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Holding the World in Balance: The Connected Histories of the Iberian Overseas Empires, 1500–1640

SANJAY SUBRAHMANYAM

America bores open all her mines,
and unearths her silver and her treasure,
to hand them over to our own Spain,
which enjoys the world's best in every measure,
from Europe, Libya, Asia, by way of San Lúcar,
and through Manila, despite the Chinaman's displeasure.

Bernardo de Balbuena, *Grandeza mexicana* (1604)¹

THE EARLY MODERN WORLD WAS FOR THE MOST PART A PATCHWORK of competing and intertwined empires, punctuated by the odd interloper in the form of a nascent “nation-state.” At the time of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the real contours of the political map of the world were as follows: from east to west, a China that had just been conquered by the Qing, who would make an expansive push westward; then the vast Mughal Empire, from the hills of Burma to Afghanistan; the Ottoman Empire, whose writ still effectively ran from Basra to Central Europe and Morocco; the Russian Empire, by then extending well into Siberia and parts of Central Asia; the limited rump of the Holy Roman Empire in Central Europe; the burgeoning commercial empires of England and the Netherlands in both Asia and America; and, last but not least, the still-extensive spread of the great empires of Spain and Portugal.² Other states could also make some claim to imperial status, including Munhumutapa in southeastern Africa, the Burma of the Toungoo Dynasty, and Safavid Iran. The crucial point, however, is not just that these empires existed, but that they recognized one another, and as a consequence they often borrowed symbols, ideas, and institutions across recognizable boundaries. In the mid-sixteenth century, the Habsburg

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¹ Luis Adolfo Domínguez, *La grandeza mexicana y Compendio apologético en alabanza de la poesía* (Mexico City, 1990), 118, as cited and discussed in Serge Gruzinski, “Passeurs y élites ‘católicas’ en las Cuatro Partes del Mundo: Los inicios ibéricos de la mundialización (1580–1640),” in Scarlett O’Phelan Godoy and Carmen Salazar-Soler, eds., *Passeurs, mediadores culturales y agentes de la primera globalización en el mundo ibérico, siglos XVI–XIX* (Lima, 2005), 25–27. The somewhat free translation is mine.

² For a recent general consideration, see John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire* (London, 2007), as well as the succinct *longue durée* view in Anthony Pagden, *Peoples and Empires: A Short History of European Migration, Exploration, and Conquest, from Greece to the Present* (New York, 2001).

ruler Charles V and the Ottoman sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver explicitly vied for the same status as universal ruler, sharing a set of ambitions and horizons; that same notion of shared symbols and horizons was held by the Mughal ruler Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) and his neighbor to the west, Shah ‘Abbas of Iran (r. 1587–1629). The idea of *translatio imperii*, the transfer of imperial models and notions, which is usually deployed in the diachronic sense of an orderly temporal succession of empires, could thus equally be seen as having a synchronic counterpart in the sense of movement across a group of competing empires.³

On the face of it, it is not surprising that there was communication between the early modern Portuguese and Spanish empires. For one thing, there is the obvious matter of the “Union of the Crowns” between Spain and Portugal in 1580–1581, through which Philip II of Spain became the ruler of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire, a state of affairs that continued under his successors Philip III and Philip IV until the “Restoration” of the House of Braganza in 1640. However, at his ceremonial acclamation by the estates at the Cortes of Tomar in 1581, Philip assured his Portuguese constituency that the two kingdoms, and the two empires, would be kept administratively and conceptually separate in the spirit of the Treaty of Tordesillas, which had been signed between Castile and Portugal in 1494 and was further ratified by the Treaty of Saragossa in 1529.⁴ These treaties were meant carefully to demarcate the spheres in which Portugal and Spain would construct their overseas empires, the first drawing an imaginary vertical line in the Atlantic, and the second defining an anti-meridian on the other side of the globe in the Pacific Ocean. The Cortes of Tomar attempted an ambitious application of what John H. Elliott has described in a classic essay as the principle of “composite monarchies,” which was in wide use in early modern Europe, and in accordance with which a ruler could separately rule distinct kingdoms without establishing an evident hierarchy between them. However, was it quite so simple to move from this notion to the idea of a “composite empire”?⁵

The blurring of the lines of division that helped create a world-encircling empire (whether unitary or composite) for the Spanish Habsburgs between 1580 and 1640 has not attracted as much attention as one might expect. The reasons for this are

³ The classic work on the subject is Werner Goetz, *Translatio imperii: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und der politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 1958). For specific early modern case studies, see Gülrü Necipoğlu, “Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry,” *The Art Bulletin* 71, no. 3 (1989): 401–427; Michel Mazzaoui, ed., *Safavid Iran and Her Neighbors* (Salt Lake City, Utah, 2003).

⁴ The political events are surveyed in Ronald Cueto, “1580 and All That . . . : Philip II and the Politics of the Portuguese Succession,” *Portuguese Studies* 8 (1992): 150–169. See also the important consideration by Geoffrey Parker, “David or Goliath? Philip II and His World in the 1580s,” in Richard L. Kagan and Geoffrey Parker, eds., *Spain, Europe and the Atlantic World: Essays in Honour of John H. Elliott* (Cambridge, 1995), 245–266. Philip II himself, however, was quite ambiguous about what was being proposed, suggesting at one point that “the entire Traffic of all that has been discovered, in the East as in the West, will be common to the two nations of Castile and Portugal”; he also considered moving the *Casa de Contratación* to Lisbon from Seville.

⁵ J. H. Elliott, “A Europe of Composite Monarchies,” *Past and Present* 137 (1992): 48–71. Also relevant is Elliott, “The Spanish Monarchy and the Kingdom of Portugal, 1580–1640,” in Mark Greengrass, ed., *Conquest and Coalescence: The Shaping of the State in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1991). An intriguing comparison comes to us in the period after 1688, when William of the House of Orange came to rule England (initially with his wife Mary), thus creating the theoretical possibility of an Anglo-Dutch “composite monarchy” and concomitant empire until his death in 1702; cf. Jonathan I. Israel, ed., *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and Its World Impact* (Cambridge, 1991).

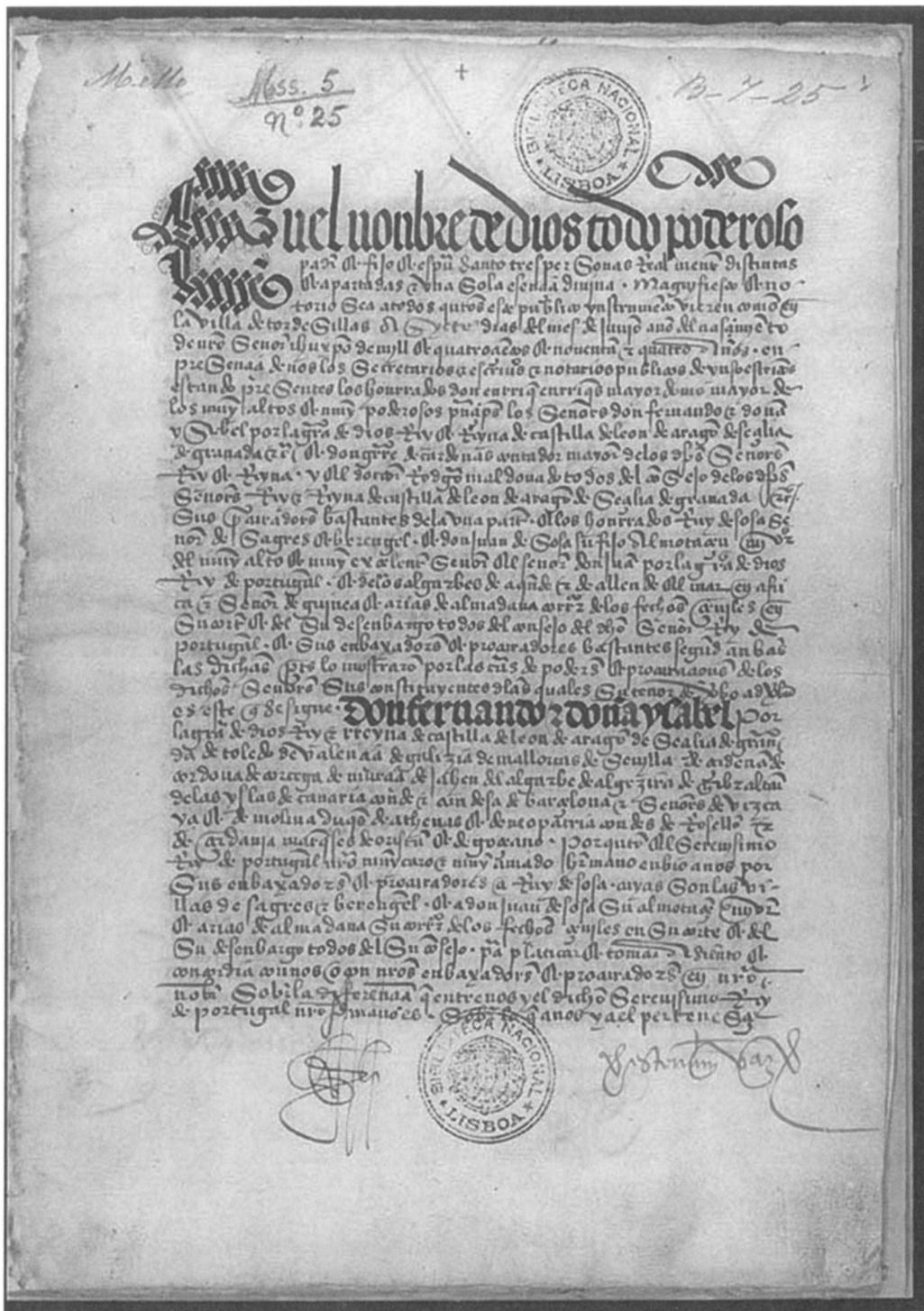


FIGURE 1: Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) between the Catholic monarchs of Castile and Aragon and Dom João II of Portugal. Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa.

not difficult to trace, and lie in an obstinate historiographical separation that has long dogged studies of the Iberian empires, as well as a tendency to reify the two imperial models in order to make the contrasts between them all the more stark.⁶ While certain issues of imperial “connection” have become increasingly common in the study of modern empires, they are less frequently applied to the early modern world. Four specific questions merit particular attention here. First, how distinct were the imperial models proposed by Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and what were the key institutional bases for those distinctions? At the heart of the matter lies the problem of the allegedly land-bound nature of the Spanish Empire in comparison to the predominantly maritime profile of the Portuguese. Second, were the distinctions that existed in the early sixteenth century blurred over time through processes of mutual borrowing and imitation, the synchronic version of *translatio imperii*? Third, what part did the “Union of the Crowns” play in these processes? And finally, how did contemporary observers and writers attempt to grapple with these issues? This is admittedly a vast geographical and institutional canvas, and it is therefore necessary to focus on some issues to the exclusion of others. The primary object of analysis here will be the world of politico-fiscal and commercial institutions. This is not to deny the importance of other aspects, whether the actions of the religious and missionary orders (such as the Jesuits), problems of mutual artistic and architectural influences across the empires, or indeed the complex monetary and banking flows that linked the two empires, to take three rather diverse examples. No doubt future researchers will return to these questions of imperial connection and mutual borrowing with other such spheres of analysis in mind.⁷

THE BEGINNINGS OF CASTILIAN AND PORTUGUESE OVERSEAS EXPANSION date back to the early fifteenth century, with the Spanish colonization of the Canaries, on the one hand, and the Portuguese conquest of Ceuta in North Africa and the occupation of the Madeira and Azores archipelagoes, on the other. However, these outposts, as well as the initial Portuguese efforts to build a network of trade (including slave trade) in West Africa, constitute something less than an empire, even if the experience of encounters there shaped later Iberian comportment in significant ways.⁸

⁶ This is apparent in two classic works that appeared at much the same time, presenting parallel histories of the two empires: C. R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825* (New York, 1969), and J. H. Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire* (New York, 1966), both published as part of the same series, “The History of Human Society,” edited by J. H. Plumb. For a highly reified view of the functioning of different European overseas empires, see also the much-cited work by Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (Cambridge, 1995).

⁷ On Iberian missions overseas, see, for example, Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Bernard Vincent, eds., *Missions religieuses modernes: “Notre lieu est le monde”* (Rome, 2007), and earlier Pascale Girard, *Les religieux occidentaux en Chine à l’époque moderne: Essai d’analyse textuelle comparée* (Lisbon, 2000). On Iberian overseas banking systems and their connections, see James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Bankers at the Court of Spain, 1626–1650* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1983), and Margarita Suárez, *Desafíos transatlánticos: Mercaderes, banqueros y el estado en el Perú virreinal, 1600–1700* (Lima, 2001).

⁸ Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *The Canary Islands after the Conquest: The Making of a Colonial Society in the Early Sixteenth Century* (Oxford, 1982); T. Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands: Madeira, the Azores, and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth-Century Commerce and Navigation* (Chicago, 1972). For a long history of the Portuguese presence at Elmina, see, for example, Joseph Bato’ora Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, *São Jorge da Mina, 1482–1637: La vie d’un comptoir portugais en Afrique occidentale*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1993);

It can therefore be said that the Spanish and Portuguese empires as articulated entities actually came into existence at roughly the same time, at the turn of the sixteenth century. Thereafter, their careers had both interesting parallels and flagrant differences, and they also faced challenges from at least some of the same forces in the seventeenth century. The question does remain of how these matters must be configured as a problem for research. This is especially so because, despite the facility with which most researchers can move back and forth between Spanish and Portuguese, the two empires tend to be studied separately, in terms of both their institutional locations and their intellectual moorings. Rare is the Spanish historian who devotes more than a small part of his or her activities to the study of the Portuguese overseas empire; and equally rare is the Portuguese historian who addresses any Spanish question other than the Union of the Crowns and the problematic phase from 1580 to 1640 when the two empires were notionally united under a single lineage of monarchs. Perhaps this is why the task usually falls in large part to historians who are located in neither of these competing Iberian national spaces.⁹

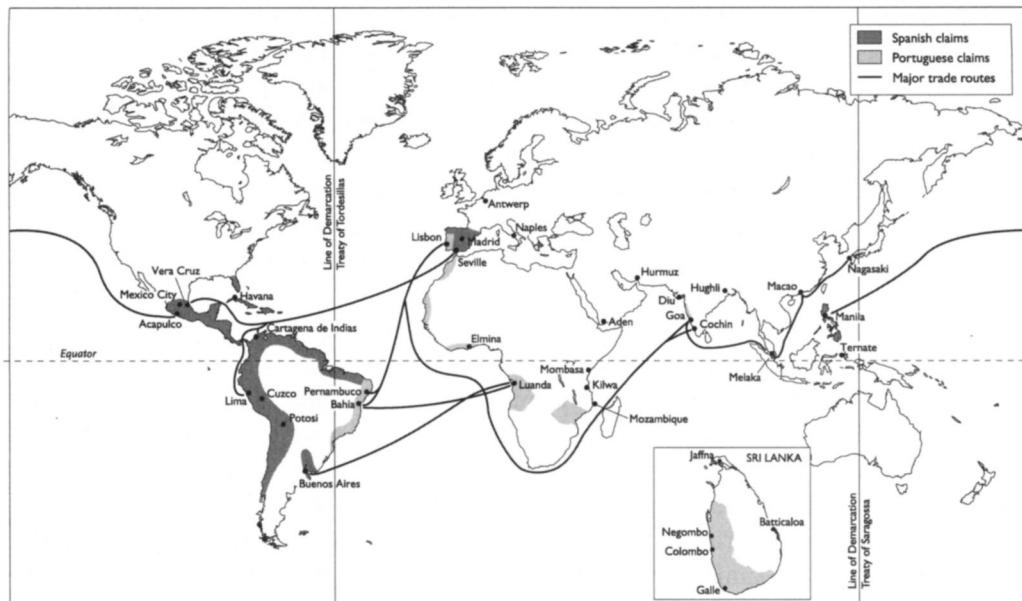
Yet a glance back at the sixteenth century reveals that attempts to treat the two empires as part of the same movement were not unknown even then. Notable among these works is the *Tratado dos Descobrimentos* (Treatise on the Discoveries) of António Galvão, which appeared in print in the early 1560s, some two decades before the takeover of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire by Philip II.¹⁰ In the *Tratado*, Galvão commences with a look at the world of the ancients, but even in his second part—where his focus is largely on the “moderns”—he casts his net wide enough to speak in the same breath, indeed often on the same page, of Hernán Cortés and Afonso de Albuquerque, Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus. But it is equally true that Galvão was something of an exception. Far more common in the sixteenth century were texts such as those of Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, João de Barros, Francisco López de Gómara, and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, which focused on only one of the two empires. This reflected the political crucible within which the historiographical enterprise itself was conceived and executed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹

and for a valuable accounting of the early Portuguese slave trade, see Ivana Elbl, “The Volume of the Early Atlantic Slave Trade, 1450–1521,” *Journal of African History* 38, no. 1 (1997): 31–75.

⁹ Thus, the otherwise excellent work of Fernando Bouza Álvarez, *Portugal no tempo dos Filipes: Política, cultura, representações (1580–1668)* (Lisbon, 2000), is quite typical in saying almost nothing about overseas questions. See also Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *Le Portugal au temps du Comte-Duc d’Olivares, 1621–1640: Le conflit de juridictions comme exercice de la politique* (Madrid, 2001), and Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *Portugal na monarquia hispânica, 1580–1640* (Lisbon, 2001). For a rare attempt by a Spanish historian to analyze these issues in an evenhanded manner, see Juan Gil, “Balance de la Unión Ibérica: Éxitos y Fracasos,” in Maria da Graça M. Ventura, ed., *A União ibérica e o mundo atlântico* (Lisbon, 1997), 367–383. On the other hand, the specter of primitive Portuguese nationalism still haunts the overall framing of (although not all the contributions in) Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto, eds., *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400–1800* (Cambridge, 2007). A pioneering effort in relation to this question is Stuart B. Schwartz, “Luso-Spanish Relations in Hapsburg Brazil, 1580–1640,” *The Americas* 25, no. 1 (1968): 33–48. For another recent and important exercise by a non-Iberian historian, see Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde: Histoire d’une mondialisation* (Paris, 2004).

¹⁰ António Galvão, *Tratado dos descobrimentos*, ed. Visconde de Lagoa and Elaine Sanceau, 4th ed. (Oporto, 1987). For an analysis, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “As quarto partes vistas das Molucas: Breve re-leitura de António Galvão,” in Godoy and Salazar-Soler, *Passeurs, mediadores culturales y agentes de la primera globalización*, 713–730.

¹¹ See Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, *História do descobrimento e conquista da Índia pelos portugueses*,



The Iberian overseas empires in 1600. Map drawn by William Nelson.

But let us return to an earlier time, the 1480s and 1490s. To be sure, the fifteenth century saw the creation of militarized outposts in North Africa, the occupation and settlement of the Atlantic islands, and the beginnings of trade (and, concomitantly, some hostilities) in West Africa. But to speak of these three processes either individually or taken together as an “empire” in the Spanish or the Portuguese case is frankly to exaggerate. We must turn, then, to the moment defined by Bartolomeu Dias and Christopher Columbus, when the Cape of Good Hope had been rounded, and the Atlantic was soon to be traversed. This was a time when Portugal and Castile seemed on the face of it to be very closely linked, when the conspirators against the monarch at the court of the Portuguese ruler Dom João II sought and found refuge in the Castilian court once they were exposed, and equally when some similar traffic existed in the other direction. Notoriously, the first viceroy of the Portuguese Indies, Dom Francisco de Almeida, had spent time at the siege of Granada, while prominent Spanish men such as Sancho de Tovar could be found captaining ships on the early Portuguese expeditions to Asia.¹² The Portuguese career of Christopher Columbus

ed. M. Lopes de Almeida, 2 vols. (Oporto, 1975); João de Barros, *Da Ásia, Décadas I–IV* (facs. ed., Lisbon, 1973); Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1922); Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, ed. Juan Pérez de Tudela Bueso, 5 vols. (Madrid, 1959). For a preliminary discussion, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “On World Historians in the Sixteenth Century,” *Representations* 91 (2005): 26–57.

¹² Thus, in Cochin, Almeida is reported to have spoken at length with the envoy from Gujarat, an Andalusian Muslim called Sidi ‘Ali, of the “good old days of the war of Granada”; see Jean Aubin, *Le Latin et l’Astrolabe, III: Études inédites sur le règne de D. Manuel, 1495–1521* (Paris, 2006), 367. The title of viceroy that Almeida assumed after arriving in Asia (his initial title was of *capitão-mór*) derived from the usage in Aragon. On Almeida and his career, see also the conventional account in Joaquim Candeias Silva, *O fundador do “Estado Português da Índia” D. Francisco de Almeida, 1457 (?)–1510* (Lisbon, 1996). For an overview of the early phase of the Portuguese case, see most recently Malyen Newitt, *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion, 1400–1668* (London, 2005), 36–59.

cannot be reconstructed in its entirety, of course, because we lack precise documentation, but we do know that his maritime and cartographic knowledge came at least in part from his in-laws the Perestrellos, whose association with the Portuguese colonization of Madeira is a matter of record. Again, notoriously, on his painful return voyage from the Caribbean, Columbus did put in at Lisbon and was received by Dom João II before he actually returned to Spain to be welcomed by his new patrons, the Catholic monarchs. If one attempts to reconstruct the names and affiliations of those who participated in the first phase of the Spanish project in the Caribbean (through to, say, 1510), one can easily see that a significant proportion of them were, in fact, Portuguese.¹³

What this means, in effect, is that in terms of personnel, skills, and—very probably—ideological presuppositions, not much separated the Spaniards and the Portuguese as they embarked on their respective empire-building missions in 1500. Joachimite apocalyptic rumblings, the projected conquest of Jerusalem (“para ir a conquistar la Casa Sancta”), the obsession with Moors and mosques—all were to be found as much in the writings of Columbus as in those of Afonso de Albuquerque.¹⁴ On his fourth voyage, Columbus encountered a rare Native American vessel off the coast of Honduras, and was at once struck by the fact that the women were partly veiled, in the manner of the “Moors.” A Muslim threat that haunted Gama and Cabral also seemed to cause Cortés some concern in Mexico.¹⁵ Admittedly, there were also differences between the two nascent empires. It might be said that Portugal was poor at the time, but Ferdinand and Isabel seemed rather strapped for cash as well. On the other hand, the kingdoms under the rule of the Catholic monarchs had a significantly larger population than the one ruled over by Dom Manuel in 1500, by a ratio of perhaps four (or, in some measures, nearly five) to one. Table 1 compares the populations of the two Iberian powers in about 1530.

Spain's more substantial human resources were surely a key to some of the obvious differences that asserted themselves by 1550, but another clue can be found in the somewhat different impact on the two societies of the long and painful business of *reconquista*. Even before the first expeditions to Mexico, which began in the middle years of the 1510s, the Spanish enterprise in the Caribbean was far more preoccupied with the possession and exploitation of landed resources than were the Portuguese in Asia. Again, the role of purely pragmatic considerations is perhaps not to be neglected. Where the Portuguese in Asia by the time of the second expedition of

¹³ Henry H. Keith, “New World Interlopers: The Portuguese in the Spanish West Indies, from the Discovery to 1640,” *The Americas* 25, no. 4 (1969): 360–371. Keith cites the earlier, classic essay by Lewis Hanke, “The Portuguese in Spanish America, with Special Reference to the Villa Imperial de Potosí,” *Revista de Historia de América* 51 (1961): 1–48. It should be noted, however, that in the early phase in the Caribbean, the Portuguese were almost certainly excluded from the *encomiendas*, and played a more commercial role; see Juan Pérez de Tudela, *Las armadas de Indias y los orígenes de la política de colonización* (1492–1505) (Madrid, 1956), 247–249.

¹⁴ Cristóbal Colón, *Textos y documentos completos*, ed. Consuelo Varela and Juan Gil (Madrid, 1992), 181. For the standard accounts of his career, see Carla Rahn Phillips and William D. Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (New York, 1992), and Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus* (New York, 1991).

¹⁵ Carmen Bernand and Serge Gruzinski, *Histoire du Nouveau Monde: De la découverte à la conquête* (Paris, 1991), 281. For the remarks by Cortés, see Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, trans. and ed. Anthony Pagden, intro. by J. H. Elliott (New Haven, Conn., 1986); see also the comments in Carmen Bernand and Serge Gruzinski, *De l'idolâtrie: Une archéologie des sciences religieuses* (Paris, 1988), 11–22.

Table 1

| Spain | | Portugal | |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Region | Population | Region | Population |
| Castile | 4,513,000 | Trás-os-Montes | 178,000 |
| Catalonia | 312,000 | Entre Douro e Minho | 275,000 |
| Valencia | 300,000 | Beira | 334,000 |
| Aragon | 290,000 | Estremadura | 262,000 |
| Navarre | 152,000 | Entre Tejo e Guadiana | 244,000 |
| Alava | 50,000 | Algarve | 44,000 |
| Others | 132,000 | Lisbon | 65,000 |
| Total | 5,749,000 | Total | 1,402,000 |

SOURCES: For Spain, A. W. Lovett, *Early Habsburg Spain, 1517–1598* (Oxford, 1986), 245–247, quoting Felipe Ruiz Martín, “La población española al comienzo de los tiempos modernos,” *Cuadernos de Historia* (Madrid) 1 (1967): 189–202. For Portugal, Orlando Ribeiro et al., *Geografia de Portugal*, vol. 3: *O povo português* (Lisbon, 1987), 735.

Vasco da Gama (1502–1503) found that there were rich possibilities in corsair activities, and in drawing resources more generally from the extensive networks of oceanic trade there, preexistent trade in the Caribbean was simply not of sufficient scale or intensity to provide a stable and taxable resource for the Spaniards. This gives us a sense of why the Spaniards moved very early on to reinvent the *encomienda* in a Caribbean context, with the disastrous consequences for indigenous populations of which we are aware from the writings of Las Casas and others.¹⁶

This institution had been of great significance in the Estremadura in the context of the *reconquista*, and we know that this particular region of Spain was especially well represented among the first generations of *conquistadores* in America. It was thus that the *encomienda* came into existence in Spanish America, more as an institution created by pressure “from below” than as a simple act of royal policy. Both Columbus on Hispaniola and later Cortés in Mexico were clearly obliged by rumblings from within the ranks of their supporters to put this institution into place, however reluctant the Crown may have been to do so. Once in place, the institution and its complex of subsidiary usages followed an implacable logic. In the 1960s, James Lockhart eloquently characterized the *encomienda* as “the basic instrument of Spanish exploitation of Indian labor and produce in the conquest period,” and while noting that it was not in fact a “grant of land” but rather “a royal grant, in reward for meritorious service at arms, of the right to enjoy the tributes of Indians within a certain boundary,” he made it equally clear that the *encomenderos*, “leaping over technicalities, made their *encomiendas* the basis of great estates even if they did not legally own the land.”¹⁷ In view of the fact that, in the absence of taxable indigenous trade, the Spaniards decided to organize their enterprise to produce resources (whether agricultural goods or minerals), this institution and its complementary counterpart the *repartimiento* must have seemed to provide a familiar and comforting matrix to those involved in defining the enterprise on the ground.

In contrast, the Portuguese setup in Asia by 1510 was characterized by a quite

¹⁶ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge, 1986), 119–145.

¹⁷ James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532–1560: A Colonial Society* (Madison, Wis., 1968), 11.

different set of institutions. At the heart of the matter was a tension between a centralizing Crown, with ambitions of operating a substantial monopoly over Cape Route trade (quite unlike the contractual system of the Spanish *Casa de Contratación*), and captains and nobles who saw the Indian Ocean as a space over which they could judiciously combine raiding and private trade. In 1510, there was no custom-house in Portuguese Asia that was worthy of the name, but the institution of the *cartaz* (the navicert) had already emerged as a means of controlling and taxing the trade of Asian vessels.¹⁸ We witness on the one hand the strategy of seeking out key points and crucial centers from which the sea-lanes could be controlled (the plan of the governor Afonso de Albuquerque [1509–1515], who conquered Goa, Melaka, and Hormuz in quick succession between 1510 and 1514), and on the other hand a view, often associated with the family of Vasco da Gama, that the Crown should define itself as a mere carapace under which great families and their clients could trade and raid with impunity. But partisans of neither view seemed to think it necessary or even possible to transpose the *sesmarias*, *comendas*, and agrarian-fiscal institutions held by the great military orders in southern Portugal to the context of Asia.¹⁹

By the mid-1520s, this distinction between Spaniards and Portuguese was seemingly set, and it is this contrast that became almost frozen in the historiography. For with the conquest of Mexico, the land-oriented destiny of the Spanish Empire was established beyond doubt, even though the conquest itself obviously had a serendipitous quality to it. Despite its previously disastrous career, first on Hispaniola and then on Cuba, the *encomienda* came to enjoy a new lease on life as an organizing institution, which continued into the conquest of Peru. Millions of new souls were now available there to be brought into the Christian fold, an occasion to invent a fresh alliance between missionaries and military-fiscal elites. This can be contrasted with the situation in Portuguese Asia at much the same time, shortly after the death of the viceroy Vasco da Gama (in December 1524) and the takeover of the government by the governor Dom Henrique de Meneses. Whereas the Spaniards were enjoying the fruits of their conquest and western triumph (and the native populations of Mexico were often dying around them like flies), the government in Goa was in the throes of a crisis of another sort.²⁰ The Ottoman threat had begun to manifest itself in the western Indian Ocean, and the Ottoman authorities in Egypt were even beginning to commission reports on the extent and nature of Portuguese maritime power. Those Portuguese maritime resources were now stretched very thin across the Indian Ocean, as a contemporary document such as the anonymous *Lembrança das Cousas da Índia* (Memorial on India Affairs, written in 1525) demonstrates.²¹

¹⁸ Luís Filipe F. R. Thomaz, "Portuguese Control over the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal: A Comparative Study," in Denys Lombard and Om Prakash, eds., *Commerce and Culture in the Bay of Bengal, 1500–1800* (New Delhi, 1999), 115–162.

¹⁹ For the place of such institutions in southern Portugal, see, for example, Joaquim A. Romero Magalhães, *Para o estudo do Algarve económico durante o século XVI* (Lisbon, 1970).

²⁰ On the demographic consequences of the conquest of the Americas, see the recent synthesis by Massimo Livi Bacci, *Conquista: La distruzione degli indios americani* (Bologna, 2005).

²¹ Michel Lesure, "Un document ottoman de 1525 sur l'Inde portugaise et les pays de la Mer Rouge," *Mare Luso-Indicum* 3 (1976): 137–160. For the most recent reconsideration of the nature and extent of Ottoman ambitions, see Giancarlo Casale, "The Ottoman Administration of the Spice Trade in the Sixteenth-Century Red Sea and Persian Gulf," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49, no. 2 (2006): 170–198. On the Portuguese end, see "Lembrança d'algumas cousas que sam passadas em Malaqua, e assy nas outras partes da Imdea," in R. J. de Lima Felner, ed., *Subsídios para a história*

Older and quite grandiose plans to build a coastal fortress near Canton in south-eastern China had been summarily abandoned, and a few years later, in 1529, the notoriously surly grandee Dom Jaime, Duke of Bragança, would even suggest that most of the Portuguese fortresses in Asia should be abandoned so that the available resources could be concentrated in North Africa. The Venetian ambassador to Charles V, Gasparo Contarini, had begun to hint broadly to his principals that the Portuguese enterprise in Asia was on its last legs, a prediction that few would have ventured to make in 1525 with regard to Spanish America. Moreover, in the late 1520s, a substantial dispute broke out between two rival contenders for the governorship of the *Estado da Índia*, which very nearly led to a civil war in the streets of Goa, Melaka, and Cochin.²²

And yet the 1530s witnessed no real collapse in the Portuguese overseas enterprise. Instead, we see deeper penetration into Brazil with the system of captaincies, or *capitanias*; the first sense of a new direction in Asia under the governorship of Nuno da Cunha; and a somewhat different balance with regard to the place of maritime trade in the whole. In the 1530s and early 1540s, several significant changes were implemented in Portuguese Asia as a matter of royal or gubernatorial initiative, and other questions were hotly debated. We can gain a measure of these debates from the extensive documentation that has come down to us from the 1540s on two substantive questions. One, considered at some length in councils in Lisbon itself, is the status of the North African fortresses: Should they be preserved, shored up, or simply abandoned? The second, debated largely at the time of the governorship in Asia of Dom João de Castro, concerns the status of trade, in particular the pepper trade. Should it be opened up to all comers, or maintained as a royal monopoly? More generally, how significant was such trade to the continued well-being of the whole overseas enterprise? There was also the specific issue of trade with the great urban center of Basra at the head of the Persian Gulf, which since 1546 had fallen under direct Ottoman control. Should such trade be allowed, and if so, under what conditions? Most of these discussions proved inconclusive, with the exception of the North African debate, as a consequence of which some Portuguese outposts were in fact abandoned. However, the large numbers of written "opinions" (or *pareceres*) generated by the "pepper question" do bring out the clear tension between an older generation of participants in the *Estado*, whose argument can be summarized in pithy phrases such as "Pepper should be a sacred thing," and others who seemed to do

da Índia Portuguesa (Lisbon, 1868). This anonymous text should be read with others that are unpublished in the same volume of the Coleção de São Vicente (vol. 11), in the Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais, Torre do Tombo, Lisbon [henceforth IANTT], which provide a useful view of matters in the *Estado da Índia* in about 1525.

²² For the struggle of the 1520s, see Jorge Borges de Macedo, *Um caso de luta pelo poder e a sua interpretação n'“Os Lusíadas”* (Lisbon, 1976). On Dom Jaime's remarks, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Making India Gama: The Project of Dom Aires da Gama (1519) and Its Meaning," *Mare Liberum* 16 (1998): 33–55. On the Venetians and their views, see "Relazione di Gasparo Contarini," in Eugenio Albèri, ed., *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, 1st ser., vol. 2 (Florence, 1840), 49. Contarini's diagnosis is far more surprising than that of his predecessor Vicenzo Quirini in 1506, since at that time the Portuguese *Estado* was indeed fragile; see "Relazione delle Indie Orientali di Vicenzo Quirini nel 1506," in Eugenio Albèri, ed., *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato durante il secolo decimosesto*, vol. 15 (Florence, 1863), 3–19. For the circumstances of Quirini's report, see Aubin, *Le Latin et l'Astrolabe*, III, 451.

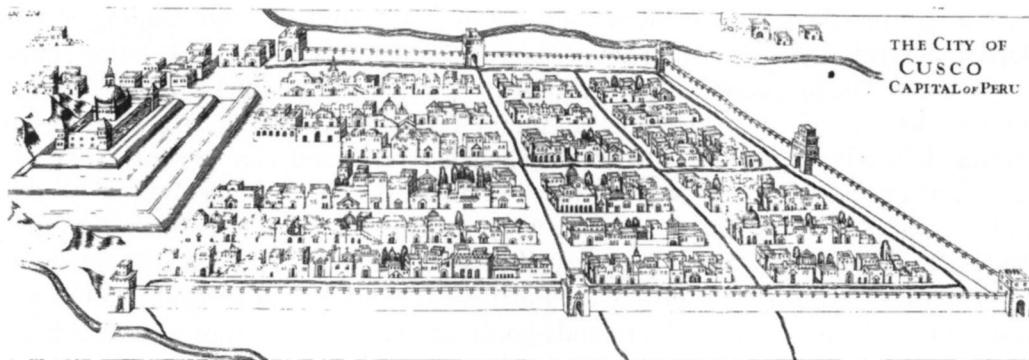


FIGURE 2: Depiction of the city of Cuzco. From Pedro de Cieza de Léon, *The Seventeen Years Travels of Peter de Cieza, through the Mighty Kingdom of Peru, and the Large Provinces of Cartagena and Popayan in South America: . . . Now First Translated from the Spanish, and Illustrated . . .* (London, 1709). Gale Group, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 204–205 (between).

far more than rehearse the old position favoring Portuguese private trade and denigrating the existence of a Crown monopoly on certain products. It is to these newer voices that we shall presently turn.²³

But first it may be worthwhile to point, if only briefly, to the significance of studies of factionalism in both Iberian empires in the sixteenth century. Historians of the Spanish Empire both in the Caribbean and on the mainland have long insisted on the continuities between factional struggles in Iberia and those in the empire. This was visible from the time of Columbus, whose main supporters were tied to him in close clientelistic relations, and whose opponents saw the opposition between themselves and the “Admiral of the Mosquitoes” in the same terms. Similar factional struggles could be found in the Mexican viceroyalty, and their most flagrant manifestations were of course in Peru, in the bloody conflicts that characterized the bizarre and seemingly extravagant actions of the extended Pizarro clan in the 1530s and 1540s. Portuguese Asia appears to have been similarly characterized by the persistence of *bandos*, which can be seen notoriously in the extended struggle between the followers of Pêro Mascarenhas and those of Lopo Vaz de Sampaio in the late 1520s, and indeed in almost every subsequent succession to the post of governor. To be sure, this view of the Iberian imperial enterprises has had its opponents in the historiography, among both neo-Marxist analysts, who see “faction” and “class” as mutually exclusive vectors of analysis, and Portuguese and Spanish nationalist historians, who tend to insist on the solidarity of all those engaged in the great and laudable “enterprise” of expansion. However, the 1530s and 1540s were an interesting period, when studies of faction can be conjugated with other explanatory factors to produce certain suggestive hypotheses about how and why shifts in policies and institutional practices came about.²⁴

²³ For North Africa, see Maria Leonor Garcia da Cruz, “As controvérsias no tempo de D. João III sobre a política portuguesa no Norte da África,” 2 pts., *Mare Liberum* 13 (1997): 123–199 and 14 (1997): 117–198. A discussion of the “pepper question” can be found in Luís Filipe F. R. Thomaz, *A questão da pimenta em meados do século XVI* (Lisbon, 1998). On Basra, see Dejanirah Potache, “The Commercial Relations between Basrah and Goa in the Sixteenth Century,” *Studia* 48 (1989): 145–162.

²⁴ Bernand and Gruzinski, *Histoire du Nouveau Monde*, 353–362, 492–496, on the question of *banderías*. For a recent reinterpretation of the Pizzarros, see Rafael Varón Gabai, *Francisco Pizarro and His*

A major problem to be resolved concerns a set of shifts in the functioning of the Portuguese overseas empire that have usually been viewed in artificial isolation from one another. The first was the attempt to penetrate deeper into the Brazilian interior through the new system of captaincies. A number of explanations have been offered for this change in connection with Brazil, which had remained a largely dormant part of the Portuguese overseas portfolio since its "discovery" in 1500; one of these would look to rivalry with the Spaniards, who were progressively creeping down into the Andes and had recently found the great silver source at Potosí, while another would insist on the growing nervousness of the Portuguese court in the face of the increased interest in the area shown by Normandy-based mariners and entrepreneurs such as Jean Ango (as manifested in various expeditions off the Brazilian coast, including those of the Verrazzano brothers), and thus pose the issue in such defensive terms.²⁵ A second shift appears in the form of a new desire to consolidate territories in western India, whether by extending the limits of the territory of Goa itself (at the expense of the Sultanate of Bijapur) or through the acquisitions in the mid-1530s in the so-called "Northern Province," in the broad region of Chaul, Bassein, and Bombay that had earlier been controlled by the Sultanate of Gujarat.²⁶ A third move, manifestly less successful than the first two, was the renewed search for sources of gold in Southeast Asia (notably the expedition of Jerónimo de Figueiredo in 1544 to the area of Mergui and farther south), as well as opportunistic schemes to attack interior temples in India and Sri Lanka with the intention of seizing their wealth. The aborted expedition against the great Tirumala-Tirupati temple in 1543 is an example of this last impulse. Now, all of these issues can be viewed in isolation from one another, as has indeed often been the case in the historiography. However, a significant clue to what lay behind these actions is the fact that almost all of them seem to be associated with a single figure, Martim Afonso de Sousa. Sousa was apparently close both to the reigning Portuguese monarch, Dom João III, and to his minister the Count of Castanheira, but he also had extensive dealings with Castile through his wife's family, and had equally served in the Italian campaigns of the Catholic monarchs.²⁷ It is thus not improbable that he knew a fair amount about the

Brothers: The Illusion of Power in Sixteenth-Century Peru, trans. Javier Flores Espinoza (Norman, Okla., 1997).

²⁵ For an overview, see Jorge Couto, *A construção do Brasil: Ameríndios, portugueses e africanos, do início do povoamento a finais de quinhentos* (Lisbon, 1995), 209–235. On rivalry with the French, see Michel Mollat du Jourdin and Jacques Habert, *Giovanni et Girolamo Verrazano, navigateurs de François Ier: Dossiers de voyages* (Paris, 1982); see also Luís de Matos, *Les Portugais en France au XVI^e siècle: Etudes et documents* (Coimbra, 1952). For the relationship between the discovery of the silver at Potosí and Portuguese projects in Brazil, see Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Visão do paraíso: Os motivos edênicos no descobrimento e colonização do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, 1959).

²⁶ Cf. *O Estado da Índia e a Província do Norte*, special issue, *Mare Liberum* 9 (1995). Particularly valuable for evaluating the early importance of this acquisition is the "Tombo do Estado da Índia" of Simão Botelho (1554), reproduced in Felner, *Subsidios para a história da Índia*. There is a rather confused discussion of this text in Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *Les finances de l'État portugais des Indes Orientales (1517–1635)* (Paris, 1982), 50–69, owing to the author's unfortunate lack of familiarity with the history of Indo-Persian fiscal institutions.

²⁷ Cf. "Brevíssima e summaria relação que fez da sua vida e obra o grande Martim Affonso de Sousa," in Luís de Albuquerque and Margarida Caeiro, eds., *Martim Afonso de Sousa: Cartas* (Lisbon, 1989). On the Southeast Asian expedition of Jerónimo de Figueiredo, see IANTT, Gavetas, 8: 8–43, "Verdadeira enforraçam das cousas da Índia," in António da Silva Rego, ed., *As gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, vol. 3 (Lisbon, 1963), 218–234. On Tirupati, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "An Eastern El-Dorado: The



Ce portrait et le doit mettre entre le feuillets 204, & 205, apres Q. iiiij.

FIGURE 3: A depiction of the combat between Tupinambás and Marcajás. The text is a byproduct of Franco-Brazilian rivalry for Brazil. From Jean de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Bresil autrement dite Amerique* (Geneva, 1578).

successes of Cortés in Mexico, and we know that by 1530, many in Portugal and the Portuguese court were aware that their own overseas enterprise was now distinctly less successful than that of the Spaniards. Whereas in 1515 most Portuguese courtiers would have answered confidently that they had gotten the better of the Catholic monarchs in the negotiations of Tordesillas (1494), the mood in Portugal was rather more somber by the time of the diplomatic dealings at Badajoz-Elvas or Saragossa in the mid- to late 1520s.²⁸

Can we legitimately speculate that the moves both in Brazil and in the *província do Norte* in India were part of a groundswell to create an *encomienda*-like institution in the Portuguese imperial context? The *aforamento* (itself deriving from the term *foro*, “land rent”) was implemented in a piecemeal fashion, then went on to have a career (sometimes under the variant name of the *prazo*) in both East Africa and Sri Lanka, but its beginnings can be clearly seen at this moment. For petty noblemen

Tirumala-Tirupati Temple-Complex in Early European Views and Ambitions, 1540–1660,” in David Shulman, ed., *Syllables of Sky: Studies in South Indian Civilization in Honour of Velcheru Narayana Rao* (Delhi, 1995), 338–390.

²⁸ This is discussed at length in several valuable papers in Avelino Teixeira da Mota, ed., *A viagem de Fernão de Magalhães e a questão das Molucas* (Lisbon, 1975).

and old soldiers who were fatigued by the endless coastal patrols and tiresome minor skirmishes that were the main official activity that the *Estado da Índia* seemed to support, this was a happy solution. In those years, such men were beginning to grumble about constantly having one foot in the water (“um pé na água”), and one of them went so far as to write to the king in the 1540s that if the wars and occasions for real glory were too few, it was not really their fault (“que as guerras sejão poucas, não havemos nisso culpa”).²⁹ Another possible contributor to this pressure was the fact that a certain number of renegade Portuguese captains had by the 1530s begun to accept grants of territory from other Asian states, including the Sultanates of the Deccan. The *aforamento* and its holder, the *foreiro*, thus lay somewhere between the far more prosperous rumor of the American *encomienda* and the *encomendero*, and the neighboring prebendal institutions of the Indo-Persian *iqtā'* and *muqāṣā*, the fruits of which men such as Sancho Pires and Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho gradually came to enjoy in the Deccan, once they had entered the pay of the sultans of Bijapur or Ahmadnagar. This was not the same lifestyle that we associate with the far more common profile of the Portuguese private trader (or *casado*) in the context of Indian Ocean commerce.³⁰

However, the true “terrestrial turn” was yet to come in the Portuguese Empire, and it would not happen until at least mid-century. Indeed, the first glimmer did not appear until after 1570, with the creation of a plantation economy in Brazil, and the deeper penetration into both Angola and the East African territories of the *rios de Cuama* (the Zambezi Valley) from the time of the Barreto-Homem expeditions. Despite the inflection provided by Martim Afonso de Sousa, the open frontier for the Portuguese in the 1540s remained largely a maritime one, and the most significant processes of the 1550s and 1560s were the move toward the Far East, the founding of the City of the Name of God of Macau, and the opening of the China-Japan trade to Portuguese entrepreneurs. The possibility of overturning large continental polities, as had been done with the Mexica or the Incas, was not considered to be within the realm of feasibility in the Asia of the 1540s or 1550s. Whatever internal difficulties the Ming polity in China faced at this point, it was usually seen as still sufficiently powerful to deal contemptuously with any Portuguese threat. Indeed, paradoxically, the only substantial polity that the Portuguese *Estado* seems to have eyed as a potential target at this time was the southern Indian state of Vijayanagara, which had in fact been one of its allies in the initial phase to about 1520. But speculation in this direction was quickly quashed in the 1540s, and even later—in the mid-1560s—when Vijayanagara was dealt an appreciable blow by its immediate northern neighbors, the Portuguese could gain no more from the process than a few additional coastal footholds and fortresses in western India. In the Asian context, the Portuguese faced a constant threat throughout the sixteenth century from resiliient indigenous polities: the Ottomans in the 1520s, the Burmese Toungoo state at mid-century, and the Mughals and Safavids as the century drew to a close.³¹

²⁹ Letter from Cristóvão da Costa to Dom João III, November 12, 1544, in Luís de Albuquerque and José Pereira da Costa, “Cartas de ‘Serviços’ da Índia (1500–1550),” *Mare Liberum* 1 (1990): 349.

³⁰ Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, “Exiles and Renegades in Early Sixteenth Century Portuguese Asia,” *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 23, no. 3 (1986): 249–262. On the case of Coutinho, see also Elaine Sanceau, ed., *Colecção de São Lourenço*, vol. 3 (Lisbon, 1983), 256–257, 399.

³¹ Jorge Manuel dos Santos Alves, *Um porto entre dois impérios: Estudos sobre Macau e as relações*

Perhaps the proponents of change were also held back by the prestigious voices that had recently spoken out against it. In a letter from Goa to the king Dom João III in 1539, the future governor of the *Estado da Índia*, Dom João de Castro (who was also an accomplished intellectual and courtier), emphasized what he defined as the essential character of the Portuguese presence in Asia:

I would like to act as a seal to stamp documents and set them out in the Torre de Tombo of Lisbon, to affirm that in no circumstances should the Portuguese enter as much as a hand-span into the interior [*pela terra dentro*] of India, because nothing keeps the peace and conserves our friendship with the kings and lords of India except that they believe and consider it most certain that we are content with the sea, and that we have no plans, nor do we imagine that we will ever come to desire their lands.³²

So far as we are aware, neither the king nor the majority of his council disagreed with Dom João de Castro's vision at the time.

Be that as it may, and whatever differences of style and substance separated them, the two Iberian empires in the mid-sixteenth century were not spaces that were truly isolated from one another. The former captain of the Moluccan fortress of Ternate António Galvão certainly knew his Spanish chroniclers, and João de Barros and Fernão Lopes de Castanheda were clearly read in both Spain and the Spanish Empire. Some significant works on Portuguese Asia were even published in Spain, including Martín Fernández de Figueroa's early account of his sojourn in Asia, and Cristóvão da Costa's later account of medicinal plants and products to be found in the East Indies.³³ There was a great deal of intermingling between the two courts, with a significant pro-Spanish group playing a role in the court of Dom João III around his Habsburg wife, as well as his younger brother, the Infante Dom Luís; while a number of prominent Portuguese, including Vasco da Gama's own son Estêvão da Gama (after an extensive career in Portuguese Asia), eventually left Portugal to gravitate to the Habsburg monarchy.³⁴ At the same time, the possibility of penetrating Asia from across the Pacific had not been abandoned by the Spaniards with Magellan, or even with the later Treaty of Saragossa. News of China appeared periodically in Peru and Mexico in the middle decades of the century, and the eventual decision to settle Manila in the 1560s set the seal on a long series of more speculative projects, beginning with Cortés's own claim to Charles V that he would go about the conquest of the Moluccas "in such a manner that Your Majesty will not have to obtain the spices through exchange, as the king of Portugal does, but can

lusochinesas (Macau, 1999). Here I return to a thesis that was first set out schematically by the Portuguese historian Luís Filipe Thomaz in a 1985 essay, reprinted as "A estrutura política e administrativa do Estado da Índia no século XVI," in Thomaz, *De Ceuta a Timor* (Lisbon, 1994), 207–243. For an earlier approach to this problem, see also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History* (London, 1993).

³² The letter appears in Luís de Albuquerque, ed., *Cartas de D. João de Castro a D. João III* (Lisbon, 1989), 12.

³³ For a facsimile edition and translation of *Conquista de las Indias de Persia e Arabia* (Salamanca, 1512), see *A Spaniard in the Portuguese Indies: The Narrative of Martín Fernández de Figueroa*, ed. James B. McKenna (Cambridge, Mass., 1967); Cristóvão da Costa, *Tractado de las drogas, y medicinas de las Indias orientales con sus plantas debuxadas al bivo por Christoual Acosta; en el qual se verifica mucho de lo que escrivio el doctor Garcia de Orta* (Burgos, 1578).

³⁴ Aude Viaud, ed., *Correspondance d'un ambassadeur Castillan au Portugal dans les années 1530: Lope Hurtado de Mendoza* (Paris, 2001).

instead possess them for himself.” It would be an error to think that, having acquired massive territories, the agents of the Spanish monarchy abandoned all thoughts of profit from long-distance trade. Thus even if it was generally admitted by 1550 that the Spanish overseas empire dwarfed its Portuguese counterpart, the latter still possessed some attributes and possibilities that the former coveted. Most notable of these was the access to Asian markets and Asian products, a dream that was to continue to drive the other European rivals of the Iberians in the late sixteenth century, including the French, the English, and the Dutch.³⁵

THUS THE UNION OF THE CROWNS DID NOT NECESSARILY MARK a major discontinuity in terms of relations between the two Iberian empires. By the 1550s, the “Spanish example” was always there before the Portuguese Crown, even if only as an unattainable dream and possibility. When institutional reform was suggested in the functioning of the Portuguese Empire, the Spanish counterexample was always available and frequently cited. We see this most clearly in the relationship between the Portuguese *Casa da Índia* and the Spanish *Casa de Contratación*, which were initially conceived as two different strategies for managing transcontinental trade. While the Spanish Crown retained for itself a supervisory role, and also needed to keep the trade across the Atlantic alive for strategic reasons—to supply garrisons and settlements, and to send officials, missionaries, and others across the ocean—its view of trade itself was one in which the monarchy would not participate fully. In contrast, although there had been periodic activity by private entities on the Cape Route from its very inception (notably by Florentine ship owners and entrepreneurs), the ideal situation for the Portuguese Crown was one in which private participation would take place in a context dominated financially and otherwise by the *Fazenda Real* (Royal Treasury).³⁶ To be sure, certain important nobles and officials would be allowed liberty chests (*agasalhados*); equally, returning fleets from Asia would carry freight goods both for some passengers and for other traders. But the crucial trade, in pepper and spices, would remain with the *Casa da Índia*, itself dominated by a factor (*feitor*) named by the Crown. Asian goods would then be distributed to other factories in Europe (such as Antwerp) from the *Casa*, with the intention that direct profits would flow from there to the Portuguese Crown.³⁷

³⁵ For Cortés’s claims, see Hernán Cortés, *Cartas y documentos*, ed. M. Hernández Sánchez-Barba (Mexico, 1963), 320.

³⁶ On the *Casa da Índia*, see Francisco Paulo Mendes da Luz, *Regimento da Casa da Índia: Manuscrito do século XVII existente no Arquivo Geral de Simancas*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon, 1992). The contrast between the two trading systems forms the implicit background to the chapter titled “Da origem das viagens da Índia, e do modo per que correrom nos tempos passados, e correm no presente,” fols. 76–82, in the anonymous text from about 1582, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Ms. 3217, titled “Livro das Cidades, e Fortalezas, que a Coroa de Portugal tem nas partes da Índia, e das capitanias, e mais cargos que nellas há, e da importânciam delles,” published in a facsimile edition by Francisco Paulo Mendes da Luz in *Studia*, no. 6 (1960). The text is dedicated to Philip II and was intended to inform him about his new Asian possessions, and the trade networks there. It is in some ways comparable to, but in others distinct from, the slightly later text (dating to about 1607) of Luiz de Figueiredo Falcão, *Livro em que se contém toda a fazenda e real patrimonio dos reinos de Portugal, Índia, e ilhas adjacentes e outras particularidades, ordenado por Luiz de Figueiredo Falcão, secretario de el-Rei Filipe II, copiado fielmente do manuscrito original e impresso por ordem do governo de Sua Magestade* (Lisbon, 1859).

³⁷ C. R. Boxer, *From Lisbon to Goa, 1500–1750: Studies in Portuguese Maritime Enterprise* (London,

By the late 1560s, however, at roughly the time when the Portuguese monarch Dom Sebastião assumed direct rule upon reaching majority, significant changes were wrought in this system. A system closer to the Spanish contract (*asiento*) arrangement was put into place, with regard to both trade and shipping. Later, in the 1570s, a formal contract arrangement was proposed to various consortia, which the Danish historian Niels Steensgaard rather extravagantly used to indict the entire Portuguese experience on the Cape Route as a mere "redistributive enterprise," despite his admission that "until 1570, it was the rule that the Crown's own people looked after the Asian side of the pepper trade."³⁸ This new arrangement brought in groups such as the Fuggers and Welsers from South Germany, who had long dealt with Spanish America, as well as Italian entrepreneurs such as the Milanese Giovan Battista Rovellasco. Under the aegis of this arrangement, the contractors sent powerful agents to Asia to organize trade on the Cape Route, including such prominent men as the Augsburger Ferdinand Cron and the Florentine intellectual Filippo Sasseti.³⁹

Here, too, we observe a situation in which, from the initial existence of two distinct models, the Portuguese seem eventually to have gravitated to the model of the *Casa de Contratación*. Later attacks on their ships, notably by the Dutch, forced them to return in the early seventeenth century to direct Crown control over trade on the Cape Route. But the change, such as it was, began before the Union of the Crowns. Indeed, the brief period of direct rule by Dom Sebastião was significant for a number of changes or attempted changes in institutional management in the Portuguese Empire.⁴⁰ The period marked the beginnings of the major phase of sugar-based economic expansion in Brazil, and the growing and concomitant trade there in slaves from West Africa. It was also notable for a proposal to subdivide Portuguese Asia into three sections, with separate governors: the first, a maritime enterprise centered

1984); Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *Os descobrimentos e a economia mundial*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Lisbon, 1982), 3: 43–79. This is not to deny the involvement of Italian (and especially Florentine) merchants in the Cape Route from the very outset, for which see Marco Spallanzani, *Mercanti Fiorentini nell'Asia portoghese (1500–1525)* (Florence, 1997).

³⁸ Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (Chicago, 1974), 95–103. Steensgaard's position was discussed in Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Luís Filipe Thomaz, "Evolution of Empire: The Portuguese in the Indian Ocean during the Sixteenth Century," in James D. Tracy, ed., *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires: State Power and World Trade, 1350–1750* (New York, 1991), 298–331.

³⁹ On Cron, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "An Augsburger in Ásia Portuguesa: Further Light on the Commercial World of Ferdinand Cron, 1587–1624," in R. Ptak and D. Rothermund, eds., *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, c. 1400–1750* (Stuttgart, 1991), 401–425; Hermann Kellenbenz, "From Melchior Manlich to Ferdinand Cron: German Levantine and Oriental Trade Relations (Second Half of XVIth and Beginning of XVIIth C.)," *Journal of European Economic History* 19, no. 3 (1990): 611–622. On Sasseti, see Filippo Sasseti, *Lettere da vari paesi, 1570–1588*, ed. Vanni Bramanti (Milan, 1970); Jean Boutin, "Les habits de l'Indiáto": Filippo Sasseti entre Cochim et Goa (1583–1588)," in *Découvertes et explorateurs: Actes du colloque international, Bordeaux, 12–14 juin 1992* (Paris, 1994), 157–166. On the Fuggers, see the classic work by Hermann Kellenbenz, *Los Fugger en España y Portugal hasta 1560*, trans. Manuel Prieto Vilas (Salamanca, 2000).

⁴⁰ Unfortunately, the 1570s remain understudied as a period of transition. For the period when D. Sebastião was a minor, see the detailed but somewhat problematic study by Maria do Rosário de Sampaio Themudo Barata de Azevedo Cruz, *As regências na menoridade de D. Sebastião: Elementos para uma história estrutural*, 2 vols. (Lisbon, 1992). Also helpful to an extent is Luís Filipe Thomaz, "A crise de 1565–1575 na história do Estado da Índia," *Mare Liberum* 9 (1995): 481–520. A significant document is the instructions given by D. Sebastião to the departing viceroy, Conde de Atouguia, October 1577, in IANTT, *Colecção São Vicente*, vol. 12, 9–11. For a valuable overview, see also Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, *D. Sebastião* (Lisbon, 2006).

on Melaka; the second, a mixed operation centered on India and Sri Lanka, but also involving trade on the Cape Route; and the third, a new frontier to be opened up from Mozambique for the penetration of East Africa. In this view, the first of these zones would approximate the Caribbean space of the Spaniards, while the other two would correspond respectively perhaps to Nueva España and Tierra Firme. In view of the renewed attempts at colonizing territory in northern Sri Lanka at the time of the viceroyalty of Dom Constantino de Bragança in about 1560, we can arguably see an attempt here to revive the notions of Martim Afonso de Sousa by other means.⁴¹

At the same time, in the decade preceding the Union of the Crowns, there had also been an attempt to redefine (or even efface) the boundaries between the two overseas empires, this one from the Spanish end. This was the move across the Pacific, undertaken during the viceroyalty of Juan de Velasco in Mexico, to test the treaty boundaries between the two empires, and to attempt to open up the space of trade with East Asia. The Spanish fleet was led by Miguel López de Legazpi in 1564–1565; Legazpi would later be named the first Spanish governor of the Philippines, having eventually managed—after an initial lack of success in first Cebu and then Panay—to found the Spanish city of Manila on the site of an earlier Muslim settlement that had been ruled by a certain Raja Sulaiman. The precise nature of Spanish motives in this enterprise remains open to debate. That the Philippines were regarded as merely a space for further Spanish territorial expansion does not seem to be a particularly credible argument, even if the territories and populations of the archipelago were not exactly negligible. Certainly, some of the institutional apparatus that had been “perfected” as a result of the Mexican and Peruvian experiences came in handy in the years from 1570 to 1620, as Spanish rule was consolidated. *Encomiendas* were thus set up on the so-called *sawah* lands in Luzon and Panay; as early as 1591, there were about 270 of them, with some 668,000 Filipinos resident under Spanish tutelage. But despite the seemingly accidental character of the process by which Manila emerged as a major center of Chinese trade, there can be little doubt that the purpose of the operation was principally to draw trade away from Portuguese-controlled networks, a point to which the veteran Pacific traveler Andrés de Urdaneta had insistently drawn the attention of Charles V as early as 1537. Major troubles soon arose in the spice-rich islands of the Moluccas after the Spaniards entered the zone. The Portuguese captains there undoubtedly saw the Spanish presence as a challenge to their own spice trade, and the fact that some of the sovereigns of the area increasingly resisted the Portuguese yoke with regard to the spice monopoly also lends itself to such speculation concerning the true intent of the Habsburgs in patronizing such a venture.⁴²

⁴¹ See, for example, the long letter from the viceroy reproduced in António dos Santos Pereira, “A Índia a preto e branco: Uma carta oportuna, escrita em Cochim, por D. Constantino de Bragança, à Rainha Dona Catarina,” *Anais de História de Além-Mar* 4 (2003): 449–484. This important document can be fruitfully compared to the slightly later letters in José Wicki, “Duas cartas oficiais de Vice-reis da Índia, escritas em 1561 e 1564,” *Studia* 3 (1959): 36–89. For a discussion of the changing context, see the discussion in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Improvising Empire: Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal, 1500–1700* (Delhi, 1990), 180–182.

⁴² Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, “A viagem de Gonçalo Pereira Marramaque do Minho às Molucas—ou os itinerários da fidalgua portuguesa no Oriente,” *Studia* 49 (1989): 315–340. Urdaneta is cited in Thomaz, *A questão da pimenta*, 2. For the Philippines, the classic work remains John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565–1700* (Madison, Wis., 1959);

It thus appears that past Spanish historians have protested a little too vigorously about Habsburg desires to maintain a firewall between the two empires in the aftermath of the Union of the Crowns in 1580–1581. To be sure, the Manila galleon trade was based on a deft fiction, because the Spaniards rarely crossed the imagined anti-meridian of Tordesillas-Saragossa to trade directly in China. But the brute reality was clear to see. Spanish trade in Manila was meant to give Spanish America access to Asian markets, and it was only a matter of time before Manila would become linked not only to China but also to Melaka, and then through Melaka to India. If New Christian traders of Portuguese origin were penetrating the marketplaces of both Mexico and Peru by the late sixteenth century, the line between the empires was also being blurred by far more official initiatives elsewhere. A typical example is provided by Cambodia, where the Spanish government in Manila sent a speculative expedition (the so-called *jornada de Camboya*) in the 1590s, in the hope of making inroads into the Mekong Valley. No one in Manila could have had many illusions about the position of Cambodia in the geography of the Treaty of Tordesillas. Yet in 1603, a soldier by the name of Pedro Sevil outlined the logic of the Cambodian project to Philip III, and having presented a moral reason (the misdeeds of local rulers) and an economic one (products such as “gold, silver, jewels, lead, tin, copper, silk, cotton, incense”), he added a third reason: “that one can thus occupy, and feed all the people who are lost, unoccupied and idle, from Mexico, from Peru, and from the Philippines.” Southeast Asia was thus also the new frontier for the lumpen would-be *conquistadores* of the early seventeenth century, one where the “tail wagged the dog” in a number of significant ways.⁴³

But other, rather more astonishing ideas and projects left traces in the archives. Consider a letter written in 1610 by Philip III to his viceroy in Goa, Rui Lourenço de Távora:

I have information that the king of Bisnagá [Vijayanagara] is very old, and on his death dissensions are foreseen, as there are three pretenders to the throne; and that in view of this, it should secretly be ordered that upon his death, the *Estado [da Índia]* should expand into the lands around the city of São Thomé [Mylapore] by a measure of three or four leagues, which can be accomplished with a few more people than are already there, for those who live there [the natives] are weak and unused to war, and besides, they are bound to be happy on being free from the tyrannies of said king and his officials; and once it has been taken and parceled out [*depois de senhoreada e repartida*], there will be no disturbances, and [then] without much additional capital I could become lord of all the Concão [Konkan], and my treasury will have a greater revenue than in all the *Estado da Índia*, without having to spend more than 20,000 *pardaos* each year to protect what has been acquired. And on the death of said king, one can equally hope to lay one’s hands on the treasure of the temple [*pagode*] of

a more recent work focusing on *encomiendas* is Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera, *Encomienda, tributo y trabajo en Filipinas, 1570–1608* (Madrid, 1995). See also John Villiers, “Portuguese Malacca and Spanish Manila: Two Concepts of Empire,” in Roderich Ptak, ed., *Portuguese Asia: Aspects in History and Economic History* (Wiesbaden, 1987), 37–57.

⁴³ These themes were dealt with earlier in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “The Tail Wags the Dog; or, Some Aspects of the External Relations of the *Estado da Índia*, 1570–1600,” *Moyen Orient et Océan Indien* 5 (1988): 31–60. See also Antoine Cabaton, “Le mémorial de Pedro Sevil à Philippe III sur la conquête de l’Indochine (1603),” *Bulletin de la Commission archéologique de l’Indochine*, 1914–1916, 1–102 (quotation from 17–18); and Bernard Philippe Groslier and C. R. Boxer, *Angkor et le Cambodge au XVI^e siècle d’après les sources portugaises et espagnoles* (Paris, 1958).

Tripiti [Tirupati], which lies six leagues from São Thomé, which is said to be of the greatest importance, since people go there from all the parts of the Orient, without what goes in [as treasure] ever coming out again.⁴⁴

In part a return to the old plan of Martim Afonso de Sousa in the 1540s, we have here a vision that is radically different from the warnings issued in the 1530s by Dom João de Castro. It is a vision in which, besides what was being put into place in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, or Burma, even peninsular India could conceivably become the target of an expansionary operation, the purpose of which would be to seize the treasures of major Hindu temples, but also to acquire territories that could be divided up into *prazos* and *aforamentos*, if not *encomiendas*.

Expressions of both resentment and resistance to the project of building a single integrated Iberian empire undoubtedly continued to be heard, in particular among the high officials of the Portuguese Empire. A case in point is an episode in the 1620s in which the viceroy of the Portuguese Indies, Dom Francisco da Gama, made it a point to harass the Habsburg ambassador to Safavid Iran, Don García de Silva y Figueroa.⁴⁵ Once the Dutch and English appeared on the Asian scene in the 1590s, there were periodic attempts to mount a joint Iberian front against them, whether in the context of Asia or the Americas, but there was great resistance to this exercise, particularly among Portuguese officials. A sarcastic Dutch observer in the 1620s claimed that the Habsburg monarch treated possessions in the Spanish Empire as his “lawful wife, of whom he is exceedingly jealous,” and those in the Portuguese Empire as merely his “concubine,” but this is a remark that lends itself to more than one interpretation.⁴⁶ For the possessions in the Atlantic, whether Spanish or Portuguese, were globally far easier to defend than were those in Asia. To some extent, the problem was exacerbated by the rather dispersed character of the Asian possessions, itself a consequence of the limited extent of territoriality there. Various territorial adventures after 1580 had yielded rather limited results for the Portuguese. Aside from some brief success in lower Burma in the early 1600s, the most significant operations appear to have been in East Africa and Sri Lanka, with the latter, in particular, being a significant if neglected case.⁴⁷

The issue of the concrete dealings between Spaniards and Portuguese in Asia requires much more research than has been devoted to it thus far. Besides the work of the late Charles Boxer, there have been few attempts to speculate on this question

⁴⁴ IANTT, Documentos Remetidos da Índia, Livro 3, fol. 49, Philip III to Rui Lourenço, February 21, 1610, in Raymundo António de Bulhão Pato, ed., *Documentos remetidos da Índia, ou Livros das monções*, vol. 1 (Lisbon, 1880), 359. The letter bears a mark at its end of “O Conde Almirante,” suggesting that it was drafted in part by the former viceroy Dom Francisco da Gama, son-in-law of Rui Lourenço de Távora.

⁴⁵ See the ambassador’s embittered comments in Don García de Silva y Figueroa, *Comentarios de la embajada que de parte del rey de España Don Felipe III hizo al rey Xa Abas de Persia*, ed. Manuel Serrano y Sanz, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1904–1905). For an account of the larger context of his embassy, see Luis Gil, “La Unión Ibérica y Persia: Contactos diplomáticos y choque de intereses,” in Ventura, *A União ibérica e o mundo atlântico*, 309–340.

⁴⁶ As cited in John Lynch, *Spain under the Habsburgs*, vol. 2: *Spain and America, 1598–1700* (Oxford, 1981), 65.

⁴⁷ On the case of Burma, see Maria Ana Marques Guedes, *Interferência e integração dos Portugueses na Birmânia, c. 1580–1630* (Lisbon, 1994); on East Africa, see Newitt, *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion*, 152–154.

in a schematic manner in the past two decades.⁴⁸ This is in turn related to the discovery and publication of major sources in Castilian regarding the period, such as the account of the Flemish trader from Bruges, Jacques de Coutre. In the case of Hormuz, in the Persian Gulf, the correspondence of Dom Luís da Gama, who was centrally involved in the whole episode, as well as the earlier loss of Kamaran (or Gombroon), must be analyzed further for any credible picture to emerge. Many of the most important “old India hands” who navigated between Lisbon and Madrid deserve further mention, in particular figures such as Ferdinand Cron, to whom Boxer himself devoted a rather significant study. As an abundance of research on Southeast Asia shows, there is much to be gained from reading Spanish and Portuguese materials for the period around 1600 jointly rather than separately.⁴⁹

Among the myriad subjects of significance that merit greater attention is Sri Lanka. It is increasingly clear—thanks in part, ironically enough, to archival findings in Spain—that Portuguese involvement in that island took on a substantially different hue in the years from 1590 to about 1630. Although the Portuguese had dealings with Sri Lanka from the very early years of the sixteenth century, their presence there remained largely coastally oriented until the middle decades of the century. From about 1550, however, there was far greater interest in penetrating the Jaffna area, and after the 1560s, civil wars in the former Kotte kingdom provided an occasion for deep inroads.⁵⁰ However, it was effectively not until the 1580s that the *Estado da Índia* began to seize villages in the coastal lowlands, which were then distributed to so-called *fronteiros*, fiscal entrepreneurs who used them to control labor on a *covée* system while also extracting cinnamon as tribute. This situation was akin to the process of *aforamento* in the Northern Province, and continued in fits and starts until the 1630s, when the Portuguese gradually lost ground because of the alliance between the kings of Kandy and the Dutch East India Company.⁵¹ The complex nature of fiscal penetration in this brief period is increasingly clear, however,

⁴⁸ See Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700*; Charles R. Boxer, *Portuguese Conquest and Commerce in Southern Asia, 1500–1750* (London, 1985). The disappointingly slight, and rather polemical, work by Rafael Valladares, *Castilla y Portugal en Asia (1580–1680): Declive imperial y adaptación* (Leuven, 2001), does not live up to its title; see the penetrating review essay of this work by Manuel Lobato in the *Bulletin of Portuguese Japanese Studies* 4 (2002): 143–153.

⁴⁹ Among significant recent works that should be cited are Jorge M. dos Santos Alves and Pierre-Yves Manguin, *O 'Roteiro das cousas do Achém' de D. João Ribeiro Gaio: Um olhar português sobre o norte de Sumatra em finais do século XVI* (Lisbon, 1997); Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto, *Portugueses e malaios: Malaca e os Sultanatos de Johor e Achém, 1575–1619* (Lisbon, 1997); and Manuel Lobato, *Política e comércio dos portugueses na insulândia: Malaca e as Molucas de 1575 a 1605* (Macau, 1999). For Coutre's account, see Jacques de Coutre, *Andanzas asiáticas*, ed. Eddy Stols, B. Teensma, and J. Verberckmoes (Madrid, 1991); the letters of Dom Luís da Gama can be found in IANTT, Convento da Graça, Tomo II-E [Caixa 6], 161–173; Convento da Graça, Tomo III [Caixa 2], 475–478. On Cron, see Charles R. Boxer, “Uma raridade bibliográfica sobre Fernão Cron,” *Boletim Internacional de Bibliografia Luso-Brasileira* 12, no. 2 (1971): 323–364.

⁵⁰ See the recent work by Zoltán Biedermann, “A aprendizagem de Ceilão: A presença portuguesa no Sri Lanka entre talassocracia e planos de conquista territorial, 1506–1598” (Ph.D. thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa/École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2006). For the first half of the sixteenth century, see Jorge Manuel Flores, *Os portugueses e o Mar de Ceilão, 1498–1543: Trato, Diplomacia e Guerra* (Lisbon, 1998). For a recent collection of essays that reconsiders the question, see also Jorge Flores, ed., *Re-exploring the Links: History and Constructed Histories between Portugal and Sri Lanka* (Wiesbaden, 2007).

⁵¹ On this transition, see Chandra R. De Silva, *The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617–1638* (Colombo, 1972); George D. Winius, *The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon: Transition to Dutch Rule* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971); and K. W. Goonewardena, *The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1638–1658* (Amsterdam, 1958).



FIGURE 4: Depiction of a Portuguese of wealth and status (*die van affcomste en vermoegen zijn*) being carried in a litter in Goa. From Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, *Itinerario: Voyage ofte schipvaert [. . .] naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien [. . .]* (Amsterdam, 1596).

as is documented both in the form of cartography and in the so-called *tombos*, fiscal records detailing holdings in a spread of villages.⁵² These *tombos*, which were eventually aggregated into complex accounts incorporating maps and other visual materials, also appeared in much the same period elsewhere, notably in areas such as Daman, Diu, and Chaul. Earlier examples of the genre, on the other hand, are few and far between, as with the broad-ranging text produced in about 1554 by Simão Botelho. Even budget documents (*orçamentos*) appeared with far greater frequency after 1580, suggesting the gradual emergence under the Habsburgs of a fiscal regime with distinctive features.⁵³

It is thus possible to argue for the emergence of a new equilibrium between trade, parasitism, and land-based fiscality in the Portuguese Empire in the early years of the seventeenth century, not merely in Brazil—where the turn is clear enough—or Angola, but even in Asia.⁵⁴ The Crown continued to divest itself of its trading func-

⁵² Mathilde Auguste Hedwig Fitzler, *Os tombos de Ceilão da Secção ultramarina da Biblioteca nacional* (Lisbon, 1927); Tikiri Abeyasinghe, *Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594–1612* (Colombo, 1966); see also, most recently, Jorge Manuel Flores, *Os olhos do Rei: Desenhos e descrições portuguesas da Ilha de Ceilão (1624, 1638)* (Lisbon, 2001).

⁵³ For an overview, see Artur Teodoro de Matos, *O Estado da Índia nos anos de 1581–1588, estrutura administrativa e económica: Alguns elementos para o seu estudo* (Ponta Delgada, 1983). For specific texts, see Artur Teodoro de Matos, ed., *O Tombo de Diu, 1592* (Lisbon, 1999) and *O Tombo de Chaul, 1591–1592* (Lisbon, 2000); also Lívia Baptista de Souza Ferrão, “Tenants, Rents and Revenues from Daman in the Late 16th Century,” *Mare Liberum* 9 (1995): 139–148, and Panduronga S. S. Pissurlencar, ed., *Tombo da ilha de Goa e das terras de Salcete e Bardès* (Bastorá, 1952).

⁵⁴ This is not to suggest that the donatary captaincy did not have some institutional roots in Portugal

tions within Asia, and periodically played with the idea of auction-based fiscality. The revenues of customhouses such as those at Goa, Melaka, and Hormuz were frequently being rented out, as is prominently illustrated by the great “General Auction” (*venda geral*) orchestrated by the viceroy Dom Jerónimo de Azevedo in 1614.⁵⁵ Again, this may well reflect the emergence of a set of relatively uniform practices across the Iberian world, and some of the actors were certainly the same (or at least belonged to similar ethnic or familial affiliations), whether one was in Mexico, Lima, Salvador, Luanda, or Goa. The valuable work of James Boyajian, and more recently Nathan Wachtel and Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, on the “micro-histories” of New Christian entrepreneurial families brings this out clearly enough.⁵⁶

And yet, to create a single, homogeneous empire out of the two that existed in 1580 eventually proved to be beyond the means of three Philips and their ministers. The most serious attempt in this direction was made by the Count-Duke of Olivares around 1630, and it involved a coming together of the armed forces of the two empires (which in Asia implied the alliance of the Manila government with that of Melaka and Goa against the Dutch in Taiwan and Jakarta); but in Olivares’s more extensive vision, it also involved an institutional *rapprochement* to integrate the two trading systems into one. Although a number of persons, ranging from Duarte Gomes Solis to Ferdinand Cron and Anthony Sherley, seem to have lent cautious support to the latter idea, neither the military nor the commercial unification eventually proved feasible. To what extent these plans of Olivares contributed to the Portuguese revolt and the Restoration of 1640 remains a subject of some debate; but there can be no doubt that they played some part, or at least provided a focus to existing forms of discontent. To those who argued that the two empires were far too integrated by 1620, and this was the real reason for the decline of Portuguese Asia—namely that Portuguese resources were being used to subsidize Spanish ambitions—Olivares might well have retorted that if Spaniards and Portuguese had only been better coordinated, they could have defended themselves better, not only against the Dutch and English, but against other rivals such as Aceh, the Safavids, or even the increasingly belligerent Tokugawa regime in Japan.⁵⁷

But what of the situation beyond the Asian theater—farther west, in West Africa, Brazil, or Spanish America? It has been persuasively argued by some historians of the Iberian Atlantic that relations between the Portuguese and Spanish parts of the

itself; on this question, see Harold B. Johnson, “The Donatary Captaincy in Perspective: Portuguese Backgrounds to the Settlement of Brazil,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 52, no. 2 (1972): 203–214. On the Portuguese penetration of Angola, see Ilídio do Amaral, *O consulado de Paulo Dias de Novais: Angola no último quartel do século XVI e primeiro do século XVII* (Lisbon, 2000). Paulo Dias received his donatary grant from Dom Sebastião in September 1571.

⁵⁵ Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Fundo Geral, Codex 1540, 89r–91v, “Relação dos cargos do Estado da Índia que estão vendidos por ordem de Sua Magestade para as despesas do Estado”; António Bo-carro, *Década 13 da história da Índia*, ed. Rodrigo José de Lima Felner, 2 vols. (Lisbon, 1876), 1: 362–366.

⁵⁶ See James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580–1640* (Baltimore, Md., 1993); Nathan Wachtel, *La foi du souvenir: Labyrinthes marranes* (Paris, 2001); Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea: Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492–1640* (New York, 2007).

⁵⁷ Duarte Gomes Solis, *Alegación en favor de la Compañía de la India Oriental*, ed. Moses B. Amzalak (Lisbon, 1955); also Solís, *Discursos sobre los comercios de las dos Indias, donde se tratan materias importantes de estado y guerra* (Madrid, 1622). The matter is summed up magisterially in John H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (London, 1986), esp. 143–146.

Habsburg overseas dominions should be divided into two broad phases, with the early 1620s used as a point of demarcation. Prior to this period, Portuguese traders and entrepreneurs (often New Christian converts from Judaism) successfully penetrated Spanish dominions, and “the records of the Spanish archives point to a steady rise in the number of Portuguese active in the [Spanish] Indies, an increase that began in the early sixteenth century and peaked in the 1630s.”⁵⁸ In other words, here, too, the year 1580 was not necessarily a starting point for a process, although numbers seem to have swelled further thereafter, leading to increasing resentment on the part of Spanish observers, one of whom (the official Pedro de Avedaño Villela) would claim in 1608 that Portuguese penetration of Spanish America was “akin to the squares on a game-board, whose multiplication makes the last square worth twice as much as all the previous ones.” In the next decade, Spanish observers in Lima would assert that Portuguese traders had all but established a monopoly in the vice-royalty of Peru, and similarly extravagant claims were made regarding the extent of contraband trade all the way from Mexico to the Río de la Plata. Even if one takes into account the element of exaggeration, it has been suggested by Stuart Schwartz that “the first [period] from 1580 to 1622 is characterized by considerable Portuguese profit as a result of the union.”⁵⁹ The distribution of this profit sometimes had a more complex logic, as in West Africa, where an alliance arose between Spanish slave traders and local Portuguese settlers in autonomous communities (the so-called *lançados*) to circumvent official Portuguese fiscal claims on the Upper Guinea coast and the Cape Verde Islands. Here, profits were shared, and “penetration” was at least partly in the opposite sense, with the complaints, too, stemming from Portuguese rather than Spanish administrators.⁶⁰

From the 1620s, however, a reversal can be seen in the nature of relations in Iberian America. It was linked to stronger Spanish attempts to control Portuguese contraband, which included impeding the flow of silver into Brazil from the Spanish possessions. The creation of the Dutch West India Company (WIC) in June 1621, at the end of the Twelve Years’ Truce between Spain and the Low Countries, also had a severe impact on the Brazilian sugar trade, as a result of raids by the Dutch on Iberian shipping, culminating in their attack on Salvador de Bahia in 1624.⁶¹ In this context, the attachment of the Portuguese possessions to the Spanish Crown suddenly appeared to be a major liability, with the governors of Portugal even asking the Habsburg Crown somewhat sarcastically in 1626 “if the utility of closing commerce to enemies is worth more than the lack of commerce.”⁶² The accumulating momentum of these tensions would not even be resolved by the eventual recovery

⁵⁸ Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea*, 44. The quotation from Villela below comes from the same work, although I have corrected it slightly.

⁵⁹ Schwartz, “Luso-Spanish Relations in Hapsburg Brazil,” 43. For a summary of much available information on contraband and related questions, see Alice P. Canabrava, *O comércio português no Rio da Prata (1580–1640)* (Belo Horizonte, 1984), and Gonçalo de Reparaz, *Os Portugueses no vice-reinado do Peru (séculos XVI e XVII)* (Lisbon, 1976).

⁶⁰ Walter Rodney, “Portuguese Attempts at Monopoly on the Upper Guinea Coast, 1580–1650,” *Journal of African History* 6, no. 3 (1965): 307–322.

⁶¹ For a general account, see Henk den Heijer, *De geschiedenis van de WIC* (Zutphen, 1994); also the detailed monograph focused on slave trading by both the WIC and other Dutch actors by Johannes M. Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600–1815* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁶² Cited in Schwartz, “Luso-Spanish Relations in Hapsburg Brazil,” 48.

of Salvador; rather, Habsburg demands that the Portuguese possessions pay for their own costs of war against the Dutch would only be exacerbated by clumsy attempts in the 1630s to encourage the immigration of Italians and other non-Portuguese to Brazil, in the hope that they would prove more loyal to Philip IV than the Portuguese settlers there. The downward spiral of disengagement in the Iberian Atlantic began in the late 1620s; it would culminate after 1640 in a “panic in the Indies,” on account of a supposed Portuguese (and especially New Christian) threat to the Spanish possessions.⁶³

Thus the Asian and Atlantic experiences of the Iberian empires, while not entirely separate and subject to interesting experiments in cross-fertilization, cannot be treated entirely in similar terms. In the former case, the existence of dense and resilient populations and states with preexistent fiscal practices based on taxation rather than the exploitation of unfree labor meant that even when the Portuguese Empire took a “terrestrial turn,” it was still somewhat distinct from what obtained in Brazil and Spanish America. Nothing resembling a slave-based plantation system emerged in the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*, or indeed in the wider Indian Ocean, until the later French settlement in Mauritius in the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ Further, in those cases in Portuguese Asia where the territorial bases were enlarged, as in the Zambezi Valley in East Africa, a compromise had to be struck with local institutions and practices, so that an institution such as the *prazo* carried with it significant internal variations between western India and Mozambique.⁶⁵ That said, however, it is nevertheless important to dissolve the overly sharp distinction that has been drawn between a maritime and trade-based Portuguese Empire and a territorial and tribute-based Spanish Empire. If the case of Brazil (and to some extent Portuguese West Africa) helps us question this neat distinction, we can legitimately ask whether each of these empires was part not just of a “composite monarchy,” but also of a composite politico-fiscal system in a number of other respects.

The conception of a “composite empire” was therefore not an anomalous one, but rather one that the circumstances of the Union of the Crowns in all likelihood imposed. We can discern this in the musings of a number of contemporary writers, including the Englishman Anthony Sherley, who wrote in the 1620s of how the Philips held the “political balance of the entire world (*peso político de todo el mundo*).”⁶⁶

⁶³ Stuart B. Schwartz, “Panic in the Indies: The Portuguese Threat to the Spanish Empire,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 2, nos. 1–2 (1993): 165–187.

⁶⁴ See Megan Vaughan, *Creating the Creole Island: Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Mauritius* (Durham, N.C., 2005). Slavery did, of course, exist in other contexts in the Indian Ocean world of the period; cf. Anthony Reid and Jennifer Brewster, eds., *Slavery, Bondage and Dependence in Southeast Asia* (St. Lucia, 1983); Indrani Chatterjee and Richard M. Eaton, eds., *Slavery and South Asian History* (Bloomington, Ind., 2006).

⁶⁵ The work of Allen F. Isaacman, *Mozambique: The Africanization of a European Institution—The Zambesi Prazos, 1750–1902* (Madison, Wis., 1972), is unfortunately rather sketchy for the period, and also unconvincing in its use of Portuguese sources. More helpful is Eugénia Rodrigues, “Mercadores, conquistadores e foreiros: A construção dos prazos dos Rios de Cuama na primeira metade do século XVII,” in Jorge Flores and Joaquim Romero Magalhães, eds., *Vasco da Gama: Homens, Viagens e Culturas*, 2 vols. (Lisbon, 2001), 1: 443–480.

⁶⁶ As Elliott writes, “the Count-Duke [of Olivares] was probably the first ruler of the Spanish Monarchy to think in genuinely global terms, and it is no accident that he should have felt at home with that bold adventurer Anthony Sherley, who would spin the globe with confidence and offer to reveal the secret strengths and weaknesses of every kingdom and sultanate between the Danish Sound and the coast of Malabar”; *The Count-Duke of Olivares*, 681. I hope to deal with the fascinating and illuminating career



FIGURE 5: Propaganda work discussing the war that followed on the Portuguese Restoration of 1640. Title page of António Pais Viegas, *Relaçam dos gloriosos sucessos, que as armas de . . . D. Joam IV . . . tiverão nas terras de Castella, neste anno de 1644, até a memoravel victoria de Montijo* (Lisbon, 1644).

Further, it can be argued that even before 1580, key processes had been set in motion that made the entanglement of the Spanish and Portuguese empires a fact that statesmen as well as merchants, and even chroniclers, had to take into account. This is not to argue that the two empires ever became entirely indistinguishable, or that the lines of administrative action in the two were wholly enmeshed.⁶⁷ Yet the extent of the entanglement can only become clearer as we multiply the objects of our study and move from primarily political and commercial considerations to more cultural and social aspects of this inter-imperial marriage. The many difficulties that were faced after the Portuguese Restoration of 1640, when the House of Braganza seized power over Portugal and its empire, in separating the two spheres and reestablishing—as it were—the Treaty of Tordesillas are a clear reflection of this.⁶⁸ Disentangling a congeries of assets and projects that had become thoroughly entwined proved to be no simple matter. Often enough, it is in the divorce proceedings that one learns of the true nature of the marriage.

of Sherley elsewhere; see Xavier-A. Flores, *Le "Peso político de todo el mundo" d'Anthony Sherley, ou un aventurier anglais au service de l'Espagne* (Paris, 1963).

⁶⁷ For a valuable account of the functioning of a major Portuguese administrative institution under the Habsburgs, see Francisco Paulo Mendes da Luz, *O Conselho da Índia: Contributo ao estudo da história da administração e do comércio do ultramar português nos princípios do século XVII* (Lisbon, 1952).

⁶⁸ Rafael Valladares, *La rebelión de Portugal: Guerra, conflicto y poderes en la monarquía hispánica, 1640–1680* (Valladolid, 1998). More specifically on Asia, see Glenn J. Ames, *Renaissance Empire? The House of Braganza and the Quest for Stability in Portuguese Monsoon Asia, c.1640–1683* (Amsterdam, 2000).

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