an opportune moment for them to express general acclaim of Alfonso XII”<sup>69</sup>. In his opinion, there were rumours about the damage that this announcement could wreak on the Carlists, which would favour his cause. A more neutral source, the British ambassador Lord Stanley, mentioned in a report that “the army has recently shown marked Alfonsist tendencies”<sup>70</sup>. Similarly, Alfonso Argüelles argued that the only reason he believed Alfonso had not been proclaimed king was his relative youth, something that his military image was intended to counter. Finally, the fact that the restoration was ushered in by a military declaration—which was widely supported and encountered no effective opposition within the army—is indicative of the army’s willingness to accept Alfonso as king. It is much more difficult to gauge whether Cánovas achieved the results he sought in relation to controlling the army. Several years ago, Carlos Seco Serrano observed that civilian rule became a reality during the restoration, as evidenced by the almost complete disappearance of declarations as a mechanism of change of government, and by civilian control over the army<sup>71</sup>. He argued that the definitive establishment of the army’s loyalty to the king was one of the mainstays of the regime’s stability. However, other researchers have claimed that the state bought the military’s loyalty, endowing the army with extensive autonomy within the political system, strengthening the royal prerogative in military matters and granting officers political influence through positions of responsibility in parliament, administration and government<sup>72</sup>. Consequently, the army was not under government control but was merely placated for a while, retreating to an “inner vocation” that in the long term would contribute to its divorce from the rest of society.

## CONCLUSIONS

A study of Prince Alfonso’s internalisation of a military *habitus* provides an indication of the centrality of historiographical debate about the crown. In the end, it was the king who possessed the ability to determine the degree of influence of the military. There is clear evidence that the military accepted Alfonso as leader of the armed forces. For example, the army itself demanded his special involvement and leadership in military matters. However, the king did not always agree with the army elites, and some of his proposals for reforming

<sup>69</sup> AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 24, Exp. 5-C: letter from Federico Argüelles to Isabella II.

<sup>70</sup> The National Archives (TNA), *General Correspondence Spain*, FO 72/1367: letter from Lord Stanley to the Earl of Derby (28th April 1874).

<sup>71</sup> Carlos SECO SERRANO, *Militarismo y civilismo en la España actual*, Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Económicos, 1984, p. 179-208.

<sup>72</sup> See the books by Joaquim LLEIXA, *Cien años de militarismo en España*, Barcelona: Anagrama, 1986 and by Carolyn P. BOYD, *Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

and streamlining the infantry, in particular, placed him in direct conflict with the generals<sup>73</sup>. Hence, Alfonso cannot be described simply as a mere agent serving the interests of the military elite. Moreover, acceptance of Alfonso as commander in chief of the armed forces —transformed into law with the Constitution of 1876— was only made possible by the king's adoption and subsequent reinforcement of a military *habitus*. Pay attention to the process of assimilation of his status as a soldier king, objective of this article, can help us to understand some of the attitudes of the king and, in some cases, to be aware of his difficulties to act under the prescriptions of this military *habitus*.

At the very beginning of his reign, Alfonso decided to appear in battle against the Carlists and fight beside the troops, in spite of warnings from his former tutor, now his private secretary, Guillermo Morphy. In his letters, Morphy urged the monarch to stay away from the campaign because otherwise, he would be neglecting his responsibilities by “dying obscurely in a civil war for lack of judgement or prudence”<sup>74</sup>. In contrast, Cánovas thought it was a good idea for Alfonso to go to war, recognising that his military image would not be as effective as they desired unless it were reinforced by such symbolic acts. More careful decisions, however, would be taken after a Carlist ambush in which the king was nearly captured<sup>75</sup>. This tension between the display of a military *habitus* and his acceptance by the army on the one hand, and the supremacy of civil power on the other, was exemplified by a discussion between Cánovas and General Martínez Campos, the officer who initiated the declaration of Sagunto. Alfonso XII agreed with the government that the general should retain his post in Catalonia, thus showing his loyalty to the armed forces. At the end of his letter in response, he assured Cánovas, by then the president of the council of ministers, that “your Excellency and the government have my full support and confidence”<sup>76</sup>. This evidences the monarch's capacity to actively intervene in the behaviour of the military, since Alfonso had opted for a civilian government and imposed his will over that of the general. This was a particularly significant event considering that his successor to the throne, unlike his father, would more often side with the military than with the government, showing his sympathy for a political system with greater military influence<sup>77</sup>. Thus, one

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73 Earl Ray BECK, *A Time of Triumph and of Sorrow: Spanish Politics During the Reign of Alfonso XII, 1874-1885*, Carbondale-London: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979, p. 134-135.

74 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 25, Exp. F-1: letter from Morphy to Alfonso XII (2nd February 1875).

75 Earl Ray BECK: *A Time of Triumph and of Sorrow...*, p.41

76 AGP, *Reinado de Alfonso XII*, Caja 25, Exp. E-2: letter from Alfonso XII to the Council of Ministers (27th January 1875).

77 See the article by Carolyn P. BOYD, “El rey-soldado. Alfonso XIII y el ejército” in Javier Moreno Luzón (ed.), *Alfonso XIII. Un político en el trono*, Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003, p. 222-237. Carlos SECO SERRANO stressed the importance of Alfonso XII in the establishment of the civilian government of the time in his article “Relaciones entre la Corona y el Ejército”, *Revista de Estudios Políticos* 55 (1987), p. 44.

could say that the army was only under civilian control to the extent that the monarch adopted the views of the government in the decision-making process. However, this also meant that despite their privileges and access to the monarch, the network of military elites failed to obtain as much influence as they would have wished. The Constitution of 1876 and the Constitutive Act of the Army placed Alfonso XII in a central role in all matters related to the armed forces, and for this it was essential that the king should possess an image of authority over the military, which he had obtained through his education and instruction. However, although Alfonso had internalised a military *habitus*, he always saw himself more as Cánovas's student than as an army soldier<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> On the political figure of King Alfonso, see the aforementioned study by Ángeles LARIO, *El Rey, piloto sin brújula...* and Carlos DARDÉ, "Ideas acerca de la monarquía y las funciones del monarca en el reinado de Alfonso XII" in Encarna García Moneris, Mónica Moreno Seco y Juan I. Marcuello Benedicto (eds.), *Culturas políticas monárquicas en la España liberal. Discursos, representaciones y prácticas (1808-1902)*, Valencia: PUV, 2013 p. 317-337.

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