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Review of Pedro Cardim, Tamar Herzog, José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, and Gaetano Sabatini, eds. Polycentric Monarchies: How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?

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Pedro Cardim, Tamar Herzog, José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, and Gaetano Sabatini, eds. *Polycentric Monarchies: How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* Eastbourne, UK and Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2012. 320 pp.

How did Spain and Portugal manage to create the first empires of truly global dimensions? And why did these empires survive, if not dominate, for some three centuries? These are the declared central questions of *Polycentric Monarchies*, a collection of essays and the fruit of an international collaboration of scholars interested in the varied territories and peoples under Iberian dominion during the early modern period. Beyond examining the mechanisms and maintenance of empire, however, the editors and individual authors of this thought-provoking compilation have a larger, historiographical purpose. This a volume whose collective intent is to revise the notion of Spain and Portugal as “composite monarchies,” a now standard description thanks to the seminal work of Sir John Elliott.

The book’s twelve essays are divided into three parts. Part I, “Spaces of Integration,” consists of four chapters tied together by a common focus on how different pieces of the Spanish and Portuguese empires were actually kept in the imperial fold. Chapter One, “Maritime Archipelago, Political Archipelago: The Azores under the Habsburgs (1581-1640),” by Jean-Frédéric Schaub, sheds light on the little-studied subject of Habsburg rule of the Portuguese Azores during the union of the Crowns of Spain and Portugal. Concentrating on the island of Terceira, the last Portuguese territory to recognize Philip II as its legitimate king (only in 1583), Schaub demonstrates how Spain controlled the Azores, in part, by leaving pre-existing political structures largely undisturbed. The same families dominated Terceira before and during Spanish rule. As they did elsewhere, the Spanish also integrated into Portuguese society through conjugal unions. In Chapter Two, “Architect of the New World: Juan de Solórzano Pereyra and the Status of the Americas,” Óscar Mazín Gómez directs our attention to the American possessions of the Spanish monarchy and, in particular, to the question of their juridical status. Analyzing a *Memorial* published in 1629 by the Spanish jurist Solórzano Pereyra which argued for the precedence of the Council of the Indies (on which Solórzano served as *fiscal* or royal representative) over the upstart Council of Flanders, Mazín Gómez concludes that the Indies were perhaps neither “kingdoms” nor “colonies” in any strict sense of those words. While they may have begun as colonial possessions, incorporated into the Crown of Castile, the Spanish Indies gradually developed an autonomy and identity similar to those of territories joined to Spain *aeque principaliter*.

In Chapter Three, “The Representatives of Asian and American Cities at the *Cortes* of Portugal,” Pedro Cardim addresses the “vexed question” of the representation of extra-European cities in the Portuguese *Cortes* and how this compared with the situation in Castile. (43) Whereas three such cities (Goa, Salvador, and São Luís do Maranhão) were represented in the Portuguese *Cortes* beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, American representatives were never sent to its Castilian counterpart (though Mexico City and Lima had been, in theory, permitted to send delegates since the 1530s). Chapter Four, “Overseas Alliances: The English Marriage and the Peace with Holland in Bahia (1661-1725),” by Rodrigo Bentes details how Portugal contracted both peace with the Dutch Republic and a marriage alliance with England largely through the financial contributions of its Brazilian lands, Bahia in particular. And since these contributions were not technically compulsory, the representatives of Bahia expected their generosity to be reciprocated.

Part II, “Spaces of Circulation,” consists of the next six essays, each dealing with “exchanges” of one kind or another. Chapter Five, “Family, Bureaucracy and the Crown: The Wedding Market as a Form of Integration among Spanish Elites in the Early Modern Period,” by Enrique Soria Mesa, continues the subject of marriage alliances. Such marital arrangements were beneficial to all parties. They provided influence and power for local elites; money (in the form of dowries) for royal officials; and stability for the empire at large, creating family ties between the disparate members of its ruling classes. “The links that made empire possible,” as Soria Mesa puts it, “were...formalized before the altar.” (85) For Chapter Seven, “Trading Money and Empire Building in Spanish Milan (1570-1640),” by Giuseppe De Luca, we turn to Spanish Italy and consider the role of finance in imperial administration. In the later seventeenth century, an increasingly sophisticated credit system grew along with and sustained an increasingly complex imperial infrastructure. Milanese creditors, for example, bought large amounts of public debt, which not only helped to keep the Spanish monarchy solvent, but also tied local fortunes to imperial ones. As De Luca persuasively observes, this mutual dependence perhaps accounts for why Milan was the single piece of Spain’s empire in Italy which did not experience an insurrection in the seventeenth century.

Chapters Eight, “Visible Signs of Belonging: The Spanish Empire and the Rise of Racial Logics in the Early Modern Period,” by Jean-Paul Zúñiga, and Nine, ““Can You Tell a Spaniard When You See One? “Us” and “Them” in the Early Modern Iberian Atlantic,” by Tamar Herzog, are, to my mind, the standout essays of this collection. Zúñiga examines the ‘*casta* paintings’ genre which has attracted so much popular and scholarly attention in recent years. Though

examples of this genre suggest a precise and taxonomic understanding of racial mixture, depicting as many as twenty possible combinations, the reality was much more confused, with both colonial authorities and everyday people often using the same designations with different meanings. This confusion over names was a consequence of multiple conceptions of “racial” difference then in circulation. Genealogy, the natural sciences, theology, as well as direct observation, often combined in unpredictable and inconsistent ways. Herzog’s essay, too, deals with the subject of identity and identification, asking who was considered a Spaniard and what constituted “Spanishness.” Contrary to much recent scholarship linking the emergence of a collective Spanish identity to an incipient nationalism, Herzog convincingly argues that colonial Spanishness was actually defined by more universal considerations, namely, ideas about civilization itself. Whereas peninsular Spanish identity continued to be connected to membership in particular kingdoms, in Spanish America, behavior and especially belief came to matter more than provenance or lineage. Context was key. “Spanishness,” in short, meant different things on either side of the Atlantic, and these meanings changed over time.

Part III, “External Projections,” is comprised of the final two essays of the collection, both focused on Spanish foreign relations. In Chapter Eleven, “Republican Monarchies, Patrimonial Republics: the Catholic Monarchy and the Mercantile Republics of Genoa and the United Provinces,” Manuel Herrero Sánchez argues not only that Spain’s relationship with the Dutch and Genoese Republics was symbiotic, but that their respective systems of government had more in common than is typically supposed. Both republics at times depended on the Spanish for military support, while Spain was similarly reliant on the Dutch and Genoese for economic reasons. Both republics were also remarkably aristocratic in character, while the powers of the Spanish monarch were famously circumscribed by the laws and *fueros* of his many kingdoms and provinces. Chapter Twelve, ““A Thing Not Seen in Paris since Its Founding”: The Spanish Garrison of 1590 to 1594,” by José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, considers an improbable Spanish intervention in France, specifically, the establishment of a Spanish garrison in Paris after Henry IV laid siege to the city in 1590. Expanding on this case, Ruiz Ibáñez demonstrates how Spain could and did extend its influence even behind “enemy lines,” partnering with dissidents often in the name of Catholicism. Finally, in a concluding epilogue, Alberto Marcos Martín offers his thoughts on this volume’s individual essays and general aspirations, paying special attention to historiographical context.

Polycentric Monarchies explores both the centripetal and centrifugal forces of empire. In twelve revealing case studies, the ways in which the Spanish

and Portuguese empires held themselves together and projected power outward are illustrated in fascinating detail. But what of this volume's larger purpose of revising the notion of "composite monarchy" itself? On the one hand, the following points are well taken: the Iberian monarchies had multiple centers, porous borders, and should not be viewed as "proto-national" entities. Nonetheless, this reviewer at least sees no conflict in conceiving of these empires as *both* composite and polycentric in nature. Each designation captures different aspects of what was a complex imperial reality. I suspect, then, that this new term will live alongside rather than replace its more familiar antecedent.

As previously mentioned, this edited volume is the work of an international network of scholars ("Columnaria"), though its contributors are primarily European (four Spanish, two Italian, two French, and one Portuguese), with only two, it seems, hailing from Latin America (Brazil and Mexico). And this leads me to the one minor criticism that I would offer of the volume in general, namely, that most of its essays evince the tell-tale signs of works in translation: Hispanisms, Gallicisms, and the like abound, as do unidiomatic constructions and the occasional archaic word or phrase: "ecclesiasts" instead of "clerics" (4); "medullar" instead of "fundamental" (translating, presumably, the Spanish, "*medular*") (30); "West Indies" for "*Indias Occidentales*" (28, 31, 74), etc. Such infelicities may distract the reader, but do not substantively diminish what is a remarkable work which will be of interest to historians of Spanish and Portuguese empires everywhere.

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