



## ‘There is but one world’: Globalisation and connections in the overseas territories of the Spanish Habsburgs (1581-1640)<sup>1</sup>

José Antonio Martínez Torres

Profesor contratado Ramón y Cajal, Department of Modern History, Facultad de Humanidades, C/ Senda del Rey, 7, Madrid, 28040, UNED, Spain  
e-mail: [jmtorres@geo.uned.es](mailto:jmtorres@geo.uned.es)

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**ABSTRACT:** The study of the overseas empire of the Spanish Habsburgs during the period when the Crown of Portugal was incorporated to this politico-economic structure and the study of their encounters, exchanges and contributions at all levels are increasingly being perceived as a plausible and original alternative within the current historiographical debate evolving around the configuration of the new European political order produced during the Early Modern period and characterised by the so-called ‘crisis of the State’ and the economic ‘decadence’ of the territories of southern Europe. This article offers some observations concerning this interesting subject, as well as some insight into the implications that this process carried in the Spanish and Portuguese cases.

**KEYWORDS:** Spanish Monarchy; Portuguese Crown; Early modern period; Global history

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**RESUMEN:** ‘No hay más que un mundo’: *Globalización y conexiones en los territorios ultramarinos de los Habsburgos españoles (1581-1640)*.- Dentro del vigente debate historiográfico sobre la configuración del orden político europeo que se produjo durante la Edad Moderna, caracterizado por la llamada “crisis del Estado” y por la “decadencia” económica en los territorios del sur de Europa, el estudio de las posesiones de Ultramar de los Habsburgo españoles durante el momento de agregación de la Corona de Portugal a la Monarquía Hispánica (1581-1640), con sus encuentros, sus intercambios y sus mixturas a todos los niveles, se insinúa como una posible y original alternativa de trabajo y reflexión. En el presente artículo se ofrecen algunas consideraciones sobre esta interesante cuestión, destacando además las implicaciones que dicho proceso tuvo en los casos español y portugués.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Monarquía Hispánica; Corona de Portugal; Edad Moderna; Historia global

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### INTRODUCTION

Just one year had elapsed from the sad and shocking news of the loss in the cold waters of the English Channel of almost 10,000 soldiers and more than half of the 130 ships composing the Spanish fleet which had left Lisbon aiming at the invasion of England, when the well-known printing press of Giolitti, in Venice, pub-

lished *Della Ragion di Stato* (1589), a political treatise written by Giovanni Botero, the Piamontese thinker, cleric and diplomat from Bene (Cuneo), and dedicated to the archbishop of Salzburg, Wolfgang Theodoric. The author would have probably never guessed the outstanding dissemination that this work would have in Spain, where it underwent at least six editions in Castilian during the three decades following the publi-

cation of the beautiful and user-friendly *editio princeps* (Descendre, 2009). The text follows a solid structure divided in ten chapters written with elegant brilliance and precision, and it impressed two generations of Spaniards ruled by Philip II and Philip III. From the very first pages of the text, the author stressed the main aim of his work, which was to rebuke Machiavelli's notion of 'reason of State' and rules of government as well as the methods used by Tacitus to obtain and keep an empire. Botero also emphasised how important it was, for the development of certain political strategies of a Christian prince, to be able to control the world's seas and oceans through the establishment of advanced defensive positions, which were usually poorly manned and provisioned by the metropolis with men, food, armament and money. In the first chapter of his work, Botero asked himself 'Whether compact or dispersed states are more lasting.' The question did not lack substance in the context of the Spanish Monarchy, for almost a decade before, it had incorporated the dispersed and – as such – vulnerable Portuguese colonies in the American, African and Asian continents (Elliott, 1991a: 48-67; Parker, 2001: 321-346; Martínez Shaw and Martínez Torres (directors), 2014).

The Spanish Empire of this period was a giant with feet of clay presenting poorly articulated parts, and this made it susceptible to the maritime blockades and attacks to ports and ships in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans inflicted by the *East Indian Company* (EIC), the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) and the *West Indische Compagnie* (WIC) from a very early stage. In 1598, 1606 and 1623, the sought-after and exotic products usually brought into Europe by the galleons and carracks of the *Carreira da India* could not be disembarked in Lisbon because its port and that of Goa, which had been linked since the arrival in the latter of the Portuguese navigator and explorer Vasco da Gama, were blocked off by Dutch and English galleons. Throughout the period during which the Portuguese Crown and its colonies remained united to the Spanish Monarchy, the years between 1629 and 1636 proved to be extraordinarily tumultuous for the Portuguese who had settled in the colonies of the Indian Ocean, especially for those living around the waters of the Strait of Malacca and the Malabar Coast, with almost 150 of their ships being attacked and destroyed by the dreaded Batavian sailors. In the following decades, the mercantile triangle conformed by Goa, Manila and Malacca was incessantly harassed by Dutch ships. The Spanish and Portuguese officers which were part of the Council of Portugal in Madrid knew that it was necessary to synchronise, with the fine precision of a clock maker, the naval forces available and the sums usually destined to redress those circumstances which were considered dramatic by the sovereign and his most trusted ministers (Boxer, 2002: 251-322, 287; Van Veen, 2000: 75-81, 147-171; Murteira, 2012: 95-212).

As early as 1608, the merchant Pedro de Baeza was stressing the importance of establishing a greater 'com-

munication' between the Portuguese and the Spaniards living in Macao and Manila, since both were 'Christians and vassals of the same king'.<sup>2</sup> According to this intelligent merchant from Madrid, who spent more than twenty-five years arranging commercial agreements in China, Malacca and Nagasaki for the Spanish Habsburgs, if this most necessary 'communication' was to be encouraged, it would 'result in the ones and the others being stronger against the enemy'; that is, the Dutch, who were strongly present in strategic Asian territories since 1595. This strange paradox did not only emerge in the context of military defeats, plagues and famine, but it also overlapped with the no less paradoxical and relevant context of 'conscience crisis' and 'introspection' in which, for reasons which were as moral as they were practical, the possession of riches was viewed as the quickest way to reach the most solemn and humiliating levels of poverty (Elliott, 2010: 190-191). 'Our Spain has become so fixated on its dealings with the Indies, from which they obtain gold and silver,' Martín González de Cellorigo warned in 1600, that the country 'has abandoned its communication with the neighbouring kingdoms. If all the gold and silver that its natives have found – and are still discovering – in the New World, would enter [Spain], it would not make the country as rich and powerful as it would be without it.' (González de Cellorigo, 1600: 15v).

This intriguing paradox of weakness in spite of power and poverty in spite of riches, which emerged during Philip II's last years and the beginning of Philip III's reign, was commented upon by most theoreticians dealing with the future of the Spanish Monarchy. As Conrad Rott wrote to Philip III in a long and complex letter in 1600, 'the Spains' were still bound to suffer much more than they had done up to that point unless the 'communication' between vassals and kingdoms advocated by Pedro de Baeza and Martín González de Cellorigo actually took place. According to this text, the Portuguese dwelling in the overseas possessions had told this notable German merchant dealing in Goa, Lisbon and Hamburg, that if they 'lost India, Lisbon would also be lost.' The Sevillians said as much about America.<sup>3</sup> 'Up until today', Rott emphatically and vehemently insisted, Spain had devoted itself to the creation of Armadas, but not to the creation 'of the substance of the same', which was 'to have an immense sum of money'. The amounts of gold and silver arriving in Holland 'from all around' were substantial, and the main reason for this lay in the fact that 'they kept their word and offered good interest rates and advantages', whereas it was clear 'that all the interest that comes from the Indies into Spain goes out again, and not a single real comes in from any nation, much to the contrary, the whole world seeks to steal from Spain and to avoid giving anything to the same'.<sup>4</sup> As the *procuradores* to the Cortes of this period used to say, Spain had become 'the Indies of Europe,' which explains why responses to the different dilemmas which came up were not lacking (Vilar, 1976: 149-150).

Undoubtedly, the underlying argument behind Conrad Rott's words was the creation, during the first decades of the union of Portugal and its possessions with the Spanish Monarchy, of a powerful and dynamic public bank which would be able to fund the navies of both Indies. Through it, part of the benefits produced in the customs of Lisbon and Seville could be destined to compensate the lenders with 12% interest. Unfortunately, the project was immediately rejected because those years were too glorious for anyone to even consider giving up a privileged position to the merchants and money lenders of Germany, Genoa or Florence. Things started changing, however, after the loss of Ormus in 1622. The 'rampant nervousness' with which royal officers would usually deal with the political and commercial projects sent to the relevant Councils of the Monarchy between the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth centuries, would evolve into the detailed and careful study of strong proposals. These ranged from a total reform of the mercantile system in Asia to a 'territorial withdrawal,' including calculated peace negotiations with the Dutch and the English (Kellenbenz, 1963: 281-283; Subrahmanyam, 1999: 185-228; Valladares, 2001: 37-64, 46).

Unfortunately, the figures at our disposal concerning the naval forces belonging to both crowns during this period of their union are not as thorough as we would like them to be. We do know, however, that a decade after the decisive battle of Lepanto (1571), Spain and Portugal possessed a merchant navy of between 250,000 and 300,000 tons. Such figures were similar to those of their main enemies and rivals, Holland (232,000) and England (66,827). The naval decline of the Spanish Monarchy was already obvious at the end of the sixteenth century. In 1585, only three years before the disaster of the 'Invincible Armada', which cost more than ten million ducats – a figure which was slightly bigger than the total annual income for that period – the Dutch had already attained maritime supremacy in all the seas and oceans of the world. In a similar vein, the English, especially under the reign of Elizabeth I, were already organising significant plunder and piracy campaigns on the coasts of Spanish America and Africa, making strenuous efforts to counteract the leadership of Holland which resulted in them rising their 50,816 tons in 1572 to 66,827 tons in 1582 (Usher, 1928: 465-478, 467; Valdez-Bubnov, 2011).

The conflict between the Iberian Catholics and the Protestants from central and northern Europe for European leadership was very similar to a 'world war', possibly the first one which took place in history if we are willing to accept the anachronism and concentrate our efforts into understanding the impact that this secular dispute had in the rest of the continents around the globe (Boxer, 2001: 115-133; Emmer, 2003: 1-14). To the attacks made by the English and the Dutch against the Iberian enclaves and their ships, we should add those made by Barbary corsairs and French sailors throughout the Mediterranean and the mid-Atlantic. The former,

with their light and swift xebecs, would capture the Spanish soldiers and passengers coming from America on board the unprotected *navio de aviso* (or packet-boat) which headed the annual fleet coming back from the ports of the western Indies, or the peasants and shepherds living in the coasts of southern Europe. The *raïis* or Muslim captains would normally launch a *razia* or raid usually at dawn or at dusk, and the usual destinations of such war prisoners would be the corsair Republic of Salé, the sultanate of Morocco, or the Turk regencies of Algeria, Tunisia and Tripoli. In such places they would end up retaining approximately one fifth of a cosmopolitan population coming from all the corners of Europe. They became indispensable to their owners as qualified workforce to be employed in all sorts of tasks both in coastal and inland towns (Davis, 2003; Martínez Torres, 2004).

On the other hand, the French sailors were ruthless when it came to the destruction of the deteriorated and neglected Iberian coastal defences in the so-called 'Coast of the Slaves'. Manuel de Andrada Castel Blanco, a cleric with great geographical and mathematical knowledge who served the governments of Portugal and Spain indistinctively in Brazil and Cape Verde, warned against the dangers that the Spanish Monarchy would face if several strategic defensive bastions – both coastal and insular – such as those of Santa Catarina (Cape Verde), Bezequiche (Senegal), São Jorge da Mina, Santa Elena (some 2.800 km off the coast of Angola) and Mina (Congo), were not urgently, simultaneously, and properly fortified. Coming back from their dealings in the mouth of the Río de la Plata, the coasts of Brazil and some locations in India, the French, Dutch and English sailors would take advantage of the fact that these places were lacking in 'people to populate, farm and defend', to replenish their water supplies (*hacer la aguada*), rest and plan their next blow, as the Portuguese cleric had bluntly declared in a barely known 'instruction' consisting of fourteen points which was offered to Philip II on his behalf by Don Felipe de Albornoz in 1590 (Hair (editor), 1990: 211-257; Alvares de Almada, 1964: 5-150, 21-22; Seijas y Lobera, 2011: 79-87).

The absence of permanent Iberian population in these strategic points of the western African coast became a problem to be solved and it did not escape the analysis of the *arbitristas*, captains of the main Angolan strongholds (especially Luanda and Muxima).<sup>5</sup> What their texts sought from the Spanish Crown was the redefinition of territorial occupation in this vital area, the crossroads between the routes uniting Lisbon and Seville with the eastern coast of South America and with the possessions of the *Estado da Índia*. Garcia Mendes Castelo Branco, one of the renowned officers who had accompanied Paulo Dias de Novais in his expedition to conquest Angola in 1575, was aware, as Manuel de Andrada Castel Blanco had been before him, of how important it was for the Spanish Monarchy to fortify the Congolese port of Pinda. He did not hesitate to write several works aiming at this in the first few decades of

the seventeenth century (Cordeiro, 1935, I: 168-211). In 1603, Castelo Branco highlighted, 'two to three Dutch ships' were already in charge of commerce – basically slaves and ivory – in the area. The 'need' for the Spanish Monarchy to build a dissuasive fortification in Pinda against the 'Dutch enemies' was 'very strong,' so time should not be wasted in requesting a planting 'licence' from the allied *manicongo*, as had been the case before. Two or three 'big' ships were to be sent quickly carrying 'men well-provided' with gunpowder – some two hundred for one or two months at the beginning and forty 'continuously' after that – and, especially, 'lots of' artillery. The feeding needs of the soldiers would be covered by the governor of Angola, Manuel Cerveira Pereira, who would load one or two 'small' vessels with flour from Brazil 'to be consumed as soon as the said fortress is done'. This enormous fortress, which would run along 'more or less thirty leagues', would provide Philip III with two advantages. It would serve to 'remove resources' from the Dutch and thus 'win' them for himself and it would notably promote and enhance the Catholic faith in all of these territories. From his point of view, this last point was a matter of urgency, since it was known that the people of the Congo were close to converting to the 'sects that the Dutch take to them and teach them' (Cordeiro, 1935, I: 173-178).

The gradual loss of hegemony of the Spanish Monarchy in Europe and in the waters surrounding its colonies, which dated back to the late sixteenth- and early mid-seventeenth-centuries, had its influence in a particular intellectual movement which emerged in northern Europe. Sir Walter Raleigh, renowned sailor, cosmographer and relentless explorer in search of the mythical region of *El Dorado* in the margins of the rivers Amazon and Orinoco, was already pointing at something similar in his work *Judicious and Select Essays and Observations*, written before his death in 1618. In this work, Raleigh stated that 'him who will govern the seas will govern the world, and him who will govern over trade in the world, will govern over its riches and he will thus govern the world' (Raleigh, 1667: 20). Diego Sarmiento y Acuña, Count of Gondomar and Spanish ambassador in London, was a privileged witness of the 'incredible events' which took place in Stuart England in the first third of the seventeenth century. He had already expressed his anxiety concerning the dramatic twist that these events had taken more or less around the same time as Raleigh's comments were being made. Thus in 1616, he advised Philip III to react immediately in an appropriate way, 'for in our world today, him who will be the lord of the sea will also be the lord of the land' (Elliott and De la Peña, 1978: 142). Domingo de Echeverri, royal secretary and general superintendent for shipbuilding in Guipuzcoa, was even more categorical when, in the same period as Gondomar, he pointed out that the Spanish empire, because of its 'dismemberment', should have 'more bridges over the seas' than before. This royal officer had no doubts that, as historical 'experience' demonstrated, 'in order to keep and

gain, which is what everything amounts to, it is necessary to own the sea.' In the dialogues of his *El Pasajero* (1617), the author Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa insisted on this 'dismemberment' of the Spanish Monarchy by stating that 'when the body of the monarchy is interpolated between the seas,' only two 'remedies' were crucial to its 'conservation'; 'many vessels and people' (Suárez de Figueroa, 1914: 48; Palacio Atard, 1949: 46).

Similar evidence can be found in a varied and still widely unknown series of texts – essentially of a political and economic nature – written in the imperial periphery during this period by soldiers, merchants and clerics serving under the Spanish Habsburgs (Ramada Curto, 2009; Martínez Torres, 2014). Their evaluations, which invaded the secretarial offices of the Councils of State, War, Indies and Portugal of the Spanish Monarchy, were the product of the providential mission of spreading Christ's word across the world and of the hopeful atmosphere resulting from the initiative to reorganise and optimise – in a second expansionist wave distinct from that of the late fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries – the trade routes and the resources obtained from the exploration of the territories of Africa and Asia. The climax of these projects took place during the last years of Philip II's reign and the beginnings of that of his son, Philip III, and it was sealed by the conquests of the legendary kingdom of Monomotapa (the current states of Mozambique and Zimbabwe) and Angola in 1565 and 1575 respectively; the taking of the islands of Ceylon, of the kingdom of Kotte and of Colombo (1580, 1594-1612); the plans made to colonise China's *tianxia* (1567-1588) and to intervene in the kingdoms of Pegu (Birmaniam), Cambodia and Champa (Vietnam) (1592-1599); or the recovery, in 1606, of the profitable commercial factory of Ternate, in the Molucca Islands, after the frustrated Portuguese succour attempts (1597-1599, 1601-1603 and 1606) sent from Goa and Malacca by the viceroys Francisco de Gama, Aires de Saldanha and Martim Alfonso de Castro.

In most of these texts they petitioned, as had been done before by Hernán Cortés, Francisco Pizarro, Miguel López de Legazpi and other well-known conquistadors of Spanish America and the Pacific, the recognition of a *merced* or gift which would further legitimise their prerogatives to exploit lands which were extraordinarily rich in silver, slaves that could be put to labour and be converted to Roman Catholicism and diverse fruits which could be used to feed 'all those [conquistadors] who are lost, unoccupied and idle in Mexico, Peru and the Philippines'<sup>6</sup> (Cabaton, 1914-1916: 1-102). Some of the conquest projects required disproportionate costs and were quixotic in their conception and, as such, unrealistic. Others, however, expressed with solvency and accuracy the 'urgent necessity' to make the eastern economic axis much more viable by putting together, as in a common *cuerpo de fuerza* or special forces group, the Portuguese and Spanish possessions in this vast geographical area. Thanks to these measures, the colonies of Asia and Africa which were also part of what

was known as the *cuero místico* or 'mystical body' of the Monarchy, would not be as isolated as they had been until this point. The commerce of minted silver, as well as that of mercury, black pepper and nutmeg would make of Philip III of Spain – and II of Portugal – a true 'peaceful' monarch, the 'absolute lord' of all the 'Esperancia' with real and effective capacity to be able to halt the mercantile expansionist aims that the 'rebellious' Dutch had been declaring since the end of the sixteenth century. If the Catholic sovereign was really intent on *enseñorear*, or firmly govern, this neglected corner of the Spanish empire, he would have to pay a 'minimum' price which would include a pact with his eastern vassals, the recovery for the royal Hacienda of a series of taxes which had been previously granted by his ancestors to private collectors, or the creation of new obligations such as the *avería* of Manila. The benefits of some of these sums would be destined to the creation of an Armada of great mobility which would be in charge of the area's defence.

These 'recommendations' that the Crown was to follow in maritime and mercantile affairs were a reflection of the labile and precarious political and financial situation that the Iberian Peninsula and its overseas possessions were in between the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. There are several similar considerations about these important matters which should not be forgotten and which, as has already been mentioned at the beginning of this article, stemmed from the reading – even if superficial – of Giovanni Botero's *Della Ragion di Stato* (1589). He further developed his ideas in other previous and later works of his such as *Delle cause della grandezza e magnificiencia delle città* (1588) or *Relazioni Universali* (1595), which also provide a useful overview of some of the problems that the disperse and heterogeneous 'world monarchy' of the Spanish Habsburgs was facing in this period. In contrast with other theoreticians of the 'Reason of State', Botero was much more concerned with the 'keeping' of power than with the conquest of the same. It is precisely for this reason why the role he ascribes in such works to the 'distant' overseas fortresses and to the 'conquerors-merchants', as settlers and integral parts of the local governments, is so fundamental and decisive. It may be possible that Botero's ideas, entwined with the neostoic influence he had received from the Brabantine Justus Lipsius, ended up crystallising in the ideology of the count-duke of Olivares, Philip IV's powerful favourite, through his conception, in 1621, of the famous Union of Arms (Elliott, 1991: 251-283; Pagden, 1997: 58-63, 140-149; Pagden, 2001: 419-438).

Proof of this influence is provided by the inventory of the nowadays extinct library of the high tower of the Alcázar of Madrid, which contained several editions of Botero's main works as well as maps and plans of the known world. When it was catalogued, in 1620, the library possessed 2,700 printed books and 1,400 manuscripts, many of them inherited from Olivares's father-in-law, the Count of Monterrey, and selected with atten-

tion and care by its librarian, the Sevillian poet Lucas de Alaejos. Other ministers, such as Luis de Haro, Olivares's nephew, learned courtiers like the Marquis of Velada, Philip III's tutor, writers such as the already mentioned Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa or Martín González de Cellorigo and able state and war secretaries like Martín de Aróztegui were also mesmerised by the reflections of the Italian thinker. This was so to such an extent that it would not be exaggerated to affirm that a whole generation of lawyers and politicians serving the Spanish Crown read Botero with interest and delight through the Spanish translation undertaken by the royal chronicler and cosmographer Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas. The renown achieved by Herrera's *La razón de Estado* within the learned circles of the Spanish Court enhanced Giovanni Botero's reputation even more. According to Apollinaire de Calderini, Philip II himself had given it to his son shortly before dying 'as a useful work for the keeping of so many kingdoms and empires that he hopes to inherit' (Iñurrítegui, 1993: 121-150; Gil Pujol, 2004: 969-1022; Bouza, 2005: 25-165; Wright, 2001: 118).

In the Catholic Spain of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, reading the works of Giovanni Botero presented an alternative – he distinguished, as is well-known, between 'good and bad reason of State' – to his compatriot, the 'impious' Niccolò Machiavelli. This has been pointed out, from different viewpoints and through different methods, by many notable historians of political thought.<sup>7</sup> The readers of Botero's works, which were also abundant in Portugal and its overseas colonies – Pedro Barbosa Homen, Luis Mendes de Vasconcelos and Fernando Peres de Sousa perhaps being the most prominent examples –, could also find among their pages one famous and thought-provoking apothegm: 'Him who is the lord of the seas will also be the lord of the land.' The aforementioned Luis Mendes de Vasconcelos, governor and captain-general of Angola between 1617 and 1621 and author of *Do sitio de Lisboa* (1608) and *Arte militar* (1612), refined this phrase even more in the first of the works quoted by labelling as 'extremely harmful' those conquests 'which cannot be united [by sea] with the state that creates them' (Ramada Curto, 1988: 179). Similar ideas can be found in a series of Catholic political treatises which are still widely unknown and which emerged in some parts of the Spanish Monarchy as a direct and critical response to the truces that Spain signed with England (1604) and Holland (1609-1621).

It is possible that in the draft of Minos [...], the Flemish Jesuit Nicolaus Bonaert became the first to reply to Hugo Grotius [...], who had argued that Portugal and Spain did not have an exclusive right to trade in the possessions of the Estado da Índia in anticipation to the Portuguese Serafim de Freitas [...]. The right of discovery and conquest, as well as the granting of papal bulls endorsed by both governments in the treaties of Tordesillas (1494) and Saragossa (1529) did not bind the other powers by reason of the principle *res inter*

*alios acta*. It is often stated that the papal bulls (five in total) granted to the kings of Spain and Portugal were irrelevant in the seventeenth century, but the truth is that authors such as Pedro Calixto Ramírez (*Analyticus Tractatus de Lege Regia*, 1619) and Juan de Solórzano Pereira (*Politicia Indiana*, 1647), were still using them in some of their theoretical arguments.

There is no doubt about the fact that the eastern and western Indies were, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, more than a mere 'experimental laboratory' for the missionary enterprises of Spain and Portugal, and were becoming increasingly integrated in the political, financial and diplomatic systems of the period. This can be surmised from the words written by the Inca Garcilaso: 'There is but one World, and although we say Old World and New World, this is because the latter has only been newly discovered for us and not because they are two; but only one' (Garcilaso de la Vega, 1723: 33). Despite the providentialism enclosed in that statement for all of the Catholic king's vassals, the truth is that upholding such heavy burden required 'superhuman' efforts. Could the Iberians overcome the cyclic 'natural law' of rise and fall which had befallen the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks and their admired Romans? (Elliott, 1991: 70) Few treatise writers of the period were sufficiently equipped to answer this question. However, in a masterful combination of political theory and praxis, Giovanni Botero offered himself again as a referential oracle for attentive ears. Despite the importance of extending, planting and defending any possessions, the most important task that any ruler would face would be that of 'keeping' them, for 'all things human grow and diminish, just like the moon, to which they are subjected.' 'The [ruler] who conquers and extends his possessions,' Botero added, 'only needs to fight against the outside causes of destruction; but the [ruler] who makes an effort to keep what he already has, must fight both outside and inside causes of destruction. Territories are acquired little by little, but they must all be kept at the same time.' Politics and its *raison d'être* became, in Botero's words, *l'arte de contrapesare* or the 'art of compensating' powers. The difficulties lay in how to incorporate new territories without transforming the original matrix, because the loss or decay of any of the parts would inevitably lead to the loss or decay of the whole (Pagden, 2001: 425-426).

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May this lengthy digression serve to illustrate, as well as it may be possible to do so, the existence of a – close – link between the ambition to control the seas and oceans of the world and the birth, rise and decline of the empires of Spain and Portugal. Such a link has always been reflected upon by the historiography, from the sixteenth century to our own days, when a series of researchers, sensitive to the methodological approaches of global history, have questioned certain Eurocentric axioms about Europe's modernity defended by some works dealing with European

expansion which were written in the mid-twentieth century mainly by French, German and English speaking historians (Valladares, 2012: 57-117). It is not an easy task to articulate a coherent and solid discourse about Iberian influence in America, Africa and Asia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the study of the circulation (of knowledge, beliefs and goods) and the 'connections' developed by the 'peoples without history' (in an expression made famous by the anthropologist Eric R. Wolf). It is not easy because it requires certain skills, such as the knowledge of several languages or of different archives and libraries, both in and outside Europe, which are possessed only by a limited number of researchers. Some of these difficulties may explain why we still lack an up to date study of the secular rivalry between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans going beyond Leopold von Ranke's still valid work. Reading and interpreting the rich and varied sources emanating from different contexts, produces a new style of history writing; one which is much more 'polyphonic' (Burke, 2010: 479-486; Remaud, Thireau, Schaub (eds.), 2012) than that which we can still read in some national histories and in which much more attention is paid to the details and the bigger picture.

## GLOBALISATION

What could explain – if indeed an explanation can be found – that an indigenous Mexican nobleman called Domingo de Chimalpáhin noted in his diary the murder of Henry IV of France at the hands of the Catholic fanatic François Ravailac just a few months after the regicide had taken place in 1610? Moreover, why do some Japanese folding screens painted during the shogunate of Tokugawa Ieyasu, a period in which there was a lack of cultural receptiveness towards the main commercial powers of the West, show the battle of Lepanto as if it were an ancient war between Romans and Carthaginians?

These very original questions were posed by Serge Gruzinski in his work *Les quatre parties du monde* (2004), which is as magnificently conceived and written as it is difficult to classify within the fragmented historiographical debate of our days. Among the influences discernable in this intuitive and extraordinary work, we will find concepts such as those of 'infinite mobilisation' formulated by the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk and 'acculturation', used by the Mexican anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán. Within the historical field, it is forceful to mention the debts we owe to Marc Bloch's project of 'comparative history' (and to his precursors, Charles-Victor Langlois and Henri Pirenne, and followers, Fernand Braudel, Pierre Chaunu, Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, Frédéric Mauro and Immanuel Wallerstein) as well as with Sanjay Subrahmanyam's 'connected histories.' A critical engagement with such methodological tools has served to prove and illustrate the development of *náhuatl* writing in the Viceroyalty of Mexico in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the acceptance of the *nanban* style folding screens among

the American elites, the achievements of the quarrel between the ‘old’ and the ‘modern’ in its colonial dimension, and even the ‘deep and terrible pit’ which unfortunately still separates the histories of Portugal and Spain which deal with this very same historical period.

The Catholic Monarchy of the Iberians; the dynastic, political and ideological construction extant between 1580 and 1640, is the ‘observational example’ through which Serge Gruzinski argues that the culture of southern Europe exerted certain influence in America, Africa and Asia through the circulation of people, knowledge and merchandise which started after the geographical discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This ‘global experimental laboratory’ allows us to consider and uphold or reject any possible degrees of acculturation and intermixing. This ‘planetary conglomerate’, composed of territories as distant and diverse as Naples, Angola, Mexico, India, Macau and the Philippines and united under a unique sovereign from the Spanish House of Habsburg, can be studied from different perspectives. We could place the expansion of ‘world-systems’ as having a key and definitional role in this crucial period. However, such a historical approach has cornered other matters which were no less decisive, as the existence of power networks which shared close links with the Church and which operated in all the known continents (Molho and Ramada Curto (editors), 2003; Crespo Solana (editor), 2010). From this point of view, it becomes evident that the Catholic Monarchy was a more or less homogeneous space in terms of religion. At the same time, it was an extremely useful example in which to assess the existing interactions between Christianity, Islam and what the Iberians of the time liked to call ‘idolatry’ (Gruzinski, 2001: 85-107; Schwartz, 2010).

Part of Gruzinski’s originality in this work, in which he expands some of the points he had raised in his *La pensée métisse* (1999), lies in the use of abundant and suggestive sources, including pictorial ones. The power of images is as persuasive and convincing as that offered by spoken and written words. Using an image as a document is revealing mainly because of what it says and what it silences, as it goes further than a crude and simplistic political or mental representation (Burke, 2005). It is also a wonderful means of expression, not only in an iconographic sense, but also in an economic one, since commerce contributed to disseminate knowledge and technique by means of the buying and selling of books, maps, paintings, utensils, and luxurious objects (Chinese porcelains, Japanese folding screens, Aztec censers, water pitchers, bezoar stones, rhinoceros horns, corals, ostrich eggs, ivory spoons and salt-cellars and African rock crystal). In relation to this traffic of utensils and other objects, the ‘westernisation’ that we have alluded to was not limited to directing these pieces of Asian, American and African origin exclusively to a European market. In many cases these products would be mixed with other cultures and peoples with the aim of enhancing their price and prestige. This was the case of the famous bezoar stones, which were believed to

cure intoxications, poisonings, the illness known as ‘melancholy’ and even leprosy. Many of them originated from Goa, but they were covered with thin golden filigree laces – an art at which the goldsmiths of Castile and Peru excelled.

Concerning the dissemination of culture, we know that more than 8.000 books were sent from Spain to the West Indies between 1558 and the late seventeenth century, but this figure will probably need to be duplicated in the future after taking smuggling into account. During the more than fifty years in which Portugal and Spain remained united, the dissemination across the world of the core values of Catholic Europe was progressive and the efforts made in this sense by the religious orders cannot be denied (González Sánchez, 2001: 203; Sánchez-Molero, 2013). The first European printing presses in Japan and the Philippines were established thanks to the efforts of the Jesuits in 1590 and 1593 respectively. Just like people, books travelled too. A copy of Abraham Ortelius’s *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1579) had reached China before Matteo Ricci decided to offer it to Emperor Wanli. People read while on the ships to fight boredom and the fear of long and dangerous voyages. They would read out loudly to entertain and inform those – the majority – who did not know how to read. They would take the most used and popular books to the most distant places. In 1583, for instance, the library of a Spaniard living in Manila contained 23 literary works among which some revealing titles could be found, such as Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso* and Jacopo Sannazaro’s *Arcadia*.

However, not all the works being circulated in the world were as well-known then and now. While Portugal and its colonies remained united to the Spanish Monarchy, some ‘best-sellers’ (for the most part pastoral romances by instalments) were circulated of whose quality even the experts are unsure about. Works such as Jorge de Montemayor’s *Los siete libros de la Diana* (1559) were written for a wider audience and they found readers in places as distant and remote as the Brazilian city of São Salvador da Bahia or the small and underpopulated towns of the Philippines. In the same manner, Esopo’s *Fábulas* became accessible to certain Christianised elites of the time in Mexico and Japan because they were respectively translated into *náhuatl* and Japanese. Mexico received not only books, but also Japanese embassies coming from Manila which in turn travelled to Seville, Madrid and Rome. Similarly, it was also in Mexico where the putrefied remains of 26 religious martyrs crucified in Nagasaki on 5 February 1597 for their attempt to introduce Catholicism were received together with the paintings portraying this macabre event which had been made in the Portuguese colony of Macao (Takizawa, 2011; Oizumi and Gil, 2011).

In the vast and yet small, Iberian colonial world of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, not only knowledge was circulated, but also thousands of men and women from almost every corner of Europe who brought with them their experiences, fears and un-

certainties. If we add up the Spaniards and Portuguese who emigrated to the Indies, those who were expelled because of their Jewish, Muslim, crypto-Muslim or crypto-Jewish religion, and those who ended up being enslaved and 'forced' to recant their original faith by the Barbary and Turk pirates, we can safely state that there was a demographic loss of near one million people. This estimated but significant amount helps explain why the American, African and Asian continents were only barely penetrated further than the coastlines until well advanced the nineteenth century with the arrival of great British and French explorers. At the same time, it allows us to imagine a better context for the thought of famous *arbitristas* such as Sancho de Moncada and Pedro Fernández de Navarrete, who respectively wrote *Restauración política de España* (1618) and *Conservación de Monarquías* (1626). According to both authors, the main causes for the Crown of Castile's poverty and depopulation were, 'the expulsion of the Jews and Moriscos' as well as the 'new discoveries or colonies'. This prescriptive perception of the overseas territories as an onerous burden instead of a profit was not only present in the middle and lower echelons of Spanish society, but also in the highest political circles. Even the Count-Duke of Olivares expressed himself in similar terms to those of Moncada and Navarrete in a meeting of the Council of State in 1631: 'Big conquests (even if winning and conquering them and acquiring those possessions for ourselves) have left this Monarchy in such a miserable estate, that we can say with reason that it would be more powerful if it had less of that new world'. Even if, as John H. Elliott points out, these may be the exaggerated words of an overwhelmed and exhausted minister concerned about the difficult political and financial situation that the Monarchy was in, they nevertheless seem to suggest a revealing change of mood in comparison to the happy times of Emperor Charles V (Elliott, 2002: 225-229; Elliott, 2007: 48-49).

The dimensions of this Iberian-influenced world were also reflected in some relevant voyage accounts like those of the Florentine Francesco Carletti (*Ragionamenti sopra le cose da lui vedute ne'suoi vaiggi si dell'Indie occidentali, e orientali come d'altri paesi*, 1594-1602) or the Spaniard Pedro Ordóñez de Ceballos (*Viaje del Mundo*, 1614), which are full of exotic images – the product of first-hand knowledge of some of the most diverse cultures, fauna and flora of the time. The need to understand and explain these is prominently present in such works (Rubiés, 2007). They were not alone in this. The observations made by the Portuguese authors Domingo de Abreu e Brito (*Sumario e descripção do Reino de Angola, e do Descobrimto da Ilha de Loanda*, 1592) and André Alvares de Almada (*Tratado breve dos Rios de Guiné do Cabo*, 1594) about the rites and customs of some cannibal tribes (mainly the Jagas and the Sobas) which inhabited the western coasts of Africa or the views provided by Luis del Mármol Carvajal (*Descripción general de África*, 1573-1599) and Diego de Haedo

(*Topografía e historia general de Argel*, 1612) about the lands of 'Prester John' (in modern-day Ethiopia) and the mundane Ottoman Alger are so meticulous that it would not be mistaken to classify them as almost ethnographic. It is thanks to the attentive and privileged eyes of these European travellers, which we will not be able to explore further due to reasons of space – see the writings of Martín Ignacio de Loyola and Rodrigo de Vivero y Velasco – that we know of the existence of *Janissaries* in Spanish America, *Mamelucos* in Brazil, and *renegados*, *lançados* or *tagomaos* in the coasts of Africa, agents which would end up playing a prominent and privileged role as cultural mediators. Unfortunately, the national histories of Spain and Portugal had nothing to say about these men until recent times (Ares Queija and Gruzinski, 1997; Loureiro y Gruzinski, 1999; Kaiser (editor), 2008).

However, Iberian globalisation was not as perfect as a first glance would allow us to think. There were rifts and cracks, places where the circulation of people, knowledge and goods was never possible. A visible *mestizaje* existed in the sacred images of the altarpieces, and in the chapels and vaults of the American churches and convents founded by the Jesuits and the Franciscans, but this *mestizaje* sometimes decreased or disappeared entirely due to the requirements of the local elites, which demanded the application of European rules of ornamentation. The languages of the Catholic Monarchy – Latin, Castilian and Portuguese – were also vehicles of intellectual globalisation through the dissemination of Aristotelian political thought and even, to some extent, of certain messianic and millenarian hopes which were underlying in the Iberian enterprises of expansion and conquest before they surfaced under the imperial figure of Charles V and his successor, King Philip II. Even if permeable in face of certain indigenous terms, the structure of the language remained immutable and intact even years later, during the attempts of the Bourbons to reorganise the 'kingdoms of the Indies'. Different spaces and times crossed and confronted each other. In Manila, for instance, the district of the Chinese merchants, or *sanglays*, was organised according to the Chinese calendar. At the same time, the indigenous chroniclers of New Spain insisted on establishing concordances between their own and the Gregorian Catholic calendars. Gruzinski thus distinguished between globalisation and westernisation, the 'two heads of the Iberian eagle.' It is not an easy task to define what is global and what is local. Even more difficult is the attempt to determine the nature of the bonds linking both concepts. Throughout the sixteenth century, the relationship between what was considered local, the homeland, and what was considered global, the world, was in constant evolution. Just as if they were two parallel and inseparable processes, the redefinition of 'local' was accompanied by the emergence of 'global', which ended up being increasingly identified with the space of the planet (Mignolo, 2003: 19-107).



## CONNECTIONS

Sanjay Subrahmanyam's works are provocative and stimulating studies in which he explores the encounters which took place in the period going from the late fifteenth- to the mid-seventeenth centuries, between the Portuguese and other peoples of Turkey, Persia, India and south-eastern Asia. In his works, Subrahmanyam points out that connecting history means to unblock and re-establish the connections which existed in the past (that 'strange country' in David Lowenthal's words) between the diverse cultures and societies composing the world, like a suspicious electrician who aims at repairing what other historians have previously and *consciously* disconnected. If the example of Habsburg America shows that there were indeed cultural contacts in both directions, Asia, especially India, the *janela* or window of the continent, also provides similar examples (Subrahmanyam, 1997: 289-315, 2007a: 34-53, 2007b: 1359-1385).

In contrast with what has been assumed by a significant part of the traditional historiography, the intellectuals of Renaissance Europe were not the only ones to consider how best to conceive and write the History of the World paying attention to the cultures and spaces newly discovered. In Turkey, Persia, India, and other Muslim territories, in addition to a wide dissemination of historian Ibn Khaldun's great works, there was also a significant tendency among historians and chroniclers to be extraordinarily preoccupied with being acquainted with the different forms of political organisation, religious customs, literature, cartography and flora and fauna of the main peoples of Europe. Such were the cases of Hudūd Al-'Alan, Mustafā 'Ali and Kūnh Ul-Akhbār. Even some historians, such as 'Tarith-i-Hindi Gabi, decided to insert into their accounts the story of the colonisation of America by the Spaniards through their knowledge of works such as that of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (Subrahmanyam and Alam, 2007c, 2011).

From a strictly mercantile point of view, since the arrival of the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama until its almost complete commercial monopolisation by the English, India became the most vigorous colony of Portuguese merchants outside of Portugal. In 1600 Ugolim (close to today's Calcutta), 10% of the population were Portuguese merchants trading in black pepper, gemstones and silk and cotton fabrics. The main purpose of this diaspora was to make profitable business enterprises in this geographical area and expand them as much as possible towards China, Japan and northern Europe. This process was not dissimilar to that which took place a bit later in the Philippines, the Viceroyalties of Mexico, Peru and Brazil, and the region of Río de la Plata (Cross, 1978; Ventura, 2005; Studnicki-Gizbert, 2007). From the Persian Gulf to Malacca, and all the way through to Goa, there were active communities of Portuguese merchants who, taking advantage of the distance from the metropolis and of the governmental

and administrative laxity of the beginnings of the territorial and spiritual conquest, managed to achieve the recognition and money that the homeland was denying to them. James Boyajian, who has studied the volume and composition of this commerce, states that between 1580 and 1640, close to 90% of the value of the shipments sent from the ports of India to Lisbon was in private hands. The Crown did not hinder this practice, for these interests secured the income of the *Casa da Índia* (Boyajian, 1993).

The group of works composing Sanjay Subrahmanyam's impeccable and erudite *Impérios em concorrência: Histórias conectadas nos séculos XVI e XVII* (2012), examines in detail some of the aforementioned subjects, rounding off some of his most relevant research works such as *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (1993), *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama* (1997),<sup>8</sup> and *Penumbra Visions: Making Politics in Early Modern South India* (2001). Subrahmanyam's suggestive but difficult way of making history has been influenced by the intellectual imprint left by prominent Indian historians such as Tapan Raychaudhuri, Om Prakash, Dharma Kumar, Ashin Das Gupta and Ranajit Guha, unfortunately all of them virtually unknown to most part of the European historiography.

Works devoted to the incorporation of the Crown of Portugal into the Spanish Monarchy emphasise that, some fifteen years before the union in 1581, the Portuguese inhabiting Asia were already gravitating towards a model of territorial expansion and conquest based on the Spanish experience in the viceroyalties of New Spain, Peru and the Philippine Isles. The extrapolation of the model set forward by the Spanish conquistadors who had followed Hernán Cortés, Francisco Pizarro and Miguel López de Legazpi, was not only taken to Asia, but also to the western and eastern coasts of Africa. During the controversial and little studied reign of Sebastian I (1554-1578), Portuguese Asia was divided into three different areas with three different governors. The first area, a purely commercial one, was Malacca. The second area, located in India and Ceylon, was something of a mixed centre for military and mercantile operations. Finally, the third area, located in Mozambique, was still a largely unknown and attractive frontier ripe for exploration by impoverished *fidalgos*, merchants and clerics. Exact figures for the number of Portuguese leaving the homeland are not reliable, but it has been estimated that some 100.000 to 150.000 were living in the overseas possessions, between Morocco and the Far East by the second half of the sixteenth century. In other words, approximately 8% of the peninsular population would have left to the territories on the right side of the Tordesillas demarcation if we accept that, for this same period, there were 1.2 million Portuguese in the peninsula and if we take the lowest values for the same figures (Enders, 1994: 29; Ferreira Rodrigues, 2008: 527).

The territorial division of Portugal's maritime empire, implemented in some Asian and African areas

between the last third of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, came to an abrupt end after the loss of Ormus at the hands of an Anglo-Persian alliance. It had reached its peak with Francisco Barreto's and Vasco Fernandes Homem's attempts to conquest Mozambique between 1565 and 1573, and the Angolan enterprise launched by Paulo Dias de Novais in 1575, but not fully undertaken until Philip II of Spain became king of Portugal. The conquest of this African region, compared, as has been pointed out, to that undertaken by the Spaniards in Mexico, Peru and the Philippines, included the commercial linking of the western and eastern coasts by sailing the wide rivers Cuanza and Cuama (the old name of the Zambezi river). Once this was achieved a viceroy of the 'royal blood' would be appointed to rule over this supraterritory and keep close links with Brazil.<sup>9</sup> If the Spanish Monarchy was able to annex this African supra-territory comprising the fertile island of Luanda, Angola and the modern states which form a natural corridor towards Mozambique, the Catholic monarch and his spent royal treasury would be able to benefit from the enterprise's 'grandeur', 'reputation', and significant resources – mainly slaves and precious metals. It would also contribute to greatly reduce in half the amount of time employed in the naval communications between the ports of Goa and Lisbon.<sup>10</sup>

Francisco Barreto's territorial expansion was made easier by the Portuguese ships which regularly sailed from Portugal to India following the route of the Cape of Good Hope. Thanks to natural or forced stops in this part of eastern Africa, the Portuguese ended up founding and planting coastal factories such as those in Matatana and Quelimane. Such settlements would be used as a platform from which to penetrate inland, where they expected to exploit some legendary silver mines which dated back to the mythical times of King Solomon. Francisco Barreto, Governor of India between 1555 and 1558, was appointed by Sebastian I in 1569 to conquer this vast territory with the support of three ships and one thousand soldiers coming from some of the noblest families of Portugal. After a failed exploratory attempt, Barreto decided to return to Lisbon, in order to better provision himself so that he could return to the heart of the kingdom of Monomotapa in 1571, when Catholic Europe had its eyes in the fight against its infidel enemies in the eastern Mediterranean. Following the course of the Zambezi River, they managed to plant the strongholds of Sena and Tete, although at the cost of a great number of casualties (including Francisco Barreto himself) and money (approximately 120.000 cruzados). This first attempt to conquer the kingdom of Monomotapa was followed by that of Vasco Fernandes Homem in 1573, a captain who had accompanied Barreto since the difficult beginnings of the enterprise. After strenuous efforts to extend the Portuguese area of influence to Manica, Fernandes Homem finally realised that the silver gathered up to that point was not worthy of the human and financial efforts which had been made. However, the Portuguese dream of conquering a silver depos-

it similar to that of the Spanish in Potosí did not fade until the first third of the seventeenth century (Thornton, 2010: 145-168; Disney, 2010, II: 43-318).

Paulo Dias de Novais's expedition to Angola in 1575 can be considered as being more successful than those of Barreto and Fernandes Homen in the kingdom of Monomotapa. Although it is true that there was not much inland penetration achieved, several defensive settlements were founded along the rivers (Dande and Cuanza) and the coastline which would later be crucial in the development of the slave trade with Brazil. Many Portuguese soldiers died in combat, and the figures show that they had to fight hard against hostile cannibal tribes (Jagas), the dense vegetation of the territory and lethal tropical diseases (dengue and malaria). Between 1575 and 1594, 3,480 soldiers disembarked of which 3,180 perished (Martínez Torres, 2014). Such figures show that the 'permanent state of war' in the African continent was as much the norm as it was in the rest of the continents. In spite of this, the profitability of the Angolan settlement had more guarantees than those of the eastern African coast. Between 1575 and 1587, 4,000 slaves on average were embarked each year in the port of Luanda as labour for the *engenhos* of Brazil, a figure that would double itself in the following decades. The dependent ties established between Brazil and Angola became so strong that even during the *Restauração* of the Braganzas there were plans to create an Atlantic empire between Brazil and the Azores (Alencastro, 2000: 44-76).

The decade preceding the union of the Crown of Portugal to the Spanish Monarchy had started with an attempt to redefine and even suppress the frontiers existing between their respective overseas possessions. The Philippines, with regular contacts with the Viceroyalty of Mexico through the Manila Galleon became the hinge uniting a significant mercantile system exporting silver and importing mercury, cinnamon, clove, black pepper, nutmeg, silk fabrics, amber, fine china, Japanese folding screens, ivory and high quality and resistance woods (Alfonso Mola and Martínez Shaw, 2000). It is unclear whether or not it was an operational base from which to launch a territorial expansion in Asia, but this does not diminish the usefulness of its institutional mechanisms, which had been first rehearsed in Mexico with the example of the Spanish viceroys. Since the Philippines were conquered by Miguel López de Legazpi in 1564, several dozen *encomiendas* had been established in the towns of Luzon and Panay. By the end of 1591, there were already almost three hundred of them. The aim behind this ploy was to take over the profitable silk and spice commerce of the Portuguese. Of course, there was mistrust, but there were also important trading projects since the East-West cooperation started which were aimed at setting suspicions aside, as was the case of Duarte Gomes Solis and his *Discursos sobre los comercios de las dos Indias* (1622), dedicated to Philip IV. Driven by his 'many years and long experience in businesses both general and of great consideration', this

Portuguese Jew resident in Madrid decided to propose to the monarch of ‘the Spains’ a significant change of style in mercantile affairs. In short, the ‘restitution’ of the commerce of both Indies that Gomes Solis demanded from the sovereign meant granting permission to the Jews ‘dwelling in the lands of Turks, Moors and heretics, to have their *juderías* like they have them in Rome and other parts of Italy because, granting that, they will all go to live there and the commerce and yields of your Majesty will increase’. From his point of view, relations between the vassals of the same monarch, especially in such faraway places, had to be established independently of their religions. They had to be reduced to a mere ‘communication between merchants and merchants’. Such a declaration of intent did not prevent him from making many other proposals which were no less important. Among them, we can highlight the creation of a university for merchants in Madrid, the involvement of ‘businessmen’ in the councils and *juntas* advising the ministers, the ‘need’ to reach a consensus for exchange rates in international fairs, the creation of a mercantile company based on the example of Holland and England and that the silver coins which were to serve as the basis of commerce and ordinary use of the kingdom ‘be alloyed like the alloy the *placas* in Flanders, because [in that way] it will be avoided that false copper coins shall enter or leave Spain, because this alloyed coin will be used for everything’. Duarte Gomes Solis was very clear on this point: only commerce was more powerful than arms, and the end of the Spanish Monarchy would come soon if the former was to be lost (Gomes Solis, 1943; Bourdon, 1955: 11-12).

Although not widespread, during these very same years there were detailed and serious attempts at joining Spanish and Portuguese overseas efforts and territories. Anthony Sherley must be highlighted among the foreign *projectistas* and informers at the service of the Spanish Monarchy because of his good knowledge of the diplomatic and mercantile relations existing between the main Asian territories, the eastern Indies and, more specifically, the Philippines and the Moluccas. These relations were important because of their geostrategic location – halfway between the Asian and American continents – and because of the enormous wealth that they could provide to the royal treasury through the continuous exploitation of its main products (black pepper, clove and nutmeg). They were crucial pieces for the Monarchy which could undermine the power of Dutch and English sailors and which could obtain for Philip IV what his father and grandfather never achieved; that is, the ‘lordship of the southern sea’. Since ‘the increase in contracting business increases power through the sea’, Sherley pointed out, ‘it seems that if your Majesty would increase and expand the contracts which he already has in the spice business, this very increase of relationships will multiply the contracts in those seas and, with them, the power in the seas’. These were the categorical remarks made by this English adventurer, who had been a pensioner of the Spanish Monarchy in Granada since

1610, in two complementary works of his: *Peso de todo el Mundo* (1622) and *Discurso sobre el aumento de esta Monarquía* (1625) (Sherley, 2010: 183-184).

The well-informed *procuradores* for the Philippines Hernando de los Ríos Coronel and Juan Grau Monfalcón expressed similar arguments to those expounded by Sherley. In lengthy and detailed *memorials* sent respectively to the Council of Indies in 1607 and 1635, they urged Philip III and Philip IV to exploit in a more ‘rational’ way the ‘business of clove and black pepper’ in their neglected and defenceless possessions in Asia. The benefits of this traffic, will be conducted away from the traditional Portuguese routes in order to avoid the stops and the ‘many potential stealers’, would revert to the royal Hacienda and to the maintenance and defence of the factory at Ternate, ending for once and for all with the obvious ‘impoverishment’ suffered by Manila and the Philippines for their defence of the same and other Portuguese possessions in the area.<sup>11</sup> Juan de Silva and Juan Niño de Távora, governors of the Philippines in 1609-1616 and 1626-1632 respectively, paid attention to the dissatisfaction expressed by some of their *procuradores* and factors, who were sensitive to the difficult situation in which Iberian Asia was. In a letter to Philip III written in 1612, Juan de Silva thought that ‘if the clove that is picked up – and which we hope will be picked up – is not put together by hands with their own fortune and sailed to Spain at their own expense and risk, as is the style that the Flemish use, it will not serve’, since ‘while it is taken out by private persons, your Majesty spends his royal treasury with no profit at all’.<sup>12</sup> Shortly before his premature death still in office in 1632, Juan Niño de Távora advised Philip IV to go even further by uniting the jurisdictions of Manila and Macau. As Niño de Távora put it himself: ‘To unite these two strongholds under a same hand should not be difficult for, even if belonging to two different crowns, if they are not united together, they will not have strength. Portugal and Castile belong to your Majesty and so it is just that their arms should be united. If your Majesty’s arms were united, we would not only defend what we have already won, but we would also [move] forward every day’ (Pastells, 1925-34: VII, clxxxiv-clxxxv).

The truth is that this impulse to ‘move forward’ in jurisdictional matters expressed by the Spanish governor of the Philippines, Juan Niño de Távora, or the closer collaboration in matters relating to Asian commerce and defence demanded by experienced merchants and *projectistas* such as Duarte Gomes Solis, Anthony Sherley, Hernando de los Ríos Coronel and Juan Grau Monfalcón, were not exclusive to Spanish officers. Just a few years earlier, in a letter to Governor Niño de Távora, the Portuguese admiral Diogo Lopes Lobo – an eminent naval authority of the times due to his frequent voyages in the Indian and Pacific oceans – had expressed his desire to ‘unite’ Manila, Malacca and Macau under a unique power, thus creating ‘a force comprising the district of the South Sea up to the strait of Malacca, for otherwise the power of the enemy will increase every

day' (Pastells, 1925-34, VII: clxxxi-clxxxii). The brief 'recommendations' made by André Coelho were written in a similar vein. Coelho, a Portuguese captain forged in the siege and defence of Ormus in 1622, proposed to Philip IV – soon after the Portuguese garrison fell – the creation in Manila of a strong amphibious fleet of twenty galleys to defend the strategic Sunda Strait, thus uniting all the Portuguese defences with those of Spain which were, in his opinion, too separated.<sup>13</sup> As it happened, all these politico-mercantile projects aimed at the union of Manila, Malacca and Macau would never materialise. According to Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, Juan Niño de Távora's successor as governor (between 1635 and 1644), the union would have been significantly profitable in terms of the safeguarding of Spanish and Portuguese interests in this vast geographical area. From Hurtado de Corcuera's point of view, had some of these proposals been considered by the officers in the councils and *juntas* of experts in Madrid, 'perhaps the city of Malacca would not have been lost', and probably the Philippines, 'through the city of Macau', would have obtained 'more convenience and commodities in the necessary agreements and commerce' (Serrano Mangas, 1994: 162).

It is undeniable that during this period, both in Spain and Portugal, a series of voices were rethinking the traditional constitutional position in which each of the territories composing the 'composite' or 'aggregated monarchy' of the Spanish Habsburgs was. They did so through an ideological element which presented its 'own' language, based in the 'love' of a father-shepherd towards its flock (Elliott, 1994; Fernández Albaladejo, 2009: 73-81; Gil Pujol, 2013, 69-108; Irigoyen-García, 2014). At the same time, in the overseas periphery, some people who were serving there essentially as soldiers and merchants, were proposing something in a similar vein, calling on for a greater 'communication' and understanding in defensive and mercantile matters. These writers wished that some of the overseas territories (the links between Angola and Brazil in the first place, followed by the triangle composed by Macau, Manila and Goa) would become more active and dynamic than they had been prior to 1580. It was not the case here of creating something similar to an 'Iberian system' in the Atlantic and the Pacific. Confronting the loss of crucial strongholds such as Ormus (1622) in the Persian Gulf, Nagasaki (1639) in Japan, all the settlements in Ceylon (1638-1658), Malacca (1641) and part of India, including Cochin (1663), it made sense to reactivate and give new impulse to what already existed.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is still common to find in encyclopaedias and manuals of early modern universal history that the Portuguese expansion initiated with the conquests of the north-African cities of Ceuta and Tangier in 1415 and 1471 lost its original vigour in the second half of the sixteenth century, falling into a state of absolute 'de-

cline' from which it would never recover. Thus in little more than a century, the Portuguese maritime empire – 'one of the biggest enigmas in history' in words of John Harold Plumb – founded by Manuel I and John III, of the House of Avis, among others, succumbed to the unrestrained attacks of Dutch, English and French sailors who, thanks to the improvements made by their respective governments in naval, commercial and defensive affairs, were able to conquer almost without opposition or resistance the rich, distant and neglected Portuguese possessions in Asia and Africa. The union of Portugal and its overseas colonies to the 'composite monarchy' of the Spanish Habsburg between 1581 and 1640 made this line of argument even harsher while providing certain legitimacy to the Braganza rebels who raised against the 'tyranny' and 'bad government' of Philip IV and his *valido*, the Count-Duke of Olivares. The ritual assassination of Miguel de Vasconcelos, the hated secretary of State for the Council of Portugal in the royal palace of Lisbon on 1 December 1640 – with its similarities to the 'defenestrations of Prague' over twenty years earlier in the kingdom of Bohemia – marked the end of the 'Babylonian captivity' suffered by the Portuguese at the hands of the 'proud' Castilians for more than half a century.

This biased, essentialist and one-sided reading of events, which stems partially from the contradictory writings of some of the most relevant chroniclers of the period, has undoubtedly influenced our views about this fundamental historical period. Fortunately, a series of new studies – such as those by Serge Gruzinski and Sanjay Subrahmanyam mentioned in this text – are now questioning this historiographical paradigm through a lively debate and the taking of positions which are far from Eurocentric. During the sixty years in which the Spanish and the Portuguese were ruled by the same king, and despite the fact that the voices against the dynastic and political 'union' of the two peoples were always in the majority, they tried their utmost to expand their common culture and defend their overseas possessions from the systematic attacks of the sailors of Protestant Europe. This is one of the most revealing conclusions reached in both studies. The Spanish monarch's respect for the 'internal constitution' of Portugal which he had sworn before the three estates in the Cortes of Tomar (1581) was ever-present. The pact only broke down when it became obvious that Castile, on its own, could not support the high costs of 'keeping' a 'world monarchy' (Cardim, 2014).

Similarly, the expansionist decline of the Portuguese empire in Asia and Africa, traditionally set in the second half of the sixteenth century, has now been qualified by these works, as it did not take place in those dates but later, after the disaster of Ormus in 1622. The premature death of King Sebastian I (who had launched the second conqueror wave that we have alluded to) and of a significant part of the Portuguese elite in the battle of al-Qasr al-Kabir (1578), was no doubt a 'national trauma' for Portugal similar to that experienced by Spain in 1588

with the defeat of the ‘Invincible’ Armada in English waters, but it is also a flexible ‘point of departure’ rather than ‘arrival’ from which to demonstrate that after Philip II inherited the Portuguese Crown, there was a significant circulation of people, knowledge and goods at a global level which had not been previously considered by the historiography leaving aside some exceptional examples (Lach, 1971, 9 vols; Russell-Wood, 1998; Thornton, 2012). Although these comparisons may be seen as anachronistic, the very significant role played by the Iberians in this process is undeniable.

Anthony Pagden is right to highlight that no other empire ever reflected so much about itself as the Spanish empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Pagden, 2001: 419-420). The union in 1581 of the Crown of Portugal and its overseas territories to the Spanish Monarchy – which took place in a neglected historical context of ‘confidence crisis’ and ‘introspection’ in the peninsula – provides us with a frame from which to study and analyse, from the perspective of political and cultural history, the reach of this ‘union’ from all possible angles. The union of the Portuguese and Spanish crowns, understood by some people in the period under the Boterian logics of ‘keeping’ united what had been previously ‘disunited’ or even under the perspective of a necessary ‘communication’ between the different territories composing the ‘mystical body’ of the monarchy, could make a difference in the metamorphosis of what was considered as an old, dispersed and poorly defended maritime empire into a more modern, compact and terrestrial one, which would be able to counteract Dutch and English power, omnipresent in all the seas and oceans of the world since the late sixteenth century. It is true that this politico-mercantile discourse only represents a minority, but this is a minority which allows us to shift the focus when it comes to the thorny matter of Iberian ‘decadence’ and ‘modernity’ by paying attention to the Hispanic-Portuguese overseas possessions. It may still be early to incorporate these findings to the ‘normality’ of encyclopaedias and early modern universal history textbooks, but there is no doubt about the fact that the Spanish and Portuguese sources, read and evaluated using different methods and using their elements of singularity to question traditional historical interpretations, can still provide us with numerous surprises.

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## NOTES

1. These pages aim to be, by means of a critical and constructive dialogue, an introduction and contextualisation of the works of Serge Gruzinski (*Les quatre parties du monde. Histoire d'une mondialisation*, Paris, Éditions La Martinière, 2004; Spanish translation by the Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2010) and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (*Impérios em Concorrência. Histórias conectadas nos séculos XVI e XVII*, Lisbon, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2012) for a specialised readership with an interest in the study and analysis of the overseas possessions of Spain and Portugal between 1581 and 1640.
2. Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE), R/14.034, “Reports by Pedro de Baeza”: 1-17, esp: 6-7 (Madrid, 5 April 1608): 1-11, esp: 3-6 (Madrid, 15 January 1609).
3. Archivo Histórico Nacional de España (AHNE), Estado, Libro 89 D, “Letter from Conrad Rott to his Majesty Philip III. Lisbon, 4 August 1600”, folios 363-366.
4. Ibid.
5. Biblioteca del Palacio de Ajuda (BPA), 51-VIII-20, folio 5. An account of 1613 commenting on the Dutch threat in Mina and Pinda (includes a map).
6. BNE, R/14.034, “Reports by Pedro de Baeza”: 1-7 (Madrid, 1 October of 1607): 1-10, esp: 5-10 (Madrid, 14 January 1608): 1-16, esp: 1-12 (Madrid, 5 April 1608): 1-11, esp: 3-6 (Madrid, 15 January 1609). Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Filipinas, 1, N. 135, “Consultas and other documents relating to the keeping of the forces at Ternate and to the circulation of clove” (Seville, 4 July 1611).
7. Friedrich Meinecke, Federico Chabod, Luigi Firpo, José Antonio Maravall, Quentin Skinner, Anthony Pagden, Richard Tuck, Maurizio Viroli and Romain Descendre.
8. There is a Spanish edition, published in 1998 by Crítica.
9. Archivo Histórico Ultramarino de Portugal (AHUP), Mozambique, Caja 1, Documento 10.951, folios 59 y 63 (The proposal can be dated in 1599).
10. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (BNP), Códice 294, folios 2, 5-14, 16.
11. AGI, Patronato, 47, R. 24, “Report by Hernando de los Ríos Coronel about the negotiations regarding clove” and “Account of the things touching Maluco” (Manila, 30 March 1607). BNE, Mss. 8.990: “Reasoning by [Juan Grau Monfalcón about] the convenience of taking good care in the preservation [of the city of Manila and Philippine Isles]”, 1635
12. Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España (CODAIN), volume LII: 13.
13. BNP, Códice 636.

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