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## The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies

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### The Early Modern Iberian Empires

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PART II

The Iberian Peninsula  
in the Golden Age  
(sixteenth–seventeenth centuries)



# History, politics and cultural studies



## 11

THE EARLY MODERN IBERIAN  
EMPIRES

## Emulation, alliance, competition

*Alexander Ponsen and Antonio Feros*

[T]his union brings to the church and to all of Christianity in general one of the greatest benefits and comforts that could ever be offered [. . .] that joining the forces of my states with those of the Portuguese nation, so valiant and highly esteemed in the world for its military capabilities and conquests by sea and land, and for its industriousness in navigation, will raise Spain's reputation to such a point that all other nations will recognize and respect it as the most thriving and prosperous province of Christendom.

(Philip II [1579] 1845, 652–653)

Philip II's enthusiasm in 1579 at the imminent prospect of incorporating Portugal and its empire within his already vast dominions could hardly have been more palpable. The union was meant to cement Spain's reputation by achieving the long-sought reunification of the entire Iberian Peninsula under one Christian sovereign and by crowning Philip king of the largest composite monarchy the world had ever known. But six decades on, in the wake of Portugal's "Restoration" of independence in 1640, many Portuguese observers scorned the unification process in retrospect as an unjust conquest by a larger, aggressive neighbor, and later historians portrayed the sixty-year union as a "long night" of "submission" and "captivity," a regrettable blemish on Portugal's otherwise proud, distinctive history (Cueto 1992, 50). As a result of independence, Portugal recovered its pride as one of the largest monarchies in history, thanks to the exploits of Portuguese conquerors in Africa, Asia and the Americas. By that time, however, the Iberian monarchies were no longer the only great powers in an ever more expansionist Europe. The Portuguese and Spanish kingdoms were therefore the earliest examples of what Thomas Dandellet calls the "revival of imperial ambition [. . .] the master narrative that drove European political life for the entire early modern period" (2014, 3).

Here we analyze the Iberian cases within this imperial renaissance, attempting to understand why they expanded, how they integrated overseas territories into the pre-existing peninsular realms, but also the debates that this expansionism provoked in each political community. In this parallel history of the Portuguese and Spanish empires, the fundamental objective is to highlight the many connections between the two, the alliances and convergences as well as the competition between them (Martínez Torres 2014; Subrahmanyam 2007). The essay will also

aim to explain the characteristics of the political communities which, though never officially self-declared empires, undoubtedly behaved as such, as heirs to the Roman Empire. In Castilian and Portuguese dictionaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, “empire” referred to the Roman Empire, or to its successor, the Holy Roman Empire. The Iberian monarchs never possessed the title of Emperor. *Imperio* as a concept meant simply, “power” and “dominion,” “to reign” and “to command.” This concept of “empire” as “government and command,” explains titles like that of the mid-seventeenth-century manuscript by Alonso Martínez Calderón, *Imperio de la Monarquía de España* (Pagden 1995).

But despite not labeling themselves as empires the two realms did nonetheless have designs to dominate non-European peoples and territories, and sought to extend their power and *imperio* to all possible regions of the globe. The results of Iberian expansionism were without doubt “imperial,” which is to say that they produced the creation of communities which integrated numerous territories on various continents. This complex mixture of concepts appears with clarity in the work of the Valencian Tomás Cerdán de Tallada who determined that the way to create a “state” was to subject diverse territories and peoples to the command, *imperio*, of a prince, “as has happened in this Spanish realm, that with time through marriages, and extrinsic juridical and natural successions, through laws, actions and conquests, conceded to the Kings of Spain by the Holy See, by just causes, had united in the Royal person of our King and lord, so many Kingdoms, Provinces, Lordships, and Republics” (1604, 2). It was the vastness of the territories under the monarch’s *imperio* which convinced many that the king of Spain was more than just an ordinary king: he was the king of kings and of princes and lords. In this way, the Spanish monarch was head of the “most powerful kingdom,” had subjected other “kingdoms and provinces,” and had no “superior in the temporal” sphere (López Madera 1597, 7r-v).

This essay analyzes the imperial constitution of the Iberian realms from the beginning of their expansion in the fifteenth century, and the debates that accompanied their expansion. It also assesses what the integration of Portugal brought to the Spanish monarchy, how the non-European possessions of both realms were governed in this period, and the relationship of those possessions to the metropolis. The histories of Portuguese and Spanish imperial expansion are strongly connected, not only from 1580 but also earlier. Both kingdoms shared a common history, one without doubt characterized by conflicts, but also by imitations, emulations and convergences. Their mutual expansion produced exchanges and mimicry, both in the process of expansion itself and in the attempts to give an institutional political structure to the expanding realms. In addition, although the results of expansion were in many ways distinct – due fundamentally to different conditions in the territories where the Spanish and Portuguese ended up settling – the reality was that in conceptualizing their empires, they drew from a common juridical-political culture, which was shared throughout Europe and was not just Iberian.

### Emulation

While historians have long recognized the joint religious and commercial motives behind Castile’s early expansion under Ferdinand and Isabel, Portugal’s initial forays into the Atlantic and Indian oceans have been portrayed until recently as overwhelmingly commercial in orientation, with their religious missionary element as secondary to what was first and foremost a profit-driven enterprise. But in addition to the search for profit, propagation of the faith played as central a role in the early expansion of Portugal as it did for Castile. This was true from the beginning, and the rulers of both kingdoms shared a worldview steeped in the juridical-theological culture of fifteenth century Christian Europe.

Iberian expansion was violently competitive at the outset. Well before the Iberians' arrival in the New World, Portugal and Castile clashed over possessions in the Canaries, Morocco, the Azores and Cape Verde. This expansion was not the result of an imperialist policy, but of attempts by the Portuguese initially, followed by the Spanish, to find new opportunities and commercial routes to replace those monopolized or closed by the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, North Africa and overland across parts of western and central Asia. The Portuguese took the first initiative. By the early fifteenth century they had already expressed their conviction that the best alternative route was that which, beginning in the Atlantic, rounded Africa and entered into the vast world of spices in the Indian Ocean and East Asia. As they went, they established an array of strategic strongholds to secure their commercial monopoly over the spice trade. Portugal's primacy in the fifteenth century is evident when we recall the papal bulls, *Dum Diversas* and *Romanus Pontifex* of 1452 and 1455, which granted Portugal full secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the lands and seas from northwest Africa all the way to India. The main conditions of those bulls were ratified when the two kingdoms signed the Treaty of Alcaçovas in 1479, which established the first Portuguese *mare clausum* in African and Asian waters.

Within a matter of decades the expansion of each kingdom achieved results viewed by many as nothing short of miraculous. After extending its trade in gold and slaves along the west African coast in the late fifteenth century, Portugal established trade links with India in 1498 and laid claim to Brazil with Cabral's landing there in 1500. Over the next half century the Portuguese attacked and occupied Goa, Colombo in Sri Lanka, and several southeast Asian islands. As they secured their foothold in Brazil, they also established an informal trading presence in both East Africa and Macao. Already by 1501, King Manuel I had adopted the title, "Lord of the Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India," indicating his global ambitions.

The expansion of the Spanish realm was no less impressive. Although not without setbacks along the way, since 1493 the Spanish monarchy had sponsored, organized or facilitated numerous voyages of exploration, as well as the occupation and exploitation of several Caribbean islands. The pace of expansion picked up following the victory over the Mexica in 1521, secured by Hernán Cortés with the aid of a large native army, and the conquest of the powerful Inca empire in the 1530s by Pizarro and his companions. As a result of these conquests, by 1560 the most populous regions and cities in the Americas had been occupied and claimed for the Spanish realm, and virtually all of the future colonial centers or capitals had been founded, or re-founded. Not until the 1620s would other European powers begin to threaten Spanish hegemony in the Indies, and even then only in the Caribbean and the regions that would later form part of the United States and Canada.

Spaniards also tried their luck on other continents. The Spanish monarchy sponsored the first successful circumnavigation of the globe, claimed sovereignty over the Moluccas, over the Philippines from the 1560s, attempted the conquest of the isle of Formosa (Taiwan), considered plans for the exploration and conquest of Australia and even for the invasion of China itself. Alongside these possessions were the Canary Islands and various territories in North Africa: Ceuta (after 1640, having previously belonged to the crown of Portugal), Melilla in what is today Morocco, and Oran, a city under Spanish sovereignty from 1509 until the end of the eighteenth century, in modern Algeria.

In the wake of Columbus' voyage to the Americas, the comparative power of the two Iberian kingdoms began to level off as demonstrated by the 1493 *Inter caetera* Bull of Donation, which legitimized conquest in the name of Christianization and granted jurisdiction on the condition that the "barbarous nations" discovered "be overthrown and brought to the faith."



The bull, *Inter caetera*, recognized the rights of Isabel and Ferdinand and their descendants over all the lands and peoples discovered as a result of these voyages of exploration. The bull conceded not only territorial, political and commercial rights to the Spanish kings, but also imposed on them an unambiguous ideological purpose: the obligation to convert all of the pagan peoples they encountered, to provide sufficient education for them to become good Christians, and, ironically, to care for and protect them against the aggression of rapacious colonizers. The legitimation of Spanish expansionism, and in a way its success, would be forever linked to Spain's ability to integrate the natives into the Christian "civilized" world.

Before the moment of dynastic union in 1580 there were relatively few conflicts between the Portuguese and Spanish. The primary reason was that from the beginning of Spanish expansion both kingdoms agreed to a pact creating two separate spheres of jurisdiction and navigation, which were confirmed in the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas and the 1527 Treaty of Zaragoza. The Segovian jurist and governor Alonso de Zuazo referred to this in 1518 as a pact between the Portuguese and Spanish to divide "the world as an orange, in two equal parts" (1864, 296–297). Despite some conflicts and misunderstandings the treaties between Spain and Portugal largely succeeded in eliminating violence between them until the rise of border skirmishes in South America in the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth centuries. Importantly, as Portugal and Spain competed to consolidate imperial rule within their respective spheres, the two empires became increasingly interlinked. Many Portuguese, including Magellan, were essential to the early phase of Spanish discoveries and conquests. And while many Spaniards were at the forefront of the expansion of the Portuguese empire in Brazil, Portuguese settlers usually constituted by far the largest group of foreigners in the cities and towns of early Spanish America.

### Celebrating and debating empire

From the second decade of the sixteenth century, the Spanish and Portuguese both expressed a clearly triumphalist view of their accomplishments (Curto 1998; Hespanha 1996). One example of such imperialist celebration comes from a Castilian chronicler, and another from a Portuguese poet. "[T]he greatest event since the creation of the world, apart from the incarnation and death of the creator himself, is the discovery of the Indies," proclaimed Francisco López de Gómara in the epistle dedicating his history of the Indies to Emperor Charles V (1553). A few years later, the great Portuguese poet, Luiz Vaz de Camões, echoed these sentiments by celebrating the explorations, voyages, and conquests of his compatriots in one of the most influential texts of the early modern period, *The Lusiads*. It was an ode to the history of his Portuguese homeland, the discoveries, the expansion of Christianity, and the deeds of Vasco de Gama and Magellan, all of which made Portugal "predestined to accomplish great deeds" and "impose its law in the concert of nations" (Camões 1639). The eulogizing of Spanish exploits was taken up again by Spain's most influential historian of the early modern period, Juan de Mariana. For Mariana, the year 1492 was without parallel in the history of Spain, with the conquest of Granada and the expulsion of the Jews, as well as the "most memorable enterprise, the source of the greatest honor and profit to have taken place in Spain [. . .] the discovery of the Western Indies, which as a result of their greatness are called the New World. [. . .] No nation in the world," he wrote, "has in such a brief period of time advanced so far, or stretched the limits of its empire so much" (1854, 2: 241, 243).

Yet despite the unmistakably patriotic literary trends in Portugal and Spain, already in the first years of expansion this triumphalism was accompanied by strong debates about the justice of the expansion, about the legality of their dominion over non-European peoples and

territories, and about the integration of these territories into pre-existing institutional structures. The main issues under scrutiny also reflected the general models that the two respective empires came to adopt. While Spanish debates revolved around the legality of their territorial claim to the Americas and the abuse of subjected indigenous populations, debates over Portuguese *imperium* centered primarily on the African slave trade and exclusive control over navigation and the distribution of Asian spices. Nevertheless, Portuguese and Spanish jurists, humanists and theologians all drew on a common juridical-theological discourse in justifying the expansion of their empires.

The controversy was perhaps most intense when its focus was the abuse of the natives (Pagden 1982; Todorov 1984). In 1511 Antonio de Montesinos, a Dominican priest in Hispaniola, had been the first to publicly denounce their enslavement and harsh treatment. We have innumerable testimonies of the horrors of the conquest, from a wide variety of sources, but it was the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas who provided the first systematic account in his famous *Brief Relation of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552), which catalogued the crimes committed by Spaniards in each of the regions conquered until that time. “Among these gentle sheep,” he wrote, “the Spaniards appeared [. . .] like famished wolves, and tigers, and lions,” killing everybody and destroying everything. Tensions escalated to such a point that, in 1550, Charles V convened a *junta* of theologians to rule on a debate on the issue.

If early Portuguese expansion elicited less controversy, part of the reason was that, unlike in Spanish America, many Portuguese conquests in Africa and Asia were directed against local peoples that were either Muslim or were considered so barbarous that, as Gomes Eanes de Zurara first argued, their conquest and enslavement was easily justified in the name of conversion and civilization. The 1510 conquest of Goa from its Muslim rulers was justified on this basis, and in 1548 Damião de Góis and Diogo de Teive spoke of the military campaign at the island of Diu as “a pious and just war” for precisely the same reasons. Yet by the second quarter of the sixteenth century Portuguese and Spanish authors were criticizing Portuguese *imperium* as well, particularly on the issue of African slavery. Bartolomé de las Casas marveled at “the manner in which Portuguese historians [Zurara, João de Barros, and others] glorify as illustrious such heinous deeds, representing these exploits as great sacrifices made in the service of God,” while the Portuguese Fernando Oliveira leveled an even more scathing critique, arguing that his Portuguese compatriots were responsible for the very invention of the African slave trade by providing a demand for it on an unprecedented scale. A decade and a half later, in 1569, Andalusian Dominican Tomás de Mercado criticized the unjust violence through which the Portuguese crown obtained its *imperium* on the West African coast and protested uniquely that the Iberians’ slaving activities contributed gravely to the social and political instability in the African regions where the slaves were procured (Marrero 2012, 417–424).

In the case of the Spanish monarchy, as a result of these critiques, from the 1530s onward ecclesiastical and secular authorities implemented measures and formed institutions aimed at changing the colonists’ treatment of the natives. In the first place, they acknowledged the need to attenuate the effects of conquest on the indigenous populations by eliminating slavery, forced labor and wars of conquest. In 1536 Pope Paul III declared that the Indians were fully human, and in 1542 the Spanish ruler officially rescinded all previous decrees that allowed the enslavement of Indians. Henceforth only specific Indian populations could be legitimately enslaved – those designated as savages or barbarians, but in reality all those who resisted Spanish domination – and in later decades even these distinctions were abolished in favor of full freedom for all natives. This process of juridical and political stabilization culminated with the publication of the ‘Ordinances for the discovery, settlement, and pacification of the Indies,’ issued by Philip II in July 1573. These prohibited new campaigns of exploration not approved

by the royal authorities, and enjoined officials and colonists to “forego the word conquest, using instead pacification and settlement,” to ensure that the Indians were never “assaulted, or aggrieved” (*Recopilación Leyes de Indias*, 1681, bk. 4). Although the debates among the Portuguese over expansion were not as intense and in general did not elicit an institutional response as profound as in the Spanish case, they did elicit the creation in 1532 of the *Mesa da Consciência*, its aim being “to resolve and settle any possible conflict between secular power and moral theology” (Marcocci 2014, 477).

The most prominent of these debates, however, was the so-called “Controversy of the Indies,” centered on Spain’s lawful title to the Americas. In 1534 Francisco de Vitoria, a leading theologian of the School of Salamanca, forcefully denied the validity of the Papal Bulls of Donation, citing what he viewed as the Pope’s lack of authority in secular affairs, and decried Castile’s seizure of American territory as unlawful because the natives, as rational beings by nature, had held it as legitimate owners. Controversy over both kingdoms’ titles to their overseas possessions slowly faded from view, however, if only because, as the Spanish Jesuit ethnographer José de Acosta contended, despite valid questions over the conquest’s initial legitimacy, Castile’s right to the Indies had nonetheless become legally enacted through its long and continuous occupation of the land (Gil Pujol 2007, 33–34). More important is that both the Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms justified their rights to empire over their non-European territories using a multitude of titles – from the papal bulls, to the right of conquest, their right to occupy unclaimed lands, and even theories about voluntary vassalage offered by native peoples (Pérez-Amador Adam 2011; Saldanha 2004; Solórzano Pereira 1647, book 1, chaps. 9–12).

### Ruling the empires

Beyond justifying the occupation of the overseas territories, the Iberian kingdoms were even more concerned with resolving their juridical status and delineating with clarity how they would be legally integrated within kingdoms that had been exclusively European until almost the end of the fifteenth century. Both the Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms had long traditions in the dynamics of territorial aggregation and cohesion. Both were “composite kingdoms” during the early modern period, the result of the aggregation of diverse territories, first in Europe, and from the mid-sixteenth century with extended dominions in Africa, Asia and America (Gil Pujol 2012). As the historians Pedro Cardim and Susana Münch Miranda (2012) have reminded us, these territories were united or annexed by various means – dynastic marriage, conquest, the voluntary cession of sovereignty – and their juridical status was determined by their means of incorporation, the geographical location of the territory, and the ethnic composition of the population. In other words, the separation between the metropole and the overseas territories was reinforced by perceived racial differences, and in general this implied that a great majority of the populations of these territories were treated as dependent and subaltern.

This explains why in both realms the overseas territories received a juridical status inferior to that of the European kingdoms and territories. All of the former were considered to have been annexed by “conquest” or cession of sovereignty, and all were considered to be inhabited by populations in a state of civilization inferior to that of Europeans. The most important result was that, with a few exceptions in the Portuguese case, they respected none of the overseas territories’ institutions and laws, prohibited natives from holding imperial offices, and abolished institutions of representation that had existed before the union or annexation.

The Spanish case was in many ways simpler. From the beginning, all of the non-European territories over which the Spanish monarch came to exercise sovereignty were incorporated within the kingdom of Castile – as Granada and the Canaries had been – and therefore governed

according to Castilian law. The non-recognition of pre-existing indigenous institutions made it such that the crown directly governed these territories. Founded in 1524, the Council of the Indies advised the monarch on everything related to the administration of his American possessions. To govern the colonies, the crown created two viceroalties, one with its seat in Mexico City, the other in Lima. The viceroys, named by the Spanish kings as their lieutenants in the Indies, held executive power. Their most important functions were to defend royal interests, and indigenous peoples from predatory colonists. In addition to the viceroalties, the crown also created several high courts of justice, *Audiencias*, to hear cases presented by both Spaniards and natives. Alongside these secular bodies and offices, the monarchy encouraged the creation of bishoprics and the establishment of numerous religious orders throughout the Indies, whose most important function, apart from taking care of the spiritual needs of the Spaniards in the New World, was to convert the natives, and the hundreds of thousands of Africans transported to those lands (Solórzano Pereira 1647).

In Spanish realms the so-called *indios* were considered vassals of the king, but formed part of the *República de Indios*, a separate political body which supposedly conserved some indigenous laws and institutions of government. But *indios* also had access to Castilian law. The Spanish monarchs conceded special statutes to certain indigenous nations, such as the Tlaxcalas, for their collaboration in the defeat of the Mexicas, or to members of the original indigenous elite. To these, although they were prohibited from performing traditional religious functions, they granted status, property, power in the native community, and the hereditary nature of their titles, offices and wealth. The growing presence of “Spaniards” in these territories provoked discussions about their role in governance. The crown permitted the creation of new cities, which functioned more or less as the peninsular ones did, but the inhabitants of the Indies never had parliamentary representation of any sort. And yet, as “Spaniards,” these populations were subject to Castilian law.

The situation of the overseas territories of the Portuguese kingdom was much more complex. First, the Portuguese kingdom’s capacity of centralization seems to have been much less than that of the Spanish. As a result, there was a general lack of central institutions of imperial government throughout the sixteenth century, and many of the territories remained relatively autonomous, especially the African and Asian ones, as well as Brazil until the seventeenth century. But rather than simply ascribing this to the weakness of the Portuguese monarchy, it is important to recall the complexity of the juridical status of its diverse territories. As Luis Filipe Thomaz stated, “When confronted with the current notion of empire, the Portuguese State of India [*Estado da Índia*] presents us with something original and, at times, baffling. More than its spatial discontinuity it is the heterogeneity of its institutions and the imprecision of their limits, both geographical and juridical, which make it unusual” (Thomaz 1994, 230). According to Susana Münch Miranda, what characterized the Portuguese empire was “decentralization, physical distance, and the jurisdictional autonomy” of each and every one of its officials and institutions (2010, 276).

Distinct from the Spanish practice of treating its overseas territories as part of the whole, the Portuguese maintained, or were forced to maintain, the differences and idiosyncracies of each one. In various African possessions, in Angola for example, the Portuguese were a minority in relation to the natives, which were not under Portuguese jurisdiction, and the same occurred with the so-called “*indios bravos*” of Brazil. In some territories the Portuguese permitted varying degrees of religious liberty, especially in African and Asian territories, made voluntary pacts of vassalage with the indigenous populations, permitted the persistence of native political institutions and in many cases the coexistence of various rights within the same territory (Hespanha 2001). The Portuguese inhabitants of these overseas territories had

a similar relationship with the metropole to that which the Spaniards had with their kingdom, the difference being that the Portuguese in these territories gained the right of representation in the meetings of Portugal's *Cortes* (Cardim and Münch Miranda 2012).

## Union

By the 1570s the devout monarchs of Spain and Portugal remained convinced of the divine mission of their respective empires. This decade saw Spain's dramatic naval victory against the Ottomans at Lepanto in 1571, considerable Portuguese territorial expansion into Angola and East Africa, and the consolidation of the plantation economy in Brazil (Subrahmanyam 2007). In 1578, inspired by these recent developments and thirsty for military glory, Sebastian I of Portugal led an ill-conceived attempt to establish an "Algarve beyond the sea" in Morocco by overthrowing its Ottoman-backed sultan. Sebastian disappeared in battle, presumably killed, and when his successor, the childless Henry I, fell ill just two years later, Philip began advancing his legal claim as rightful heir to the Portuguese throne.

As the son of Portuguese Princess Isabella and grandson of Portuguese King Manuel I, Philip's claim was strong and he viewed it as his divine destiny to unite the entire peninsula under one Christian sovereign. An anonymous letter from late 1578 advised Philip that union with Portugal would enable him to "wage war against the Turk across the Red Sea and to enter the provinces of Egypt and Jerusalem" (Bouza 1997, 34). The death of Henry in 1580 and the attempts of Dom António to declare himself king of Portugal compelled Philip to order an invasion, but only after having placated most of the Portuguese nobility with bribes as well as informal promises of autonomy and patronage in return for their political support. Despite having ultimately used force to secure his succession, Philip rejected the advice of his trusted adviser, Cardinal Granvelle, to treat Portugal as a conquest, abolish its autonomous laws, and subsume it as a province within the jurisdiction of Castile. Instead, under the terms agreed upon at the *Cortes* of Tomar in 1581, Philip was proclaimed King of Portugal while promising to respect the kingdom's existing customs, laws and privileges. Portuguese officials would continue to administer the kingdom and its overseas possessions, Portuguese would remain the official language in all matters of state, and a permanent *Consejo de Portugal* would be established, composed solely of Portuguese councilors, to advise the king on all matters relating to Portugal and its empire (Bouza 1987; Cardim 2014a, 2014b; Schaub 2001).

Philip's succession to the Portuguese throne initiated a profusion of verbal and visual discourse celebrating the event. The famous 1583 coin emblazoned with the phrase, "The World is not Enough," was one of many examples. Several prominent Portuguese voices also celebrated the union for its potential in expanding the territorial reach of the Iberian empires in East Asia. In 1584, the Portuguese Bishop of Malacca, Dom João Ribeiro Gaio, presented a detailed plan stressing the ease with which a joint Iberian force could conquer and become lord of all the lands from India to Japan. The following year, another Portuguese India official, Jorge de Lemos, echoed the militant discourse of Gaio in claiming "that the conquest of Atjeh [in present-day Indonesia] would give the dual Iberian crown the economic resources for a war [. . .] to recover all Christian territory lost to the Muslims (including Jerusalem), and to overthrow the Ottoman empire" (Boxer 1969, 122–124). Portuguese and Spanish authors lauded the extension and power of the new kingdom, which extended its power right across the New World and, in the words of Gregorio López Madera, thanks to Portugal, to territories in Africa and Asia where "Roman power never reached, and which not even Alexander attempted to subject" (Curto 1998, 461).

The Portuguese benefited greatly during the first four decades of union. Lusophone slave traders in West Africa gained access to both the enormous Spanish American market as well as to Biscayan iron, one of the chief items of exchange for slaves in their African ports of origin. Access to Spanish American silver was perhaps the major draw, both through legal trade conducted on the peninsula, as well as through the largely illicit trade in East Asia and the Río de la Plata (Schwartz 1968, 44). Beyond that, a military alliance with Spain was a tantalizing prospect in the effort to stamp out the rise of northern European privateering everywhere from the South Atlantic to the Malacca Straits. Finally, the series of steps taken by Spain to facilitate inter-peninsular commerce by abolishing customs duties on the Spanish-Portuguese border and improving navigation on the Tagus River also proved beneficial to both sides (Bustos 1983, 172).

Throughout the period of union, Portuguese writers also continued to pen celebratory tracts in the tradition of Zurara, Barros and Camões. In his 1627 *Memorial de la preferencia, que haze el Reyno de Portugal, y su Consejo, al de Aragon, y de las dos Sicilias*, Pedro Barbosa de Luna argued that, given the breadth of its overseas jurisdiction and conquests in the name of Christ, Portugal deserved a more dignified status than Aragon or Sicily within the composite Spanish kingdom. Four years later, by which time Spanish-Portuguese relations were already under significant strain, António de Sousa de Macedo intensified the patriotic rhetoric further still, describing Portugal as an “independent sovereign kingdom,” which within its borders recognized neither the authority of the Emperor nor the superiority of the kingdom of Castile (Cardim 2010; Curto 1998).

These defenses of Portugal and its empire, especially during the first decades of the seventeenth century, came largely in response to Castilian attempts to consolidate control over the kingdom and its possessions. There were decades of constant debate about the possibility of abolishing the agreements of Tomar. There were also attempts to introduce Castilian officials into the governance of the Portuguese empire and centralize it according to the Spanish model with the creation of a Council of India (*Conselho da Índia*), which existed from 1604 to 1614 (Hespanha 1989; Münch Miranda 2010). Some of the most significant reforms were undertaken under the Count-Duke of Olivares, who served Philip IV as royal favorite from 1622 to 1643. In his 1624 *Gran Memorial*, Olivares suggested: “Looking at the way they are nowadays governed, many people would rightly say that Your Majesty’s power would be greater if there were fewer nobles” (Elliott and de la Peña 1978, 95). With respect to the relationship between the Spanish and Portuguese overseas empires, he had in mind both an economic integration of the two empires and a Union of Arms (Subrahmanyam 2007, 1381). As a consequence of these reforms, besides bringing prestige to the Spanish monarchy by vastly expanding its imperial holdings, the incorporation of Portugal and its overseas possessions also brought a number of material benefits. Spain gained a number of Portuguese Atlantic ports, including Lisbon, direct access to spices from Portuguese India and slaves from Portuguese possessions in Africa (Schwartz 1993, 167). In addition, its colonists at the distant edges of the empire in Buenos Aires and Manila benefitted enormously through intense yet illicit trade in silver, slaves and spices with their Portuguese counterparts in Brazil and Macao.

The period of union was also characterized by the increase of international conflict, or to put it in other words, by the growing expansion of other European competitors, a process which questioned and challenged Portuguese and Spanish dominion in Asia, Africa and the Americas. The Dutch seizure of a Portuguese carrack off Singapore in 1603 provoked the first major international juridical debate over Portugal’s right to maritime monopoly in Asia. In the famous 1609 treatise, *Mare Liberum*, Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius argued that the sea was an international space, that all nations were free to trade across it and that no nation could

claim it exclusively or restrict the passage of foreign ships. Grotius drew heavily on the ideas of Spanish jurists who argued against the right to exclusive dominion over the high sea, but his basic innovation was to claim that Dutch war against Portugal was fully justified since the latter had violated the common rights of “the freedom of the seas” by attempting to impose its exclusive dominion. By the mid-1620s, the Dutch and English had long since broken Portugal’s maritime monopoly. Beyond the rapid rise of Dutch and English power across maritime Asia, the Dutch also occupied northeast Brazil from 1630 to 1654 and Angola from 1641 to 1648.

As frustrations mounted in both the Spanish and Portuguese empires, resulting in large part from the incursions of the Dutch, English and French, many Spaniards and Portuguese alike came to view each other, and the union in general, as a major cause of their respective woes. The *consulado* merchants of Seville and their partners in Peru brought rising anti-Portuguese sentiment to a head by protesting the impressive economic power of the Portuguese. The xenophobic frenzy reached its height in the 1630s, resulting in a purge of unprecedented proportion in the Spanish Americas. During Lima’s so-called *Complicidad Grande* of 1635, the Peruvian Inquisition executed more than thirty suspected New Christians, the vast majority of them Portuguese. This had an impact on virtually the entire Portuguese population, and many had their assets seized in the process (Cross 1978, 162).

At the same time, anti-Spanish feeling had gathered force among the Portuguese, because of their sense of being undervalued within the broader body politic of the Spanish kingdom, and of the many injuries Portugal had suffered in recent years. Philip IV’s 1631 plan to populate Brazil with Italians to protect against Dutch incursions further aggravated the Portuguese (Schwartz 1968, 47). And after Olivares expressed the idea of an Iberian Union of Arms, Portuguese jurist, João Pinto Ribeiro, published his 1632, *Discurso sobre os fidalgos e soldados Portugueses nao militares em conquistas alheas desta Coroa*, which protested that, in accordance with the terms agreed upon at Tomar, Portuguese soldiers and mariners should never be forced to serve outside their own empire (Boxer 1967, 249).

## Two empires

Tensions finally came to a head on 1 December 1640 when a group of Portuguese nobles seized a well-chosen moment to assassinate the Portuguese Secretary of State Miguel de Vasconcelos and imprison Margaret of Savoy, Portugal’s vicereine under Philip IV. Faced simultaneously with another revolt in Catalonia and a war with France and the Protestant powers, Castilian forces were unable to respond adequately after the Duke of Braganza was proclaimed King John IV of Portugal the following day. Despite the persistence of anti-Castilian sentiment among the people throughout much of the period of union, the formal rebellion itself was only made possible once the King had threatened the collective power of the Portuguese nobility, thereby violating the terms of their informal pact (Bouza 1994, 344). The spew of patriotic pamphlets published in the wake of the Portugal’s “Restoration” of independence justified the revolt as a legitimate reaction to tyrannical kingship and the steady degradation of Portugal’s autonomous jurisdiction (Gil Pujol 2007, 72–73).

Responses to Portuguese Restoration in the overseas territories were less straightforward. Although in Portugal and its colonial capitals of Goa and Salvador, both the lower and ruling classes alike were quick to support the Restoration, colonists in Macao and southern Brazil, at the distant edges of the empire on the border with Spanish territories, were remarkably ambivalent. Macao’s commercial life, if not also its naval protection, had grown far more linked to

Manila than to the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*. In 1642, Macao's municipal council entered into negotiations with Philip IV to rejoin the Spanish realm on condition that Castile send a permanent garrison to defend the port and that the Macanese be permitted to travel freely to Manila. Likewise, the notoriously autonomous colonists of São Paulo, many of whom were of Spanish descent, also offered their allegiance to Philip IV in return for two concessions: first, that they be permitted to continue capturing and trading indigenous slaves, which they viewed as their legal right through immemorial custom; and second, that he approve their 1640 expulsion of the Jesuits, who had vigorously opposed their indigenous slaving activities. Philip ultimately declined the proposals of both São Paulo and Macao, wary of the lack of guarantees and hopeful that he would soon quell the ongoing Portuguese "rebellion" and thereby return the entire Portuguese empire to his dominion without undermining the process through sub-agreements with individual colonies (Valladares 2001, 77–80). The conflict between Portugal and Castile lingered on through the mid 1660s, with intermittent fighting along the border. But because of the Spanish monarchy's weakened financial position and its various military entanglements elsewhere, its hope of reconquering Portugal never came to pass, and it eventually recognized formal Portuguese independence in 1668.

Portugal's patriotic identity and pride, fashioned through the history of expansion and the writings of its great poets and chroniclers, remained latent but never faded during the union, and re-emerged with the writings of António Vieira and others who hailed Portugal as a resurrected "Quinto Imperio" (Cardim 2010, 25–29). However, although both empires survived, after their separation they eventually lost their combined pre-eminence on the world stage. The new global political landscape had shifted with the increasing preeminence of the Dutch but especially the French and English empires. There is no doubt that after the 1660s Spain and Portugal continued defining imperial realities in southern and central America, but on the broader global scale, imperial supremacy and its dominant discourses were shifting from Iberia to Northern Europe.

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