Book Reviews

Carlos Martínez Shaw and José Antonio Martínez Torres (eds.)

In last two decades, global history has been one of the most fertile fields in historiography. The process of growing economic, political, social and cultural entanglement during the early modern period has been given many names – globalization, age of discovery, first globalization, proto-globalization and archaic globalization, among others. Empires were essential spaces in such a process of global interaction. Spain and Portugal were pioneers. Spanish and Portuguese navigation, conquest, trade, and domination over peoples from the Americas and Asia marked a change from the medieval ages to modernity. Furthermore, it paved the way to an increasing global interdependence. From a global perspective, this book collects fourteen articles whose protagonists are Spain, Portugal and their empires. As a whole, the book addresses how, depending on the context, the main political and economic agents from Spain and Portugal both in the Iberian Peninsula and in the overseas territories cooperated and faced each other during and before the Union of Crowns (1581–1640). Moreover, the text addresses whether Portugal politically and economically suffered as a result of its dynastic union with the rest of Iberian territories, and the extent to which the Spanish Crown must divert financial resources to defend Portuguese territories. The book covers the period from 1581, when Philip II ascended to the Portuguese throne, to 1668, when the Spanish Crown finally recognised Portugal’s independence in the Treaty of Lisbon.

The book organizes chapters according to geographic criteria. Chapters are organized following a line that goes from the centre, which is to say the Iberian Peninsula, to periphery, namely the furthest Iberian territories in the Far East. In the first chapter, Edval de Souza interprets the end of the Union of Crowns in the light of the impact of the international situation of Portuguese in Asia, Africa and Brazil on Crown’s councils. In the second chapter, Ángel Alloza examines the rise of an “anti-Spanish feeling” among Portuguese traders and
officials because of the negative consequences of the Spanish economic wars and foreclosure of markets during the first half of the seventeenth century. Juan Antonio Sánchez Belén addresses, in the third chapter, the Dutch trade of such colonial goods as sugar, cocoa and tobacco in Spain after the Treaty of Münster (1648), and he shows the significance of Cadiz as a re-export center and the complexity of the articulation of trade through international merchant networks. The fourth chapter by Tamar Herzog deals with how identities and juridical barriers determined the relationship between Spaniards and Portuguese in different parts of their empires. In the fifth chapter, José Antonio Martínez Torres and Antonio José Rodríguez Hernández study the institutional process over which Ceuta and its population, who politically depended on the Portuguese Crown after 1415, became Spanish after 1640. By using a long-term perspective, which spans from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, in chapter six, António de Almeida demonstrates, from a renewed perspective, how in North Africa was marked by two processes from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries – hybridization and cohabitation of population, and the expansion of violence through slave trade.

Luis Salas also addresses Portuguese and Spanish policies in northern Africa in the seventh chapter, in which he shows how the relation between Portuguese and Spaniards in the Maghreb swung between cooperation and reluctance to collaborate. By approaching the conquest of Maranhão and Grão Pará during the Union of Crowns in chapter eight, Guida Marques shows the contradictory impact that the Luso-Spanish endeavor caused in the Spanish Americas. In the ninth chapter, Stuart B. Schwartz brilliantly addresses the role that silver trade and, above all, Brazilian sugar had in Portuguese independence. In chapter ten, André Murtiera sheds new light on the military conflicts between Portuguese and Dutch in the early seventeenth century. In the following chapter, Zoltan Biedermann offers an interesting insight into the different means of conquest between Portuguese and Spaniards by looking into the Portuguese conquest of Ceylon and the progressive imposition of the Castilian model of conquest in the area over time. In the twelfth chapter, Rui M. Loureiro narrates the alterations derived from the pressure of Persia against the Portuguese plaza of Ormuz in the early seventeenth century. In chapter thirteen, Manel Ollé shows how the theoretical political division between the Spanish and Portuguese empires was not real in China, Japan, Ternate, Melaka, and Manila, where the porosity between Spanish and Portuguese barriers was an inescapable reality. In this line, the last chapter by Andreu Martínez d’Alòs Moner addresses the Jesuit missions across the world and how Jesuits had an ambivalent relation with the Habsburg Crown during the Union of Crowns.