



Book Reviews

El Mundo de los Virreyes en las Monarquías de España y Portugal. By Pedro Cardim and Joan-Lluís Palos (eds). Madrid and Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2012. 471 pages. € 36 (paper). ISBN 978-84-8489-664-7.

The incorporation of the Crown of Portugal into what has been termed the “composite monarchy” of the Spanish Habsburgs in 1580 meant the creation of a body politic of hitherto unknown dimensions; a “*ponto de chegada mais que de partida*”, according to the famous expression of Portugal’s most important historian and intellectual of the twentieth century, Vitorino Magalhães Godinho (1918–2011).¹ Only some empires of Classical Antiquity, such as Persia, Greece and Rome, could compete with the Iberian empire in riches and cultural influence, although not so in terms of territorial expansion, since the latter’s possessions were scattered throughout the four corners of the known world. In Europe, as well as in Africa, Asia and America, the subjects of this “dual empire”, poorly articulated and even “improvised”, followed a tortuous and narrow path marked by the search for an identity which would go beyond the secular enmities and suspicions existing between the Spanish and the Portuguese. Modern day historians know that it is not an easy task to detach oneself from the myths and nationalist narratives transmitted generation after generation by partisan authors. This difficulty is especially harmful and burdensome when it comes to the study of Portugal and its colonies. The half-century period during which Portugal was united to Spain is a brief episode and it is the subject of controversy in books on Universal Early Modern History, but its noteworthy significance is undeniable, even if only because the trading of slaves, silver, sugar, pepper and clove – essential, as is well-known, for the development of everyday life back then – was basically monopolised by Spanish and Portuguese merchants between the second half of the fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Undoubtedly, the historiographical advances that took place in the decade following the 19th International Congress of Historical Studies which took place in Oslo in August 2000, with its emphasis on comparative and transnational

¹ The term ‘composite monarchy’, which owes so much to Conrad Russell and Helmut G. Koenigsberger, reached its fame through John H. Elliott: “A Europe of Composite Monarchies”, *Past and Present*, 137 (Nov., 1992), pp. 48–71. The classic work by Vitorino Magalhães Godinho is still valid for the history of Portugal between 1580 and 1640: “1580 e 1640-Da União Dinástica à Restauração”, in *Ensaios e Estudos. Uma maneira de pensar* (Lisbon: Sá da Costa Editora, 2009), Vol. I, pp. 421–468, here, p. 422.

history – heirs to the theoretical hypothesis put forward in the first half of the twentieth century by Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel – have proved decisive for the development of historiography, exerting a powerful and attractive influence on most of the authors who have written the thirteen chapters which compose this significant work. The pages of this work are framed within a new way of thinking (or re-thinking) the global monarchy of Spain and Portugal during this particular moment of incorporation between 1580 and 1640.² Thus, it takes into account a perspective that considers the study and analysis of power and government through the different centres which composed the Spanish Monarchy – a point of view which was probably the most reviled by the second and third generations of the “*Annales School*” although not so by Ernest Kantorowicz, Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault or Peter Burke. How did Spain and Portugal undertake the problem of governing and administering justice in their distant territorial conquests? How did they manage to reliably enforce laws and royal decrees in possessions which were, in many cases, thousands of kilometres away?

Neither of these two questions is rhetorical, for we still do not have a global consensus concerning the model of government of the two greatest empires in human history during the Early Modern period. Despite brilliant monographs and solid works on the specificity and responses to power in Spain and Portugal for the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we still lack studies for some of the institutional resources created by the chanceries of both monarchies which would enable us to answer all these questions. Such is the case of viceroyalties, both in Europe and in the overseas territories.³ Pedro Cardim and Joan-Lluís Palos are thus absolutely correct in the clarifying “presentation” of this work, when they warn that the attention shown by the European historiography towards the viceroyalties of the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies has been unequal and partial. Although it is true that we already had pioneering studies such as those made by Helmut

² Cf. , Pedro Cardim, Tamar Herzog, José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, and Gaetano Sabatini (eds.), *Polycentric Monarchies: How Did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* (Eastbourne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2012); Carlos Martínez Shaw and José Antonio Martínez Torres (eds.), *España y Portugal en el Mundo, 1580-1668* (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2014).

³ See Fernando Bouza, *Portugal no tempo dos Filipes: política, cultura, representações, 1580-1668* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 2000); Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde. Histoire d'une mondialisation*, (Paris: Editions La Martinière, 2004); Bartolomé Yun Casalilla, *Marte contra Minerva. El precio del Imperio español, 1450-1600* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2004); Antonio-Miguel Bernal, *España, proyecto inacabado: Costes/beneficios del Imperio* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2005); Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto, *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Francesca Cantú (ed.), *Las cortes virreinales de la monarquía española: América e Italia* (Rome: Viella, 2008); Pablo Fernández Albaladejo, *La crisis de la Monarquía* (Madrid: Crítica-Marcial Pons, 2009); John H. Elliott, *España, Europa y el Mundo de Ultramar, 1500-1800* (Madrid: Taurus, 2010); by the same author, *Imperios del Mundo Atlántico: España y Gran Bretaña en América, 1492-1830* (Madrid: Taurus: 2011); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Impérios em Concorrência: História Conectadas nos séculos XVI e XVII* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2012).

G. Koenigsberger on Sicily – the most original research work to date in the opinion of the author of this review – we still lack a global view incorporating everything that we are starting to know and suspect about these courtly institutions.⁴ Unfortunately, the editors and authors of this work have not treated the relations between the viceroys of Portuguese India and the Spanish governors in a detailed way. In the case of the Philippines, these relations were obviously extraordinarily tense concerning the effective defence of the Portuguese possessions against the territorial expansion of Dutch and English sailors by the means of Spanish troops mainly coming from Seville and New Spain. Including these aspects in its pages would have completed even more the global perspective which is prominent in this work, and it would have most definitely shed light on the hazy and diverse Portuguese and Spanish interests that were intertwined in the geography of Asia during the periods of the union and of Portugal's fight to become independent from Spain. The inclusion at the end of analytical and name indexes would undoubtedly help the reader, and would have rounded off its otherwise impeccable editing work, which includes maps, charts and images.

The novelties that may be extracted from a careful and calm reading of this solid and well-equipped book are many, and a bibliographical note, always limited to a certain number of pages, risks the cornering of some of them. From our point of view, the significance of this work resides in the fact that it highlights, in a categorical manner, that the Iberian worlds of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic during the years 1580 to 1640, were not the dissociated worlds that historians often insist on portraying. The fact that places as distant and dissimilar as Peru or Goa lacked courtly traditions prior to the arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors forced its viceroys to make an herculean effort to seek for their own identity. This effort would logically involve the many good things that were being produced in the Old and New Worlds in terms of painting, literature – in all its varieties – and music. The reconstruction of part of this fascinating and exotic visual and literary culture, a task which the authors undertake competently, proves that this was a more “two-faced” and “mestizo” world than we had traditionally thought, in line with the anthropologically oriented analysis carried out by Serge Gruzinski concerning Pre-Columbian and vice-regal Mexico.⁵ The American viceroys were not the only centres of power and social climbing to which noteworthy painters, writers and musicians trained in the classical tradition of Europe could emigrate. Vice-regal courts such as those of Naples, Barcelona or Lisbon, with refined palaces “facing the sea” were also the focus of cultural attraction, accumulating on their

⁴ *La práctica del Imperio* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1989; the first edition in English dates back to 1969), ‘preface’ by Josep María Batista i Roca (who underlined, for the time when the exiled Catalan historian and ethnologist was writing, the absence of a rigorous monograph on the Monarchy of the Habsburgs or the Spanish Empire), and ‘epilogue’ by Pablo Fernández Albaladejo, including a carefully selected and appropriate bibliography.

⁵ Serge Gruzinski, *El pensamiento mestizo. Cultura amerindia y civilización del Renacimiento* (Barcelona: Paidós, 2000).

walls and libraries canvases and texts from some of the greatest geniuses in the arts of the brush and the quill that could be found in these creative years.

The greatest indication that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Mediterranean and the Atlantic did not resemble Janus, the two-faced Roman god, is probably the process of “vice-regalization” (*virreinalización*) – an expression belonging to legal historian Jon Arrieta Alberdi – experienced by the territories of both monarchies since it had been decided to start the practice of appointing viceroys for Catalonia in 1285. This process extended itself like a long trail of gunpowder through the two Mediterranean islands belonging to the Crown of Aragon (Sicily and Sardinia), and later on, in the early sixteenth century, throughout all of the peninsular (Navarre, Valencia) and overseas territories (New Spain and Peru). Between 1580 and 1640, a period during which the Crown of Portugal became a viceroyalty of those termed “of the royal blood” for the Spanish Monarchy, there were a total of 13 vice-regal governments. None of them resembled the other. The pages dedicated to the governmental practices in India and Brazil clarify even more these important results, proving that Portugal did not follow the same patterns as Spain. In both cases, the appointment of viceroys was made in a climate of political vagueness and doubts concerning their political, judiciary and military competencies.

Another aspect of this work which deserves emphasis concerns the function of the viceroy. It was an obviously risky office according to the authors, and I would like to suggest that this label is also applicable to the posts of captain general and governor of Macao and the Philippines respectively, which were always subject to factional tension and to political misunderstandings on the part of the political center. Even if for the case of Spain we still lack sociological studies of these personalities similar to those made by Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro and Mafalda Soãres da Cunha in this work,⁶ the data shows that the circulation of viceroys followed different paths that, even if composed of different stages, were devoid of crossovers and interference. In the Spanish case, viceroys frequently travelled between Mexico and Lima and vice versa thereby providing a colonial connection. Since Portugal did not possess territories in Europe, it is logical that a development similar to the aforementioned phenomenon did not take place. Despite all this, it is noteworthy that after the country recovered its independence from the Spanish Monarchy almost all of the highest titles of the Portuguese nobility would hold overseas posts before being employed in relevant posts within the Portuguese central administration.

In addition, the wage difference was always considerable in the Portuguese colonial world. The wage received by a viceroy in India was different to that of a captain general or governor in America or Africa. In India, for example, the salary of a viceroy was of 3,200,000 *reis* per annum. In Brazil, however, that of the captain general

⁶ Previously: Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, Mafalda Soares da Cunha and Pedro Cardim (eds.), *Optima Pars: As Elites do Antigo Regime no Espaço Ibero-Americano* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2005), pp. 191–252; Ana Crespo Solana, *Comunidades transnacionales. Colonias de mercaderes extranjeros en el Mundo Atlántico, 1500–1830* (Aranjuez: Doce Calles, 2010).

barely reached half of that stipend (1,200,000 *reis*). Perhaps this explains the existence of a whole universe of sub-powers and corruption which, like satellites, surrounded the viceroy, the captain generals and the governors, all of them dispensers of “grace”, positions and privileges, as is well-known. In metaphorical terms, the development of such powers would always concern the “Sun” – the monarch – who did as much as he could (repetitive issuing of laws and royal decrees limiting and clarifying their functions in the overseas government) so that the “Moon” – the viceroy – would not end up being brighter than himself (Juan de Solórzano Pereira, quoting Plutarch, *dixit*).

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