

Politics and Colonial Discourse in the Spanish Empire: The African Atlantic Possessions, 1575–1630*

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Abstract. – The works devoted to the study of Spanish *arbitrismo*, developed between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, have been traditionally influenced by a negative perspective, inherited from the use given to the adjective *arbitrista* in the past, when it was used almost as an insult. Instead of emphasising this negative view, it would perhaps be convenient to analyse such as what they really were, at least to a certain extent; that is, collective opinions seeking to influence the king and his most trusted circle. While Castilian *arbitrismo* of financial nature has been more widely studied, the *arbitrismo* developed in the colonial world is less known, especially that for the possessions in Atlantic Africa. These texts were written by merchants, soldiers, and clerics with great experience in the service of these territories. As a crucial “remedy” to solve the problems of these difficult times of monarchical “decline”, these texts propound an encouragement of territorial conquest and defensive fortresses, as well as a reorganisation of the main resources and of trade that would enable them to put an end to fraud and abuse.

“the *arbitristas* as a group remain too little known.”

John H. Elliott (1977)

Introduction

It was traditional in the context of European royalty that all vassals had a right to be heard by their lord. The lord, in turn, was obliged to choose that

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piece of advice which best suited him from those presented. There was even the possibility – why not? – that he could reject all of them, which was not at all unusual.¹ It seems obvious that this premise was followed throughout the Spanish Baroque. How else could we explain the prowling around the surroundings of the Queen’s Yard at the Alcazar of Madrid – seat to the main councils of the Monarchy – of notorious groups of different geographical origins composed of impoverished merchants, captains hardened a thousand battles, clerics, lawyers, and bachelors? They all decided to pay a visit to the Court in Madrid – heart of what was known as *economía de la gracia*² – to enquire some influential person within the complex but efficient royal bureaucratic machinery about the state of a particular processed file or dossier. These documents, often written in haste to obtain a gift or privilege, would pile up on the sturdy wooden tables in the offices of the councils’ secretaries. Expert and punctilious readers appointed by those in charge of the main collegiate organisms of imperial Spain would pass judgement over which texts were to be admitted and which were not. If the author had friends and relatives there were many possibilities that his document would be studied and assessed in a *consulta ordinaria*. Moreover, if he had savings, he could circulate it as a *manuscrito que corre* and stir debate in the context of the great development that – just like in so many other European cities of the time – the printing press was experiencing in Madrid. Experts point out that, only between 1605 and 1615, 12,000 copies of *Don Quixote* reached the European market. Approximately half of them were printed in the almost 100 printing houses functioning in the Court at that time.³

Concerning these works of recommendation, and in contrast with Miguel de Cervantes’s brilliant work, it is possible to spot vacuous rhetoric in some of them, but some others present detailed “remedies” to solve the different evils that afflicted the Monarchy’s ailing body politic. The Castilian word used to describe many of these discourses is *arbitrio*, synonymous

¹ Otto Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft: Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Österreichs im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt 1973), p. 426–437.

² Marcel Mauss, *Ensayo sobre el don. Forma y función del intercambio en las sociedades arcaicas* (Buenos Aires 2009); Maurice Godelier, *Antropología y economía* (Barcelona 1976); Bartolomé Clavero, *Antidora: Antropología Católica de la Economía Moderna* (Milan 1991); Antonio Manuel Hespanha, *La Gracia del Derecho: Economía de la Cultura en la Edad Moderna* (Madrid 1993).

³ Fernando Bouza, *Corre manuscrito: una historia cultural del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid 2001); idem, ‘*Dásele licencia y privilegio*’. *Don Quijote y la aprobación de libros en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid 2012); Roger Chartier, “La Europa castellana durante el tiempo del Quijote”: Antonio Feros/Juan Eloy Gelabert (eds.), *España en tiempos del Quijote* (Madrid 2005), p. 162–198; Francisco Rico, *Tiempos del ‘Quijote’* (Barcelona 2012).

to the Portuguese word *alvitre*, and probably almost equivalent to the English *project* and the French *avis*; all of which flourished during this period as the inspiring source of certain policies. Of course, the writers of these works were known as *arbitristas* in Spanish, *alvitristas* in Portuguese, and *projectors* and *donneurs d'avis* in England and France respectively.⁴ What is even more, nowadays it is no secret that empires like Turkey or China – studied and admired by renowned European political treatise writers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries – also profited from the services provided by these projectors, who had often been trained in the bowels of governmental power. Among the various subjects reflected upon and analysed by this legion of writers coming from all sorts of geographical regions we can find the optimal rationalisation of public funds, commerce, and *poli-orcetica*. They also put forward other more audacious or even curious opinions on morality and on the customs of those who were prone to stepping the line of what was considered appropriate at the time. All sorts of things could be a matter of study for these quill and ink professionals, and it is not difficult to imagine them locked up in a basement or garret surrounded by enormous books bound in goatskin, writing and reading relentlessly.

Doubtless, some of this is true in the case of Anthony Sherley, an English adventurer serving under the Spanish Monarchy who had been employed thanks to his vast knowledge – fundamentally acquired in Asia and America – on strategic and commercial affairs. We know that he spared no effort in sending *arbitrio* after *arbitrio* on such relevant subjects to the State, War, and Portugal Councils at the end of Philip III's time and during Philip IV's reign. The missions that he undertook for the Monarchy in some of the most distant and vulnerable parts of the Spanish Empire earned him the ferocious enmity of some royal councillors, who openly accused him of being a mere “charlatán e invencionero”. Curiously enough, however, they also made him worthy of the trust of the all-powerful Count-Duke of Olivares, for whom Sherley was a “hombre de mucha experiencia y que [había] visto mucho”. Claiming to know the “sustancia de gobierno” of the enemies of the Habsburgs – as Anthony Sherley himself stated in some of the works

⁴ The existing bibliography on arbitrista is copious. See especially Diogo Ramada Curto, *O discurso político em Portugal, 1600–1650* (Lisbon 1988); Agustín Redondo (coord.), *Le corps comme métaphore dans l'Espagne des XVI et XVII siècles* (Paris 1992); Louis Baeck, *The Mediterranean Tradition in Economic Thought* (London 1994); Anne Dubet, “L'arbitrisme: un concept d'historien?": *Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 24 (2000), p. 141–167; Pablo Fernández Albaladejo, “Por una ‘economía política’”: *idem, La crisis de la Monarquía* (Madrid 2009), p. 242–275; and Arndt Brendecke, *Imperio e información. Funciones del saber colonial español* (Madrid/Frankfurt am Main 2012), which is indispensable.

he wrote from his retreat in Granada – could be labelled as pretentious, but it most certainly contributes to explain why, in 1616, the Spanish Crown decided to grant him an annual allowance of 3,000 escudos under the express condition that he would not conspire for other governments.⁵

The ambiguous nature of some of these men who were close to the effective government was probably consubstantial to the tricks of *engaño* and *disimulo* which characterised politics during the European Baroque period. This nature has never received much attention in the historiography, and it is definitely worthwhile to delve into cases such as those of Sherley or João Salgado de Araújo.⁶ We already knew that the latter had been, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, a Portuguese *arbitrista* renowned for his knowledge in political and commercial matters and who enjoyed the support and sympathies of relevant personalities of the time who were opposed to royal power, such as don Miguel de Noronha or Mendo da Mota. These connections would result in Salgado de Araújo being exiled from the Court of Madrid in 1639, just one year before the Portuguese rebelled against the “tiranía de Castilla”. What we did not know, however, was his audacity when it came to describing his own profession as pertaining to “prophetas falsos”. There were no doubts about this for the author of *Marte Português* (1642). At this stage of the period of the union, the *arbitristas* were “gente foragida del Reyno”, capable of deceiving even the “ministros [más] ambiciosos”.⁷

A pejorative and, to a certain extent, disdainful perspective has heavily weighed up on the studies dedicated to *arbitrismo*. This view has been

⁵ Archivo General de Simancas (hereinafter AGS), Estado, legajo 436, f. 132; John H. Elliott, *El Conde-Duque de Olivares. El político en una época de decadencia* (Barcelona 1991), p. 157, 159, and 169, here: p. 157.

⁶ José Antonio Maravall, *Estudios de historia del pensamiento español. Siglo XVII* (Madrid 1975); José Antonio Fernández-Santamaría, *Razón de Estado y Política en el Pensamiento Español del Barroco, 1595–1640* (Madrid 1986); Rosario Villari, *Elogio della dissimulazione. La lotta politica nel Seicento* (Bari 1987), p. 3–48; Xavier Gil Pujol, “Las fuerzas del rey. La generación que leyó a Botero”: Mario Rizzo/José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez/Gaetano Sabatini (eds.), *Le forze del Principe. Recursos, instrumentos y límites en la práctica del poder soberano en los territorios de la Monarquía hispánica* (Murcia 2003), vol. II, p. 969–1022; Mauricio Viroli, *De la política a la razón de Estado. La adquisición y transformación del lenguaje político (1250–1600)* (Madrid 2009), p. 289–298 and 309–312; Romain Descendre, *L'État du Monde. Giovanni Botero entre raison d'État et géopolitique* (Genève 2009); Quentin Skinner, *Uma Genealogia do Estado Moderno* (Lisbon 2011).

⁷ *Marte português contra emulaciones castellanas o justificaciones de las armas del Rey de Portugal contra Castilla* (Lisbon 1642), p. 199 and 213, quoted by Miguel Galdes Rodrigues, *Do Reino a Angola. Agentes, arbitrios e negócios na rede familiar de João Salgado de Araújo* (unpublished BA thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa 2013). I am indebted to the author for providing me with a copy of it.

inherited from the past, in which the words *arbitrio* and *arbitrista* were used as weapons to discredit the projects produced before a group of experts by a person who was considered a political adversary. Rather than dwelling on this negativity, which would inevitably draw us to conclude that the texts of the *arbitristas* were impractical and not very useful in many cases, it would be helpful to analyse these documents as what they are, to a certain extent: collective opinions with a certain ability to influence the king and his most trusted circle thanks to the control of essential power mechanisms. These men flourished significantly under the Crown of Spain during the rule of the so-called “minor Habsburgs” – a time when, as is well-known, it was united to the Crown of Portugal and its overseas possessions for a significant period of more than half a century.

This may explain why Philip IV issued a decree in October 1622 urging his ministers for the West Indies “que no se le embaraze con consultas inútiles”.⁸ This precept was to remain unfulfilled for, not long after the royal will had been so expressed, such opinions emerged again, although this time the themes to be analysed and the remedies that should be applied to them were drastically opposite to those that had been originally considered. Whereas in the early seventeenth century some of the territories in America were seen as a last resort for the Monarchy, at the end of the seventeenth century the American settlements had become – as the Low Countries had been before them – a dispensable and heavy burden to be continuously carried by the sore royal shoulders. The old, but useful work by Manuel Colmeiro, published in 1861 and re-edited in 1947, is the point of departure for any research project focusing on this subject.⁹ A total of 165 *arbitrios* have been recorded for the reigns of Philip III and Philip IV alone. These *arbitrios* are, as John H. Elliott has rightly pointed out, the “survivors”, but it is possible that we may be able to find many more in the specific *juntas* commissioned by the main Councils of the Monarchy during this period.¹⁰ The form of *arbitrismo* more widely studied is the financial one, and it often originated in Castile, the kingdom which suffered the most from the funding of Spain’s incommensurate imperial enterprise across the “cuatro partes del mundo”.

Thanks to essential research on these subjects carried out between the seventies and the early nineties of the past century, it would not be absurd to

⁸ British Library, Eggerton, 1.322, f. 9.

⁹ Manuel Colmeiro, *Biblioteca de los economistas españoles de los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII* (Barcelona 1947).

¹⁰ John H. Elliott, “Introspección colectiva y decadencia en España a principios del siglo XVII”: idem, *España y su Mundo, 1500–1700* (Madrid 2007), p. 299–322, here: p. 301. The first edition of this crucial article dates back to 1977.

state that all historians, whether specialised or not, are nowadays familiar with the language and chronology of this process of “collective introspection” headed by authors as essential to the mercantilist heritage of Europe as Sancho de Moncada or Duarte Gomes Solis. However, we do not know so well which kind of *arbitrismo* was developing in the overseas territories at the time when these men were writing their works. The same can be said about some alimentary treatises which served them as argumentative weapons.¹¹ These texts can be identified in rough outlines as having a similar origin and intention, and having been elaborated by soldiers, merchants, and clerics highly experienced in the government, ways, and services of the imperial periphery. In many cases they proposed, as an essential “remedy” to overcome these difficult years of monarchical “decline”, to promote the conquest and defence – at sea and inland – of the scattered and badly articulated colonial possessions; to put an end to bad administration; and to reorganise again resources and trading schemes (of medium and large reach). This was intended to furnish the Crown with a greater specific weight, in line with what the enemies of Spain and Portugal had been doing for some time through the establishment of their trading companies for the East and West Indies.¹²

The aforementioned work by Colmeiro along with a series of essential studies such as those by Professors John H. Elliott and Pierre and Jean Vilar¹³ constitute a key list of readings for any researcher willing to explore the *arbitrista* thought and its era. However, I would not like to avoid the commitment that the advantageous position of these pages offers me to

¹¹ Fred Bronner, “Peruvian arbitristas under Viceroy Chinchón, 1629–1639”: *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 26 (1974), p. 38–78; idem, “Tramitación legislativa bajo Olivares. La redacción de los arbitrios de 1631”: *Revista de Indias* XLI, 165–166 (1981), p. 411–441; John H. Elliott, “América y el problema de la decadencia española”: idem, *España en Europa. Estudios de historia comparada* (Valencia 2002), p. 217–236; Diogo Ramada Curto, *Cultura imperial e projetos coloniais (séculos XV a XVIII)* (São Paulo 2009), p. 7–17 and 145–355; Arrigo Amadori, *Negociando la obediencia. Gestión y reforma de los virreinos americanos en tiempos del conde-duque de Olivares (1621–1643)* (Sevilla 2013), p. 117–141 and 304–376, and the bibliography found there.

¹² AGS, Estado, legajo 2.847. Mendo da Mota’s report “sobre la necesidad de fomentar el comercio español” (March 6th, 1623).

¹³ John H. Elliott, *España y su Mundo, 1500–1700* (Madrid 2007); idem, *España, Europa y el Mundo de Ultramar, 1500–1800* (Madrid 2010); Pierre Vilar, “Los primitivos españoles del pensamiento económico. ‘Cuantitativismo’ y ‘bullonismo’”: *Crecimiento y desarrollo* (Barcelona 1976), p. 135–162; idem, “El tiempo del ‘Quijote’”: ibidem, p. 332–346; Jean Vilar, *Literatura y economía. La figura satírica del arbitrista en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid 1973); and Luis Perdiges de Blas, *La economía política de la decadencia de Castilla en el siglo XVII* (Madrid 1996). Pierre Vilar’s works were published in 1956 and 1962 respectively.

commend the reading of forgotten documentary compendia on the so-called “conquest” of Angola carried out by the Portuguese between the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries.¹⁴ Indeed, these texts narrate the hazardous penetration into the Western part of the African continent, its exploitation, its defence, and the expenses generated as well as news on religious missions (mostly Jesuit) and on the syncretic and yet barely known rites and customs practised in the area. In short, they are essential works to understand and comprehend, by means of the different perspectives provided by the people who wrote about such topics, the Iberian presence in this neglected part of the Spanish Habsburgs’ Empire during this particular period of the union of the crowns.¹⁵

Iberian Africa

Portuguese expansion in the African continent – and the rest of the known world – commenced on August 22nd, 1415, when a carefully set up Portuguese amphibious expedition took the Moroccan stronghold of Ceuta with little resistance of its native population. For the Portuguese Crown there were three essential purposes concerning the North of Africa: to control the geographically strategic area of the Strait of Gibraltar, to counteract the activities of the feared Barbary pirates, and to obtain a significant advantage over the Crown of Castile, which also pursued its own interests in the area. It would not be thus exaggerated to state that, until well into the fifteenth century, the city of Ceuta became a relevant “magnet” for European merchants because it received large quantities of black slaves, gold dust or *tibar*, refined salt, spices (especially cinnamon and malagueta or “pimenta pobre o falsa”), carpets, ivory, perfumes, and dyes brought by camel trains that crossed the Sahara and Middle East deserts.¹⁶

¹⁴ Luciano Cordeiro, *Questões Histórico-Coloniais*, 3 vols. (Lisbon 1935), vol. I (for the years 1574–1631); António Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. África Occidental* (Lisbon 1954–1956), vols. IV, V, VI, and VII (for the years 1469–1630); Louis Jadin, *L’Ancien Congo et l’Angola, 1639–1655, d’après les archives romaines, portugaises, néerlandaises et espagnoles*, 3 vols. (Brussels/Rome 1975); Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart 1985).

¹⁵ David Birmingham, *Portugal and Africa* (New York 1999); John K. Thornton, *A Cultural History of The Atlantic World, 1250–1820* (New York 2012); Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland* (Cambridge 2013).

¹⁶ Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *Os descobrimentos e a economia mundial*, 4 vols. (Lisbon 1991), vol. I, p. 139–143, and vol. II, p. 174–177 and 245–267; John K. Thornton, “Os portugueses em África”: Francisco Bethencourt/Diogo Ramada Curto (eds.), *A expansão*

Without denying or pushing into the background the commercial incentive that the Ceutan enterprise meant for Portuguese expansion around the most important seas and oceans of the globe, the truth is that this conquest, as well as that of the contours of the African continent, had been strongly spurred on by the minor nobility, which had been, for some time now, in open conflict with their homonyms of higher social rank. The extraction of glory and titles for their offspring had been at the origins of this very significant African campaign. The legitimising façade of the enterprise was not devoid of certain logic: a long-standing tradition of battling the Muslim enemy. As is well known, from the mid-fourteenth century, the kings of Portugal, Castile, and Aragon had considered themselves the “legítimos herdeiros” of the ancient Visigothic Northern Africa which had been usurped from their ancestors by the *huestes mouras* commanded by Tariq ibn Ziyad in 711.

It is actually under this context that the three monarchs of the Iberian Peninsula decided to forge a tacit agreement allowing each other to intervene and exert their influence in those parts of Africa which were nearest to their kingdoms. The specific case of Portuguese influence in North-eastern Morocco’s affairs had its origins in the relentless struggle against Islam since the crucial battle of Río Salado (1340). A set of five papal bulls – issued successively between 1341 and 1377 – officially authorised the monarchs to organise crusades against the Muslims in Granada and Northern Africa. It is true that the same ecclesiastical documents were never put into practice because the plague and the wars in Castile prevented that from happening. However, they turned out to be a precedent for future kings – especially João I, Manuel I, and Sebastian I – who, in times of welfare and relative calm, would resume their forefathers’ ambitions to attain an *imperio universal* parallel, although with notable differences, to that which was being gestated during the same period in Castilian territories thanks to the theoretical abilities of prelates such as Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and Alfonso de Santa María. Ceuta, like all other relevant strongholds that were later conquered in the Maghreb – Alcazarquivir, Arzila, Azemur, Mazagan, Safi, and Tangier – inevitably opened the possibility of a new collective goal thanks to a careful ideological scheme intertwined with worldly and secular powers.¹⁷

marítima portuguesa, 1400–1800 (Lisbon 2010), p. 145–168; Anthony R. Disney, *História de Portugal e do Império português*, 2 vols. (Lisbon 2011), vol. II, p. 43–64.

¹⁷ John H. Elliott, “España y su imperio en los siglos XVI y XVII”: idem, *España y su Mundo, 1500–1700* (Madrid 2007), p. 27–50; Luis Felipe F. R. Thomaz, *De Ceuta a Timor* (Lisbon 1994), p. 47–50; Franz Bosbach, *Monarchia Universalis. Storia di un concetto cardine della politica europea (secoli XVI–XVIII)* (Milan 1998); Pablo Fernández Albaladejo,

Since the abovementioned conquest of Ceuta and right up until the second half of the sixteenth century, most North African *cabilas* signed exceptional and precise peace treaties with the Portuguese conquerors. Trade, which requires the “trust” of different agents to be able to develop vigorously, was established almost without any problems in the whole of this African strip. There were of course attempts to expand beyond Ceuta and the neighbouring strongholds that had been conquered in subsequent years. However, all these attempts failed because the political power that Portuguese soldiers clashed with was much more organised than they had been initially believed to be. The absence in North African strongholds of rich resources similar to those that would be extracted later from Madeira, Cape Verde, Angola, Brazil, and the rest of the scattered strings of factories that composed the Estado da Índia also contributes to explain to a certain extent why the enterprise of Morocco was neglected. Not until the reign of Sebastian I would this old aspiration of expanding towards the African inland from the North be resumed when war was declared on the Moroccan sultan that had deposed Muley Ahmed, who had been favourable to the Portuguese. The outcome could not have been more adverse to the whole of the Portuguese population: most of the members of the expedition that had accompanied the young king were either lost or captured, and the kingdom became fertile ground for prophecies and legends announcing the return of a monarch who had survived the plains of Alcazarquivir.¹⁸

“‘Imperio de por sí’: La reformulación del poder universal en la temprana edad moderna”: *Fragmentos de Monarquía. Trabajos de Historia Política* (Madrid 1992), p. 168–184; idem, “Imperio e identidad: consideraciones historiográficas sobre el momento imperial español”: *Semata* 23 (2011), p. 11–18; David Armitage (ed.), *Theories of Empire, 1450–1800* (London 1998), p. xv–xxxiii; Anthony Pagden, *Señores de todo el Mundo. Ideologías del Imperio en España, Inglaterra y Francia en los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII* (Barcelona 1997), p. 45–136; Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du Monde. Histoire d’une mondialisation* (Paris 2004), p. 24–33; Pedro Cardim, “La aspiración imperial de la monarquía portuguesa (siglos XVI y XVII)”: Gaetano Sabatini (ed.), *Comprendere le monarchie iberiche. Risorse materiali e rappresentazioni del potere* (Rome 2010), p. 37–72; Giuseppe Marcocci, *A consciencia de um imperio. Portugal e o seu mundo (sécs. XV–XVII)* (Coimbra 2012); Eva Botella Ordinas, “‘Exempt from time and from its fatal change’: Spanish imperial ideology, 1450–1700”: *Renaissance Studies* 26, 4 (2012), p. 580–604, here: p. 580–595; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Impérios em Concorrência. Histórias conectadas nos séculos XVI e XVII* (Lisbon 2012), p. 113–152; and Peer Schmidt, *La monarquía universal española y América. La imagen del Imperio español en la Guerra de los Treinta Años (1618–1648)* (Mexico City 2012), p. 344–356.

¹⁸ Lucette Valensi, *Fables de la mémoire. La glorieuse bataille des trois rois* (Paris 1992); Jacqueline Hermann, *No Reino do Desejado. A Construção do Sebastianismo em Portugal (Séculos XVI e XVII)* (São Paulo 1998); Ruth Mackay, *The Baker Who Pretended to be King of Portugal* (Chicago 2012).

Not even the incorporation of the Crown of Portugal into the combination of territories that were part of the Spanish Monarchy could stimulate the development of these strongholds. The latter were – with the exception of Ceuta and Tangier for obvious geo-strategic reasons – largely lacking in resources and much damaged by Riffian raids. The desertion of Portuguese soldiers in Mazagan to the ranks of their Muslim enemies was both notorious and continuous even before the period of the union of the crowns. The neglect suffered by Portuguese prisoners was somewhat alleviated by Spanish redeemers belonging to the Trinitarian and Mercy Orders who, during the period of the union of the crowns, managed to free an average of two people per year through royal support.¹⁹

Portuguese expansion along the coast of Africa may possibly be due to the failure of the conquest of Morocco. Be it as it may, the truth is that the contacts established by the Portuguese in the Western coasts of Africa were of a different flavour to those that had been established in the Northern territories some years before. The first exchanges with the peoples of the African coasts had taken place on board, which favoured the prompt fortification and planting of the islands. In 1441 the port of Lagos received for the first time a rich and exotic cargo coming from the African coasts, which included twelve black slaves, gold, ivory, refined salt, and ostrich eggs. Between that date and well into the seventeenth century, when Portuguese merchants were replaced in the slave market by the Dutch, voyages to the coasts of Guinea would be organised in a disorganised but routine manner.

The regularisation of all these deals was the most important purpose of Don Henrique's rule. He replaced the razzias of the first period of the conquest by what was known as *resgate* or barter system. The Island of Arguin became thus the first Portuguese *feitoria* in 1445. A few years later, in 1488, peace embassies were sent by the sovereigns of Portugal and the most important authorities in the area. During these initial contacts, wheat, horses, and cloth bought in Northern Europe and Morocco were exchanged for gold, ivory and, above all, slaves captured in the vast region comprised between the Gambia and Niger Rivers. The establishment of a permanent commercial centre in this area of modern Mauritania and, soon afterwards –

¹⁹ António Dias Farinha, *História de Mazagão durante o período filipino* (Lisbon 1970); Beatriz Alonso Acero, *Orán-Mazalquivir, 1589–1639: Una sociedad española en la frontera de Berbería* (Madrid 2000), p. 421–438; José Antonio Martínez Torres, *Prisioneros de los infieles. Vida y rescate de los cautivos cristianos en el Mediterráneo musulmán (siglos XVI–XVII)* (Barcelona 2004), p. 137; José Antonio Martínez Torres/Antonio José Rodríguez Hernández, “Una lealtad esquivo. Ceuta antes y después de su agregación a la Monarquía hispánica”: Carlos Martínez Shaw/José Antonio Martínez Torres (dirs.), *España y Portugal en el Mundo, 1581–1668* (Madrid 2014).

in 1482 –, in São Jorge da Mina would define the basic outlines of the colonisation pattern, mainly based in the security provided by these well-fortified strongholds. In 1502, for example, a fortress was erected in Axim (in the Gulf of Guinea), and two more were built respectively in 1505 and 1507 in Sofala and Mozambique, in Eastern Africa. Lagos, first, and Lisbon, a bit later, would become the receiving and distributing centres of a growing and important trade regulated through the Casa da Guiné e Mina. Until the creation of the Casa da Índia in 1504, all Portuguese overseas trade was supervised by this institution. Even the famous Casa dos Escravos, which controlled the entrance of black prisoners into Lisbon, depended on the Casa da Guiné e Mina.²⁰ The German cosmographer Hieronymus Münzer, who travelled through the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the fifteenth century, did not hesitate to note down in his journal that Lisbon was the European capital for trade in black slaves and exotic merchandise. Between the second half of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, African slaves formed 10% of the population in Lisbon. Such a percentage could only be found in other Southern European cities such as Seville.²¹

From the second half of the sixteenth century, the Western African coast – from the Cape Verde Islands to the kingdom of Congo – were divided by the Portuguese into two great commercial areas that were then rented by the Crown to a prominent merchant or *rendeiro* for a maximum period of four or six years. The two trading poles that we are pointing out here were the area of Cape Verde, to the North of the coastline, and the area of São Tomé, to the South. The jurisdiction of both territories was quite large, as it extended from the Benin Empire, up North, to what would later be Angola, down South. The vast majority of the men, women, and children captured in this region of Central Africa by the slave traders or *lançados* were sent to São Tomé, which was then the most buoyant area, but which, in contrast with promising Angola, was forced to pay customs duties to the

²⁰ Malyn Newitt, “Prince Henry and the Origins of Portuguese Expansion”: Malyn Newitt (ed.), *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire* (Exeter 1986), p. 9–35; Thornton, “Os portugueses em África” (note 16); Disney, *História de Portugal* (note 16), vol. II, p. 79–156.

²¹ Alessandro Stella, *Histoires d’esclaves dans la Péninsule ibérique* (Paris 2000), p. 74–79; Luis Felipe de Alencastro, *O Trato dos Videntes. Formação do Brasil no Atlântico sul* (São Paulo 2000), p. 77–116; Antonio de Almeida Mendes, “Les réseaux de la traite ibérique dans l’Atlantique nord. Aux origines de la traite atlantique (1440–1640)”: *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 4 (2008), p. 739–768; Bernard Vincent, “La esclavitud en el Mediterráneo occidental (siglos XVI–XVIII)”: José Antonio Martínez Torres (dir.), *Circulación de personas e intercambios comerciales en el Mediterráneo y en el Atlántico* (Madrid 2008), p. 39–64; José Antonio Martínez Torres, “L’esclavage en Méditerranée et dans l’Atlantique Nord (1571–1700)”: Fabienne P. Guillén Salah Trabelsi (eds.), *Les esclavages en Méditerranée. Espaces et dynamiques économiques* (Madrid 2012), p. 141–150.

highest ruler of Congo, who was known as Manicongo. In a way, São Tomé Island became some sort of warehouse for slave workforce that supplied three different kinds of markets: local markets such as that of São Jorge da Mina, the markets of Southern Europe with Lisbon as the most important city distributing this kind of trade, and later on, at the end of the same century, the American markets of Brazil, the Caribbean, and Mexico.²²

Between the late fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries, the port of Mina was the most important slave buyer, with a total of 30,000 per year. These figures should be, of course, linked to the introduction of sugarcane cultivation in Madeira and São Tomé. In the case of the former, the introduction of Genoese capital, the effective work techniques imported from Sicily, and the slave workforce made Madeira a rich producer thanks to its eighty *engenhos* and an annual production of 120,000 arrobas of sugar up until the mid-sixteenth century. Its decline overlapped to a certain extent with the rise – until the late sixteenth century – of São Tomé, which doubled such production. The gigantic possibilities of this “sacarocracy” can be seen in the case of Brazil, where during the first quarter of the seventeenth century there were already 235 *engenhos* and an annual harvest of 1,100,000 arrobas of sugar.²³ The shift in terms of economic exploitation from the Eastern possessions to those of the Mid-Atlantic was already an established fact in Portugal in the early seventeenth century.

The horizon of possibilities offered by the coasts of Western Africa launched the movement of a large number of Portuguese merchants, soldiers, and clerics to the fertile lands of Congo. Portuguese influence on the main local ruler, the Manicongo, was of such magnitude that the latter’s closest advisers were merchants from Lisbon. The Catholic Church even found in Congo a warmer welcome than it had received among other populations of the Atlantic African coastline, because from 1521 it could count among its ranks with a black prelate. The ambiguous stance taken by the Portuguese soldiers in relation to the border battles that took place from 1560 between the Manicongos and their Angolan enemies, the N’golas, finally prompted the Manicongo Álvaro I to transfer to them vast lands between the Dande and Cuanza rivers in an attempt to get rid of them.

²² Enriqueta Vila Vilar, “Extranjeros en Cartagena (1593–1630)”: *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 16 (1979), p. 147–184; Nicolás Ngou-Mvé, *El África bantú en la colonización de México (1595–1640)* (Madrid 1994); Alencastro, *O Trato* (note 21), p. 43 and 69, where these figures are offered based on research by Philip D. Curtin and David Eltis.

²³ Tony Hodges/Malyn Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe: From Plantation Colony to Microstate* (London 1988); Godinho, *Os descobrimentos* (note 16), vol. III, p. 102–113; Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550–1835* (Cambridge 1985), p. 16–19.

These lands presented a great potential in terms of exchanges between the Portuguese merchants, but they were also dangerous, as they were inhabited by tribes such as the Jagas, poorly organised but very hostile, and the Sobas, with a better social structure but less belligerent.

The Portuguese pondered over the relationship between profits and costs, and soon enough they decided to plant, quite regularly since 1571, the lands that had been named that very same year as Angola (they had been previously known as “Lower Guinea”). Despite this, it became necessary to explore and exploit a territory that was deemed as dense and insalubrious by means of a conquering expedition. The leader of the expedition was Paulo Dias de Novais, a grandson of the explorer Bartolomeu Dias, who had been a prisoner in Congo between 1560 and 1565 as a result of his attempt to establish contact with Manicongo Bernardo I’s greatest rival, the N’gola Kiluanji Kiassamba. When he returned to Lisbon in 1571 – he was freed on the promise that he would bring military aid to defeat his enemy – Sebastian I granted him the corresponding *carta de donación* and the title of “governador e capitao-mor, conquistador e povoador” of Angola, making the most of the rivalry between the Manicongo and the N’gola. This important enterprise – which sailed from Lisbon on October 23rd, 1574, and landed in the Ilha das Cabras (modern Luanda) on February 11th, 1575 – was composed of seven ships, a bit less than a thousand soldiers, and some clerics, basically Jesuits and Franciscans.²⁴ The main aim of the expedition was obvious: to control the promising slave market in the area. Luanda, strongly fortified in 1576, would be the headquarters of such trade. The policy followed in this area – which would be almost the same for the rest of the overseas territories – was based on favouring the divisions between the rival African tribes, something that was achieved by the establishment of asymmetric relations. They would provide the natives with trinkets, bad quality wine, and defective pistols and muskets in exchange for slaves, ivory, gold, and silver.

The results of Dias de Novais’s expedition were very notable: they penetrated onto the continent more or less sixty leagues from the coastline, and they founded important fortresses such as Massangano in 1583. The figures that we know for casualties are sufficient evidence to prove that the battles were extremely fierce. Between 1575 and 1594, for instance, we know that

²⁴ David Birmingham, *Trade and Conquest in Angola* (London 1965); Robin Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa, 1550–1750. The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society* (Oxford 1991), p. 118 ff.; Alencastro, *O Trato* (note 21), p. 188–210; Thornton, “Os portugueses em África” (note 16), p. 157–166; Ilídio do Amaral, *O Consulado de Paulo Dias de Novais. Angola no Último Quartel do Século XVI e Primeiro do Século XVII* (Lisbon 2000).

a total of 3,480 Portuguese disembarked, of which 3,180 died; that is, almost 92%. Such numbers prove that, just like in Europe, the “permanent state of war” was also constant in the African continent – so much so that some of the figures available show an average of two conflicts per year between 1603 and 1642.²⁵

Despite the aforementioned “estado de guerra permanente”, the profitability of the Angolan settlement was guaranteed. Between 1575 and 1587, an average of 4,000 slaves were shipped every year, a figure that would be doubled after Angola was granted a rental agreement separate from that of São Tomé, which took place in that very same year of 1587.²⁶ The merchants and soldiers that made a living out of the war business and the slave trade in São Tomé and Angola entered a competition for the lucrative black slave market. It could not have been otherwise. All the supporters of Angola’s agreement denounced the deceptive ways of and the abuses committed by the dealers of São Tomé, who according to the former dwelled in the Angolan lands to carry out their business, just like before the agreement. Those from São Tomé were obviously indifferent towards this criticism, which made relations between the two colonies extremely tense during the period of the union of the crowns and during the fight against Spain for their independence. The conquest of this part of Africa, likened to that carried out years before by the Extremaduran Francisco Pizarro in Peru, included the plan to reach the kingdom of Monomotapa sailing up the mighty Cuanza and Cuama rivers – the latter being the name of the Zambezi river back then – to seize the legendary gold mines from times of the no less mythical king Solomon. Once this had been achieved, this supra-territory would be governed by a viceroy of the royal blood who would maintain close relations with Brazil.²⁷

Besides these considerations, the most interesting fact to be retained is that the conquerors and merchants were demanding attention due to the forced halt suffered by the enterprise of Angola after the death of Paulo

²⁵ Beatrix Heintze, “Luso-african feudalism in Angola? The vassal treaties of the 16th to the 18th century”: *Revista Portuguesa de Historia* XVIII (1980), p. 111–131; John K. Thornton, “The Art of War in Angola, 1575–1680”: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, 2 (1988), p. 360–378; Ngou-Mvé, *El África bantú* (note 22), p. 58; Adriano Parreira, *The Kingdom of Angola and Iberian Interference, 1483–1643* (Uppsala 1985), p. 99–100; idem, *Economia e sociedade em Angola na época da Rainha Jinga, Século XVII* (Lisbon 1997), p. 24–28.

²⁶ Godinho, *Os descobrimentos* (note 16), vol. IV, p. 161–181, here: p. 165; Alencastro, *O Trato* (note 21), p. 44–76; Disney, *História de Portugal* (note 16), vol. II, p. 125–156.

²⁷ Archivo Histórico Ultramarino, Mozambique, caja 1, documento 10; Godinho, *Os descobrimentos* (note 16), vol. I, p. 183–209.

Dias de Novais in 1589, Philip II's disastrous venture in England, and the political and religious setbacks in France and the United Provinces. It was thus necessary to resume the conquest of 1575 and expand it beyond the sixty miles that had been already achieved. There would also be a second stage during which the area would be continuously evangelised and colonised with the building of churches and the cultivation and assignment of resources and defences. This was the only possible way to keep this vast territory, which was only limited by the coastline if they were to resist the main enemies of the Spanish Monarchy: the Dutch. The latter, strategically settled in the Congolese port of Pinda and the isle of Saint Helena (an important fresh water spot for those ships sailing to the East Indies, Brazil or the Río de la Plata region), would disturb as much as they could the commercial monopoly of the Catholics thanks to an important smuggling trade that was practised in many cases with the connivance of the corrupt Iberian authorities of the area. It is within this peculiar context that we should understand and comprehend some of the representative texts produced in this part of Africa between the rule of Paulo Dias de Novais (1575–1589) and that of Fernando de Sousa (1624–1630).

Colonial Discourse

A few years before, after Governor Paulo Dias de Novais had died – in 1589, as has already been noted – a series of texts were written which denounced certain frauds and administrative neglects that had taken place in some parts of Angola due to the standstill that its conquest went through after the setbacks of the Spanish Monarchy in Europe.²⁸ In these texts, basically the works of experienced soldiers, merchants, and clerics who had closely followed the political management of Dias de Novais, the latter was exalted and there was an almost unanimous approval of territorial expansion and the subjugation of the Sobas, which was achieved through military force after fierce battles. At a later date and with a marked tax collection purpose in mind, the Sobas were grouped and classified according to a series of areas ruled by their main chiefs – a system reminiscent of the Middle Ages.²⁹

To a certain extent, the misgovernment described for this forgotten corner of the overseas empire of the Spanish Habsburgs was not exaggerated by the informants. When Governor João Rodrigues Contino arrived in

²⁸ See mainly Cordeiro, *Questões* (note 14), vol. I, p. 167–380; Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana* (note 14), vols. IV, V, VI, and VI.

²⁹ Heintze, “Luso-african feudalism” (note 25); Thornton, “The Art of War” (note 25).

Angola to replace João Furtado de Mendoza in 1601, none of the Sobas which had fought against Dias de Novais's troops acknowledged the "new" authority figure of the Iberian government. It was described in such manner in a *relación* written after Rodrigues Contino's death on September 28th, 1603, in which we can also read that before the governor's death, only "se sujetaron cinco [Sobas]" out of the 150 that usually acknowledged the suzerainty and dominion of the Catholic king. The person finally appointed by the Council of Portugal and the viceroy to replace Rodrigues Contino for the difficult task of administering justice in Angola during these crucial years was Manuel Cerveira Pereira. He chose to pursue the same policy of conquest and colonisation followed by Dias de Novais and Contino, and he stated that, to that end, he was ready to use a significant part of his troops, which were then registered as comprising a total of 570 Portuguese, some companies of "negros amigos" – the exact figures are not given in the document – and some thirty horsemen.³⁰

The breakup of the coexistence established in Angola by Governor Paulo Dias de Novais with royal assent between the conquerors and the conquered can be corroborated by the objective fact that in less than eleven years, those between 1589 and 1600, five different governors were required to keep the newly acquired territories of Philip II in relative calm. This is also made patent in a series of important *memoriales*, *alvitrios*, and *informes* about "el reino de Angola y la isla de Luanda" addressed to the Spanish Crown and the Council of Portugal in 1588, 1592 and 1599, and written by Diego de Herrera, Domingo de Abreu e Brito, and Jerónimo Castaño, respectively.³¹ The works by Herrera and Castaño present an additional interest because in them they recreated their experiences on the coasts of Western Africa as soldiers and merchants serving under the direct orders of Dias de Novais and because they never hide their firm and categorical purpose to go beyond the territorial expansion that had taken place during the

³⁰ British Library, Additional, 20.786, f. 325.

³¹ Biblioteca Nacional de España (hereinafter BNE), Manuscritos, 5.785 "Memorial de Diego de Herrera sobre la conquista del Reino de Angola", fs. 193–197; BNE, Manuscritos, 3.015: "Memorial de Jerónimo Castaño sobre la conveniencia de comerciar en el Reino de Angola y conquistarlo", fs. 169–174 and 202–205; Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (hereinafter BNP), Reservados, código 294: "Sumario e descripção do reino de Angola, e do descobrimento da ilha de Loanda e da grãdeza das capitaniãs do estado do Brasil, hecho por Domingo de Abreu e Brito", 84 folios. For a faithful reproduction of this document, see Alfredo de Albuquerque Felner (ed.), *Um inquérito à vida administrativa e económica de Angola e do Brasil* (Coimbra 1931). As far as I know, the first to point out the relevance of these documents were Jaime Cortesão, *História da expansão portuguesa. Obras completas* (Lisbon 1993, 1st ed. 1931–1934), vol. IV, p. 74–76; and Claudio Miralles de Imperial y Gómez, *Angola en tiempos de Felipe II y de Felipe III* (Madrid 1951).

above mentioned exploratory expedition of 1575. The work by Abreu e Brito is also imbued with this interventionist *esprit* propounded by Herrera and Castaño as the most urgent and efficient remedy to redress the total laxity in political and administrative functions experienced in this area of the African continent. It also provided figures and evidence which are of inestimable value to clarify some of the most recurring frauds that had taken place in the slave trade during the first years of the enterprise's economic take-off.

Repeating here the polemic on the origins of Diego de Herrera's and Jerónimo Castaño's origins would add nothing to the debate, since until we find reliable sources on the places where they were baptised and where they died, such a debate will only be based on conjectures which may distract us from what was a common situation at the time; that is, that under the Spanish Monarchy there were Portuguese men serving in Castilian territories and vice versa.³² Diego de Herrera was just one of many soldiers who obeyed and carried out orders for both crowns. His works clarify this without any doubts, as he confesses having served the army for a total period of twenty-two years: "catorce en Brasil y otras partes de África" and another eight in the viceroyalty of Peru in the company commanded by captains Pedro Meléndez and Diego Flores de Valdés.³³

The "obligación de administración de doctrina conforme al Perú" was essential and decisive for the development of the African enterprise sketched out by Herrera. The more than 500 *fijosdalgos* that would be – according to him – needed "para conquistar y poblar" the whole of Angola would not entail any extra cost to the royal treasury because "no haber menester llevar mantenimientos andando e conquistado porque en aquella tierra hay mucho", and because they would provide revenues and pensions – in terms of *repartimiento* – for more than 30,000 ducats.³⁴ Diego de Herrera, as businessman and interested party that he was, did not forget to ask from Philip II the issuing of the appropriate *licencia* and *carta de encomienda* to leave the Court of Madrid and go to Lisbon, where one of his ships was already "totalmente aparejada" to come to the aid of the "desabastecida y estropeada" garrison in

³² Domingo Centenero Arce, "Soldados portugueses en la Monarquía católica, soldados castellanos en la India lusa": Pedro Cardim/Leonor Freire Costa/Mafalda Soares da Cunha (orgs.), *Portugal na Monarquia Hipânica. Dinâmica de integração e conflito* (Lisbon 2013), p. 47–72; José Damião Rodrigues, *Histórias Atlânticas. Os Açores na primeira modernidade* (Lisboa 2012); Jean Frédéric Schaub, "Archipiélago marítimo y archipiélago político: Las Azores bajo los Austrias": *ibidem*, p. 73–92; *idem*, *L'île aux mariés. Les Açores entre deux empires (1583–1642)* (Madrid 2014).

³³ "Memorial de Diego de Herrera" (note 31), fs. 193–195.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 193.

Angola. Herrera had to wait for more than half a year for the anxiously expected processing of the royal *placet*, during which time he had incurred in many debts – “quinientos ducados con la Hacienda real” and “ochocientos con particulares” – thus desperately requesting from the Spanish sovereign that he “pardoned” him, at least, what he owed him as a courtesy for the 6,000 ducats that Herrera had provided for other enterprises of the Crown for a period of fourteen years.³⁵ His petitions and their answers, processed through the secretary Pedro Álvarez, also included the examinations for the royal grant of a total of twenty habits of the prestigious Order of Christ for the future conquerors of Angola – many of whom were the lords of Brazilian *engenhos*, like Manuel Botello. The objective of this manoeuvre is understandable: it aimed to equal such services to those provided by other subjects in the possessions of the Estado da Índia. The overcome of this inexplicable *décalage* would not be effective until early into the following century, when Governor João Rodrigues Contino resolved to ratify the royal decision and approval of six habits of the Order of Christ and thirty *alvaras* for pages of the chamber in Angola.³⁶

Probably the most suggestive and attractive part of Diego de Herrera’s discourse was his proposal of collaboration with Brazil in military aspects, although the cost of the enterprise would fall on the kingdom of Castile, financially the stronger party of the dynastic union produced in 1580. The composition of this *socorro* and the amounts intended for it constitute inescapable proof of the intercolonial participation that has already been mentioned. The 800 troops that would be employed for the “refresco” and conquest of Angola would mainly come from Lisbon while the total of fifty horsemen that would accompany them – essential for the advance and charge of the army in mountains, rivers, and jungles – would come from Baía de Todos os Santos. The latter settlement would also contribute by a compulsory levy of “doscientos soldados mamelucos y otros perseguidos por la justicia aunque por culpas leves”. Diego de Herrera stressed that the lure of a royal pardon would make these soldiers “fueran gustosos”.³⁷ Moreover, Baía “quedaría más sosegada”, and Angola would receive “gente sufrida en los trabajos y unos expertísimos flecheros y espingarderos”. The

³⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 195.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, fs. 193 and 197. See also Mafalda Soares da Cunha/Nuno Gonçalo F. Monteiro, “Governadores e capitães-mores do imperio atlântico português nos séculos XVII e XVIII”: Nuno Gonçalo F. Monteiro/Pedro Cardim/Mafalda Soares da Cunha (orgs.), *Optima Pars. Elites Ibero-Americanas do Antigo Regime* (Lisbon 2005), p. 191–252; and Pedro Cardim/Joan-Lluís Palos (eds.), *El Mundo de los virreyes en las monarquías de España y Portugal* (Madrid/Frankfurt am Main 2012).

³⁷ “Memorial de Diego de Herrera” (note 31), f. 197.

total cost of the enterprise of Angola – to be paid, as already mentioned, by the king of Spain’s treasury – would not surpass 70,000 ducats, of which approximately one tenth would be set aside for an indeterminate number of miners who would be transported to these territories to joyfully and efficiently exploit the rich metalliferous deposits of the same – basically gold, silver, copper, and lead. The large sum envisaged for the expansionist enterprise of Angola did not appear to be a problem for Herrera, who, as has already been mentioned, had served in Peru and knew first hand its abundance of natural resources. He promised even more advantages than those derived from the conquests in America due to Angola’s many mines and slaves. Spain’s financial aid would be essential to expand even to the Monomotapa region, which some geographers of the time, following the Medieval tradition, did not doubt to liken to the mythical country of Ophir, “la cosa más nombrada que hubo en el mundo”.³⁸

This kind of legends, which enjoyed certain overtones of authenticity well into the seventeenth century, influenced Domingo de Abreu e Brito when he wrote his interesting *Sumario e descripção do Reino de Angola, e do Descobrimento da Ilha de Loanda* (1592).³⁹ Independently of its socio-economic value, the truth is that this text was intended as an incentive for the Crown to get more involved in the territorial expansion that took place in this area of the African continent between 1575 and 1589. We ignore almost everything about its author. Fortunately, though, we know that this miscellaneous text – labelled in some of its pages as *alvitere* – was the final result of a research mission carried out for the Spanish Crown by Abreu e Brito in Angola between 1590 and 1591.⁴⁰ Its real purpose was completely unequivocal: to confirm or dismiss certain rumours about frauds committed in the colony during the later years of the government of Paulo Dias de Novais and the early years of that of his successor, Luis Serrão. In a nutshell, the main argument of the *Sumario e descripção* was that the total lack of assistance – of men, armament, and domestic essentials of all sorts – that the Iberian fortifications in Angola suffered from lay at the core of corrup-

³⁸ Ibidem. On these legends, Godinho, *Os descobrimentos* (note 16), vol. I, p. 183–209; Francesc Relañó, *La emergencia de África como continente: un nuevo mundo a partir del viejo* (Lérida 2000); Jean Michel Massing, “The Image of Africa and the Iconography of Liplated Africans in Pierre Desceliers’s World Map of 1550”: Thomas F. Earle/K. J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge 2005), chapter 2; Marina Alfonso Mola/Carlos Martínez Shaw, “La Etiópia imaginaria de Luis de Urreta”: *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 85–86 (2011–2012), p. 33–50.

³⁹ “Sumario e descripção do reino de Angola” (note 31).

⁴⁰ Ibidem, f. 36; Cortesão, *História da expansão portuguesa* (note 31), p. 75; Alburquerque Felner, *Um inquérito* (note 31), p. VII.

tion. Abreu e Brito pointed out to Philip II and his most concerned ministers that the military forces that had been transported to that area of Africa up to that date were more than insufficient to establish the “señorío del mar” deserved by a monarch who was likened by apologetic treatise writers of the period to a new Neptune handling his infallible trident. There were no possible alternatives for Abreu; either Philip II promptly resolved to send troops and victuals for Angola or else it would be better to give up the significant territory acquired since 1575, “pues los enemigos eran muchos y muy competentes para la lucha”.

Curiously enough, the solution propounded by Abreu e Brito was the same as that declared by Diego de Herrera just a few years earlier. It was imperative to send to Angola a total number of 1,000 soldiers, “bien armados y munizados”, and fifty horsemen. A significant contingent as such, mainly coming from Lisbon and Baía de Todos os Santos, would be able to penetrate even into the lands of the Monomotapa. The annexation into the “composite monarchy” of the Spanish Habsburgs of this African supraterritory comprised by the fertile Island of Luanda, Angola, and the modern states that form a natural corridor towards Mozambique, would provide *grandeza* and significant resources to the depleted royal treasury, and doubtlessly they would contribute to greatly reduce the time employed in marine communications between Lisbon and the East Indies almost by half.⁴¹

In contrast with the texts by Diego de Herrera and Domingo de Abreu e Brito, in which, as we have seen, they advocated for a more interventionist presence of the Spanish Crown in its recently acquired possessions of Western Africa as well as for military collaboration between Angola and Brazil, thus anticipating the prevalent theme for the second half of the seventeenth century, the texts that Jerónimo Castaño sent to the Council of Portugal in Madrid are relevant because they point out without any convolution those who were to blame for the *impasse* suffered by the “conquest” of Angola.⁴² It was definitely not the fault of Governor Paulo Dias de Novais, who, according to Castaño, distinguished himself from all of his successors in the post not only because he set aside the profits derived from the black slave trafficking for the Crown of Spain but also because he decided to do the

⁴¹ “Sumario e descripção do reino de Angola” (note 31), fs. 2, 5–10, 11–13, 14, and 16. Allusions to this “Iberian Neptune” in Pagden, *Señores de todo el Mundo* (note 17), p. 88, and in general chapters 2 and 3. See also Geoffrey Parker, “David or Goliath? Philip II and his world in the 1580s”: Richard L. Kagan/Geoffrey Parker (eds.), *Spain, Europe and the Atlantic World: Essays in Honour of John H. Elliott* (Cambridge 1995), p. 245–266.

⁴² “Memorial de Jerónimo Castaño” (note 31), fs. 169–174, 202–205, here: fs. 169 and 173–174.

same with the quantities resulting from the tribute paid by the Sobas as vassals to the Catholic king. To that end, Dias de Novais could undoubtedly count on his cooperation and that of other prominent officials who had accompanied him in the Angolan enterprise. Such were the cases of Luis Serrão – who, as we have seen, replaced him in the government of Angola –, Pedro da Fonseca – who was a relative of Dias de Novais’s –, García Mendes Castelo Branco, Manuel João, and Jácome da Cunha – all three of whom were distinguished captains in the main fortifications of Angola. There are no doubts, however, that he profited little from the venture. By his own account, we know that he lost three sons, several brothers and nephews, and even significant amounts of money that he had paid in advance from his savings during the negotiations that he had initiated with contractors from Lisbon and Seville some years before the expedition had been launched.⁴³

This understandable reproach, directed against his immediate superior in the chain of command because he had not been granted a *privilegio* after his services and their high personal cost to him, does not disguise, as has already been noted, his intention of pointing out who had been the main agents interested in corrupting the spirit of conquest in this part of the African continent. Just as Castaño reminds us to do, we should go back in time two decades, when Paulo Dias de Novais, then an unknown Portuguese soldier stationed in the coasts of Congo, solicited financial and economic support from the regent Don Henrique for the taking of part of the lands that bordered on the south of the kingdom of Congo. The bordering battles fought at the time between the Manicongo – allied with Portugal – and the N’gola were a wonderful opportunity to reinforce bonds and develop an unprecedented territorial expansion.⁴⁴ The original and audacious initiative undertaken by Dias de Novais would inevitable provoke strong opposition among the Portuguese and Spanish merchants already established in São Tomé. According to Jerónimo Castaño, these traders tried their utmost to stop the promising commerce in Angola from developing because they rightly judged that it would be detrimental to their economic interests in the short and medium terms. The struggle was of such nature that the merchants in São Tomé resorted to sending emissaries to the Manicongo with the firm purpose of disturbing their fellow countrymen’s activities.

These problems would not be solved by time, and the Crown saw no remedy but to send Dr Pedro Barbosa, a prestigious jurist experienced in this kind of affairs, to mediate. He judged, to the surprise of the merchants

⁴³ *Ibidem*, fs. 171 and 202.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, fs. 202–203.

of the island, that it would be better for Portugal to carry on with the project of “conquest” of Angola planned by Dias de Novais.⁴⁵ The evidence that the Portuguese Crown could profit from this original enterprise stood upon the verification of certain rumours, common during those years, about the discovery of the silver mines of Cabambe, a few leagues of distance away from the mouth of the Cuanza River. Several silver samples extracted in the area were examined with the purpose of dispelling any doubts about this. The origins and high quality of the same were authenticated in a series of *ad hoc* meetings marked by the decisive intervention of Francisco Duarte, a purveyor of the royal treasury who complicated matters even more by advising to include Angola in the commercial orbit of São Tomé. Philip II of Spain had become Portugal’s new sovereign after old cardinal Henrique’s death and the removal of his opponents in Lisbon and the Azores, and he considered the affair such a thorny one that he forwarded it for a *consulta* to Don Rodrigo Vázquez, president of the Council of Castile, who corroborated Dr Pedro Barbosa’s opinions, to the surprise of the São Tomé “lobby”. This meant that the “conquista de Angola”, with both economic and religious opportunities for Portugal, required autonomy, and Paulo Dias de Novais was the better suited person to undertake this. Jerónimo Castaño, a moneylender and staunch supporter of Dias de Novais’s enterprise because he had accompanied him from the beginning, quite logically became the target of those with interests in São Tomé. Such was the case of Manuel Muñiz de Fonseca, brother to Antonio Muñiz de Fonseca, secretary of the chamber of the Council of Portugal, for whom the final decision had obviously been detrimental.

All these alliances, involving several merchants and royal officers with an interest in the same affairs and conveniently reinforced through kinship or friendship, were rife in the period. In many cases these alliances could encourage the good functioning of the whole political system through the efficiency that often comes with emotional bonds. On the other hand, however, other cases made clear how these bonds could be obstructive when one faction encountered a different one that would also logically find support in this consanguinity or mutual sympathy that we have already alluded to.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, fs. 203–204.

⁴⁶ Remo Bodei, *Ordo amoris. Conflitti terreni e felicità celeste* (Bologna 1991); *idem*, *Geometria delle passioni. Paura, speranza e felicità: filosofia e uso politico* (Milan 1991); Ullrich Langer, *Perfect Friendship. Studies in Literature and Moral Philosophy from Boccaccio to Corneille* (Geneva 1994); Wolfgang Reinhard (ed.), *Power Elites and State Building* (Oxford 1996); Pedro Cardim, “Amor e amizade na cultura política dos séculos XVI e XVII”: *Lusitania Sacra* 11 (1999), p. 21–57.

A case in point is provided by the already mentioned Portuguese projector João Salgado de Araujo, who had certain influence in the Council of Portugal thanks to the fact that he was the nephew of its powerful secretary, Cristóvão Soares.⁴⁷ In 1610, the probable date of his arrival in Luanda as an archdeacon, many of the people already established in this area of Africa knew that he had come to pursue the interests of his other uncle, Friar Manuel Baptista Soares Pereira, bishop of Angola and Congo, who opposed the provisional governor Benito Banha Cardoso and a series of officers who were loyal to the latter, such as the *oidor* André Velho da Fonseca. The frequent outbursts of the newly elected archdeacon and his meddling in affairs that were not of his concern – he would even go so far as to free a prisoner who had been “justly” accused of murder in Luanda’s public square – would soon gain him the open enmity of the political and military sectors of the colony and, surprisingly, even that of his own family, including the already mentioned bishop of Angola and Congo, who accused him of interfering in affairs which were outside his duties. His opponents agreed to point out that he devoted “la mayor parte de su tiempo” to the writing of *arbitrios*. During the “poco tiempo” that he has been estimated to have remained in the coasts of Africa, he wrote a total of nine *arbitrios*, although only one of them, incomplete and unfortunately very damaged, has survived.⁴⁸

Accusations such as those thrown against Salgado de Araujo were not groundless, for many men employed by the Monarchy – in the political, military, and religious spheres – and who served overseas wrote reports and *arbitrios* with the purpose of obtaining a reward or privilege that would bring them closer to the coveted access to the Court of Madrid. Other royal officers, by contrast, sought to benefit from the far-away distance of the colonies and from the priority that the European territories were always given in Spanish imperial policy, to become rich with malice and impunity. For instance in 1622, according to some intelligence from the officer António Diniz addressed to Philip IV, we know that the Spanish Crown was being prevented from receiving “grandes e útiles beneficios económicos” from Angola.⁴⁹ The reasons for this major loophole in the king’s coffers were essentially two: the lack of an *alfandega* or customs, and the *alianza* of two brothers – Fernando Vogado Sotomaio, the king’s *factor* by appointment of the Governor Luis Mendes Vasconcelos, and Manuel Vogado Sotomaio, chancellor of St Paul’s Jesuit College in Luanda. Fernando Vogado’s fortune was estimated at being around 15,000 or 16,000 cruzados “si no

⁴⁷ Gerales Rodrigues, *Do Reino a Angola* (note 7), p. 54–65, here: p. 64.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 48–65.

⁴⁹ Cordeiro, *Questões* (note 14), p. 324.

más”, and it had been accumulated by tampering in his books of accounts with the amounts paid to the ships – between thirty to forty each year, half of them coming from Brazil, the Canary Islands, and Seville – that would sail to the port of Luanda to exchange food, clothes and other everyday essentials for black slaves whose prices were very much below their actual cost.⁵⁰ The heavy loaded ships which embarked in Luanda towards the Portuguese Brazil would pay 3,600 reis per *pieza* and 7,000 reis if they were bound to any other part of the Castilian Indies. António Diniz declared that “el poder de uno y la valía del otro” had such an influence that almost all the ships that sailed to the waters of Angola each year to engage in this kind of business were irremissibly dispatched to Brazil. This way, the Crown “lost” more or less 4,000 reis for every *pieza* that was not sent to Spanish America. Luanda had thus become a “puerto controlado” by two people. Paying arrival and departure rights was not required and the prices for essential products were sky-high.

This kind of abuses did not disturb much the *moradores* of the colony because they could count on hordes of *pombeiros* (slaving agents) who would provide them with slaves in exchange for the minimum cost or even for free. An obviously astonished Diniz commented upon the fact that a cow or a ram could cost “tres o cuatro veces más que un negro”.⁵¹ The Catholic Church, represented by the Jesuit Manuel Vogado Sotomaior, had little to say on this respect, because it was well-known that a significant part of the Church serving in those latitudes thought that “[...] a conversão destes barbaros nao se alcançara por amor, senao depois que por armas forem sogeitos a vassallos del Rei”.⁵² Among all this disorder, meticulously narrated by António Diniz, there was also scope for criticising the treasurers. Francisco Goçálvez, for example, who was the general paymaster for all the wages of “aquele reino de Angola”, had apparently made a fortune of 2,000 to 3,000 cruzados.⁵³ Not even the governors managed to escape Diniz’s rebukes. Corruption affected all the officers, “maiores o menores”. Some of the main omissions in which the governors of Angola incurred revolved around not providing the Spanish Crown the compulsory “quinta parte” of the profits obtained in their frequent territorial incursions and *razzias*. What was even worse: they turned a blind eye when the *moradores* took their black slaves all the way to the Congolese port of Pinda to sell

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 316–318.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 317.

⁵² Quoted by Charles R. Boxer, *Relações raciais no imperio colonial português, 1415–1825* (Porto 1988, English original 1963), p. 27, n. 20.

⁵³ Cordeiro, *Questões* (note 14), p. 319.

them to the Dutch, open enemies of the Monarchy and their greatest competitors in commercial matters in the area.

Perhaps one of the most corrupt governors was Manuel Cerveira Pereira, who did not report to Philip IV the discovery of an important salt mine in Benguela which yielded more than 30,000 cruzados per year. It seems unlikely that the highest political authorities of the territories were much concerned by the difficult situation of the “pobres soldados” based there, for they outrageously deducted from their wages the price for the small quantities of “harina de guerra” provided to them for their monthly use.⁵⁴

The Congolese port of Pinda, located on the mouth of the Zaire River in the Atlantic Ocean and thus bordering the Angolan lands, had become, since the late sixteenth century, a traditional and competitive centre for important commercial exchanges between the Portuguese and Dutch sailors.⁵⁵ The inexplicable lack of a permanent Iberian presence in so strategic a commercial centre did not escape some of the *arbitristas*, many of whom were captains in the most important Angolan fortifications.⁵⁶ Their writings and maps were seeking to some extent for the Spanish Crown to redefine the territorial occupation of this crucial area, which was half way in the routes that united Lisbon and Seville with the Eastern coast of South America and the possessions of the Estado da Índia. García Mendes Castelo Branco, one of the seven or eight officers who had accompanied Paulo Dias de Novais to the aforementioned expedition to Angola of 1575, had already realised the importance of fortifying such port for the Crown, and to this end he did not hesitate to write several works in the first decades of the seventeenth century.⁵⁷ In 1603, Castelo Branco noted, “de dos a tres naves holandesas” were in charge of local commerce, mainly based on slaves and ivory. The necessity for the Spanish Monarchy to erect a dissuasive fortification in Pinda against the “enemigos holandeses” was “muy fuerte”, so no time could be wasted in asking the Manicongo, who was their ally, for a *licencia*.⁵⁸ Two or three “big” ships should be sent quickly together with “hombres bien provistos” with gunpowder – about 200 first, for one or two months, then forty “de continuo” – and “mucha”, “mucha” artillery. The feeding of the soldiers stationed there would be entrusted to the governor of

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 321–323.

⁵⁵ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in Western Africa. Empires, Merchants and the Atlantic System 1580–1674* (Leiden 2011), p. 177 (Table 17), and in general chapter 6.

⁵⁶ Biblioteca del Palacio de Ajuda, 51-VIII-20, f. 5: An account of 1613 on the Dutch threat in Mina and Pinda (includes map).

⁵⁷ Cordeiro, *Questões* (note 14), p. 168–211.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 173–178, here: p. 173.

Angola, who would load one or two “small” ships with flour from Brazil for them to “comer en cuanto se hiciere la dicha fortaleza”. Such an important fortress, which would run along “treinta leguas poco más o menos”, would mean two great advantages for Philip III: first, it would be useful to “quitar recursos” from the Dutch and “ganarlos” for himself; and second, it would notably increase the Catholic faith in those territories. In his opinion, this last point was no less urgent than the other one, since it was known that the people from Congo would soon convert to the “sectas que los holandeses les llevan y les enseñan”.⁵⁹

It is precisely this very purpose of defensive cantonment based on curbing Dutch commerce and expanding the Catholic faith propounded by Castelo Branco that we can also identify in an *arbitrio* – the only one still extant as far as we know – written by João Salgado de Araujo in 1615.⁶⁰ According to the controversial archdeacon of Luanda, the building of a fortress in Pinda would secure a “grande aumento de la cristiandad”, as it was known that some 60,000 souls in the area were “desprovidas de sacramentos”. The fortress would also serve as defence and bridgehead to penetrate into the “fertilissimas” lands of Angoy, scattered across the two banks of the Zaire River. The profits that could derive from this exploration, which Salgado Araujo proposed in parallel to that of Angola, would be an “escravidão de bom serviço” and “muito marfim”.⁶¹

The long distance between the different territories which composed the overseas empire of the Spanish Habsburgs was a formidable obstacle for the royal orders approved in the different councils. In the case of the South-eastern Asian possessions, an aid expedition and news from the Iberian Peninsula could take up to one year before they arrived. In the case of the colonies in the Western Atlantic and the East Coast of South America, it was a bit less than half a year. The slow course of communications and inevitable imponderables – such as rises in the prices of victuals and supplies, the effective risks of piracy, an adverse weather, etc. – always ran against the fragile situation in which the inhabitants of the overseas colonies found themselves. Jerónimo Castaño seems to have been aware of some of this when, in his already mentioned reports sent to the Court in Madrid, he had pointed out that during the period when the lawyers of the Council of Portugal were debating the feasibility of the enterprise of Angola, the Sobas, who had already been made subjects of the Crown by Governor Paulo Dias de Novais, had established friendly relations with

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 174 and 177.

⁶⁰ Archivo Histórico Ultramarino, Angola, caja 1, documento 45.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

other hostile tribes of the area and not with the Portuguese settlers. This fact, as Castaño implied, would have a negative impact on the royal treasury.⁶² The veteran soldier and merchant's reprimands were, to a certain extent, headed in the right direction, for the apparatus of the African colonial system, like that of Spanish America and the Asian possessions, could only be successful through the profits resulting from taxing the natives and from the plentiful and exotic natural resources. This specifically explains why so many texts following this line flourished between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

In 1620, for instance, a project for the “foramento e tributação” of a total of 200 Sobas was propounded to the members of the Council of Portugal in Madrid by the already mentioned Captain García Castelo Branco.⁶³ Like many other writers of *arbitrios* who were engaged in military affairs, his experience furnished him with the necessary authority to write about this and other related matters. The *arbitrios* written by García Branco in the first third of the seventeenth century are many and diverse. Apart from suggesting the fortification of the Congolese port of Pinda to counteract Dutch ivory trade and expand the Catholic faith, as we have seen, he also alludes to the possibility of promoting the whole population of this area of Western Africa and of the development of breeding equine livestock.⁶⁴ Actually, all these thoughts were aimed at accomplishing a double objective. First, they would contribute to a better preservation of the conquered territory through the active defence of key strongholds, which would reject any internal or external threats. Secondly, they would enable the Iberians to establish themselves even better – that was actually the main motive for the “projecto de foramento e tributação” – through an occupational strategy that would mean that the Sobas, in exchange for protection and according to their land possessions, would pay an amount to the conquerors and to the Jesuits of St Paul of Benguela between 100,000 and 200,000 reis per year. This text contains the added value that its author does not hide his desire to keep for himself the position of “comisario general” of such a tax collection, even if he would be under the supervision of the purveyor of the royal treasury and the superior of the Society of Jesus. According to Castelo Branco, the annual profit estimated for this compulsory taxation would be of approximately 15,000,000 reis, which would be almost entirely used to pay the

⁶² “Memorial de Jerónimo Castaño” (note 31), fs. 169, 173, and 203–205.

⁶³ Cordeiro, *Questões* (note 14), p. 178–185.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 185–211.

soldiers stationed at the fortresses. Philip III, the Portuguese captain insisted, would spend nothing on officers.⁶⁵

In 1618, two years before Castelo Branco brought forward his “projecto de foramento e tributação” for the Sobas, a similar document written by Baltasar Rebelo de Aragão had appeared.⁶⁶ Rebelo was yet another soldier who, like Castelo, had wide experience in Africa, having served there at least since 1593. In contrast with Castelo Branco, Rebelo de Aragão had never been employed under the orders of Governor Paulo Dias de Novais, but he had served under Francisco de Almeida and João Furtado de Mendoza respectively. Under the latter’s government, he had saved the fortress of Massangano from strong native pressure and in 1599 he even founded, at his own expense, the fortress of Muxima.⁶⁷ The interest of this text lies in the fact that it is a different stand from that taken by Castelo Branco while tackling the same problem, which was the lack of assistance for the troops stationed in Angola. Rebelo de Aragão put forward that all Sobas, “robados y muy maltratados”, should pay to the conquerors a fee or stipend in money – he did not specify how much – and agricultural products – easy to pay for and highly available, more than in “nuestra España”, he claimed – such as millet, beans, oil, and salt. This would be of “gran provecho” to the royal treasury because, according to Rebelo, it could also be used to pay the soldiers that were stationed there.⁶⁸

Governor Fernando de Sousa thought similarly to Rebelo de Aragão, and in a letter to Philip IV on July 8th, 1626, he stated that he had prepared a census of all the Angolan Sobas obedient to the Spanish Monarchy. In the brief annex he attached to this very same letter, he recommended to exempt them, for they – a total of 81 – had declared that “no consideraban que el tributo fuera perpetuo”.⁶⁹ The political actions of this governor, doubtlessly relevant in many respects, can also be linked to certain attempts made under the government of João Furtado de Mendoza at the end of the sixteenth century aimed at obtaining better conditions for the Iberian settlement in Angola. It seems, however, that it was Fernando de Sousa who finally developed this good disposition by granting to the soldiers lands under the *sesmaria* system and promoting the cultivation of the soil.⁷⁰ The simple fact that he favoured the acquisition of black slaves through peaceful means was an initiative that notably distanced him from his predecessors. The opening

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 178–182.

⁶⁶ Cordeiro, *Questões* (note 14), vol. I, p. 220–244, here: p. 220–234.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 215–220, and 241–244.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 224, 225, and 227.

⁶⁹ Biblioteca del Palacio de Ajuda, 51-IX-20, fs. 331–332.

⁷⁰ Heintze, *Fontes para a história de Angola* (note 14).

and keeping of a series of *ferias* was an integral part of the colony's modernising project that Fernando de Sousa wished to implant. This is why, a year after he took the office as governor, he decided to create one for Ambaca. A completely trustworthy officer would try to prevent the *pombeiros* from being corrupt and paying more money than was used to for the *piezas*.

This was not to last. In a letter to Philip IV written in 1633, Gonzalo de Sousa, eldest son of the recently dismissed governor of Angola, stated that the *ferias* which had been founded after that of Ambaca in Dondo, Beja, and Lucamba had almost entirely disappeared due to disorders and numerous tribal wars.⁷¹ This delicate situation, according to what we know of the years during which Portugal struggled to maintain its independence from Spain between 1640 and 1668, did not get better. The instability of the *ferias* founded by Fernando de Sousa and the financial struggles of the few dwellers in Angola was described in detail in another letter, this time addressed to João IV and written by the purveyor of the royal treasury, Benito Teixeira de Saldaña, in 1652.⁷²

Whereas, as has been noted, Castelo Branco suggested for his “projecto de aforamento e tributação” for the Sobas little involvement in terms of costs and officers for the royal treasury, Rebelo de Aragão demanded the exact opposite; that is, “más oficiales” so that the authority of the Crown would be obeyed and respected. Quoting his own words, “los presidios de Angola no rendían nada [...] porque todo se lo llevaban los capitanes y los gobernadores”. One out of every ten slaves, Rebelo carried on, would be for the governors of the colony.⁷³ The same news provided by this soldier in 1618 can be found a few years later, in 1629, during the time of João Correia de Sousa as governor. The informant, António Bezerra Fajardo, was an Angolan officer close to the judgements forwarded to the Crown by António Diniz in 1622.⁷⁴ The author of this document did not hesitate to point out the regrettable losses caused to the royal treasury because of the governors who succeeded Manuel Cerveira Pereira from 1607 onwards. In his opinion, and as a result of not collecting the appropriate tributes from the subdued Sobas, the Crown had been prevented from receiving around 13,000 cruzados per year.⁷⁵ All of these royal rights, as well as those related to slave trade, “no debían arrendarse” in order to stop them from falling into

⁷¹ Archivo Histórico Ultramarino, Angola, caja 3, documento 5.

⁷² Archivo Histórico Ultramarino, Angola, caja 5, documento 101.

⁷³ Cordeiro, *Questões* (note 14), vol. I, p. 224 and 226–227.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 333–340.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 333.

corruption and abuse. Bezerra Fajardo could not estimate the exact amount because the governors had the bad habit of not “guardar ni papeles ni provisiones”, but it was doubtless “abundantísima”. The other way through which royal liquidity was lost were the “muchas guerras” launched by some of the governors, which were “injustas”, in his opinion, because “se mata mucha gente” and because “no tiene mucho sentido” since the people of this “nación no tienen resistencia ninguna a los blancos y les obedecen fácilmente”. The men of arms and the common people should not meddle in the “declaración de guerra” because “los capitanes y los moradores no quieren más sino que haya guerras para capturar piezas y valerse de ellas”.⁷⁶

Naturally, the neglect of power functions and corrupt activities carried out by the men responsible for the government of the overseas colonies were not exclusive of Angola. In the island of Madeira, for example, the defensive expenses of which mounted up to a total of 925,000 reis in 1606, was also targeted by Philip III and his councillors for embezzling its traditional renting system and for avoiding to carry out the defensive construction works that had been ordered by Madrid at least two years before.⁷⁷ Moreover, thanks to the detailed intelligence forwarded to the Council of State on April 16th of the same year by the Castilian Captain Diego de Obregón, it became known how the governor, Don Juan Fogaça de Leca, and the purveyor of the royal treasury, Baltasar Froes, had established “negocios fraudulentos” with the Dutch rebels. According to Diego de Obregón, the Dutch sailors “metían y sacaban mercancías”, especially sugar, flour, and palo from Brazil, as if Madeira was a “puerto franco”. Fed up with the threats that he was receiving from the governor of Madeira and some contract-killers under the latter’s pay, Obregón decided to put an end to this situation by requesting *licencia* to leave the island towards a less corrupt and more secure destination. The Council of State, which was fully aware of what was going on through other examinations in the same line, resolved to keep him in his post “por ser una persona entera y celosa del servicio”. The Council did contact, however, the Council of Portugal with the intent of sending someone “de su más absoluta confianza” with the purpose of figuring out what was happening there. This entangled situation was finally closed by a famous *visita* which resulted in the immediate dismissal of the main culprits of such “vergonzantes actos”, the Governor Don Juan Fogaça de Leca and the purveyor Baltasar Froes.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibidem, p. 334–335 and 338.

⁷⁷ AGS, Estado, legajo 2.636.

⁷⁸ Ibidem. Related documents can be found in AGS, Estado, legajo 435.

Situations like those described above, which were certainly not uncommon in the vast but scattered Iberian colonial world, may explain why a shadow of mistrust and suspicion haunted the Portuguese and the Castilians during the half century in which they obeyed the same king. Unfortunately, comments such as those picked up by Anthony Sherley in his essential *Peso de todo el mundo* (1622), did nothing to help, as they became commonplace. This English adventurer serving under the Spanish Habsburgs considered the Portuguese “antiguos enemigos e inciertos vasallos”, a statement which was enough proof of how difficult it was for both nations to coexist.⁷⁹ Such harsh accusations made clear that there was not even scope for negotiation with certain political traditions like that represented by Pedro de Valenzuela, who stated in his *Portugal unido, y separado* (1659) that “tan español es el portugués como el castellano”.⁸⁰ It is indeed possible that the stigma of Judaism and a critical stand towards the predisposition of the Portuguese to commercial business may have weighed up heavily in Sherley’s judgements. Such demons were usually let loose in moments of uncertainty and confusion, like the proclamation of a new sovereign following a revolt of questionable legitimacy. It was not uncommon that people who had been hitherto labelled as *compatriotas* would be henceforth treated as common scoundrels. Panic of a colonial rebellion was most definitely a reality until Portugal officially separated from Spain after the Treaty of Lisbon was signed in 1668.⁸¹

Some of this can be seen in the *bando* issued in Mexico on November 27th, 1641, due to the Portuguese revolt that had taken place in December 1640.⁸² The document, signed by Don Diego de Pacheco, viceroy of New Spain, declared “que todos los portugueses” living in Mexico had to register for “mayor seguridad suya” and hand over all of “las armas de fuego que tuvieren, so pena de la vida y perdimiento de bienes”. Similar preventive measures were also adopted in Santo Domingo in 1650 following the rumours – spread by some statements made to the officers of the Casa de la Contratación by several Spanish pilots of the area who had arrived in Seville after having been prisoners to the French and the Portuguese – “de la toma de

⁷⁹ *Peso de todo el mundo* (Madrid 2010), p. 90, including case studies done by Ángel Alloza, Miguel Ángel de Bunes, and José Antonio Martínez Torres.

⁸⁰ Pedro de Valenzuela, *Portugal unido, y separado* (Madrid 1659), p. 64.

⁸¹ Stuart B. Schwartz, “Pânico nas Índias. A ameaça portuguesa ao Império espanhol, 1640–1650”: idem, *Da América Portuguesa ao Brasil. Estudos Históricos* (Lisbon 2003); Mafalda Soares da Cunha, “Os insatisfeitos das honras. Os aclamadores de 1640”: Laura de Mello e Souza/Júnia Ferreira Furtado/María Fernanda Bicalho (orgs.), *O Governo dos Povos* (São Paulo 2009), p. 475–493.

⁸² Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza de Toledo, Frías, caja 124, documento 5.

Santo Tomé y del castillo de Buenos Aires”.⁸³ Apparently, any trifle could ignite a conflict gestated during decades of mutual hatred. This was made all the more dramatic among populations like those on Terceira Island, awfully divided in *bandos*, where approximately 20% of women were married to Spanish soldiers and had children born of these unions. In 1623, for instance, in a letter dated November 10th, and addressed to King Philip IV and his councillors of State and War by the Spanish Don Pedro Esteban Dávila, the *maestre de campo* in charge of the fortress of San Felipe on Terceira, the latter informed of an “alboroto” which had taken place between the Castilians and the Portuguese.⁸⁴ The trigger seemed not to be of much importance. A Castilian soldier from the fortification went out to “henchir una cantarilla de agua a una fuente pública” of the city. He had probably crossed the line with a black slave – belonging to the Portuguese *corregidor* of the Azores, Pedro Vaz Freire – who happened to be in the same place with another black slave, probably her partner or friend. Even if the incident may not have been too significant, its final results, apparently disproportionate, seriously worried the Court in Madrid as they evolved into a spiral of violence between the Castilian military authorities and the Portuguese civil authorities. We probably need to seek the origins of these conflicts in the unsolved hostility that ensued the harsh repression carried out on the archipelago under royal orders in 1583 by the Marquis of Santa Cruz and the subsequent Castilian military meddling in certain aspects of the isles’ everyday and religious life. That is, at least, what can be inferred from a later letter written on August 2nd, 1623, by Pedro Esteban de Ávila, governor of the fortress of Terceira.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The picture portrayed by this brief but significant sample of texts about the Portuguese “conquest” of Angola between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is a most revealing one. The repeated requests for exploratory and military operations which were undoubtedly connected to commerce were a response to diverse group interests which sought to gain support from cer-

⁸³ AGI, Charcas, legajo 3.

⁸⁴ British Library, Additional, 28.439.

⁸⁵ AGS, Guerra y Marina, legajo 952. On the history of the archipelago for this period, see Avelino de Freitas de Meneses, *Os Açores e o domínio filipino (1580–1590). A resistência terceirense e as implicações da conquista espanhola* (Angra do Heroísmo 1987); Maria Hermínia Morais Mesquita, *As gentes de Angra no século XVII* (doctoral thesis, Universidade do Minho 2004); and Jean Frédéric Schaub, “Archipiélago marítimo y archipiélago político: Las Azores bajo los Austrias”: Cardim/Freire/Soares, *Portugal na Monarquia Hipânica* (note 32), p. 73–92.

tain royal institutions of the period. In face of the dangerous drift taken by some overseas affairs in the context of Baroque international politics, there was an attempt to bring to the attention of the monarch and his most trusted circle many aspects of the same from Angola, a neglected corner of the Spanish Habsburgs' empire.⁸⁶ Some of these proposals involved the reactivation of the initial expansionist policies undertaken by Angola's first governor, Paulo Dias de Novais: the strategic fortification and evangelisation of neglected areas of commercial exchange, the subjection of the less unruly African vassals through regular and compulsory taxing – in line with what was already being done in Spanish America –, and even the denunciation of the fraud and administrative neglect. The Spanish Crown and some of its most prominent ministers only showed a limited interest in these affairs, which was unfortunate given the magnitude of the issues being raised.

It would be risky to simplify the discursive styles present in these texts, but the documents hereby analysed can be classified into two basic groups: those requesting from the Monarchy a stronger involvement in the conquest as its director and supervisor, and those which preferred the contrary as a guarantee of the autonomy agreed by Philip II in the Cortes of Tomar in 1581. The truth is that this perceived *laissez faire* in the Western African Portuguese possessions was a great opportunity for enrichment and social, collective, and individual ascent. This does not seem to have been a prerogative of the Atlantic world. Something similar was gestating during the same period in the territories composing the Estado da Índia.⁸⁷ In other words, a decade before the end of Philip II's reign, the incorporation of the Crown of Portugal by the Spanish Monarchy was already starting to be perceived as a failure by some of the people employed overseas in the military and mercantile sectors, who watched helplessly how their everyday affairs were not satisfied in the dynastic policies which emanated from Madrid. To a certain extent, the only thing they could do was to put pressure by writing texts of a marked accusing tone.

It can be observed that for the same period a series of polemicists and theoreticians of power in the peninsula were re-thinking the traditional constitutional position of each of the territories composing the so-called “com-

⁸⁶ See especially Jonathan I. Israel, *La República Holandesa y el Mundo Hispánico, 1606–1661* (San Sebastián 1996); Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in Western Africa: Empires, Merchants and the Atlantic System, 1580–1674* (Leiden 2011).

⁸⁷ Antonio Manuel Hespanha/Catarina Madeira Santos, “Le forme di potere di un impero oceánico”: Renzo Zorzi (dir.), *L'epopea delle scoperte* (Florence 1994), p. 449–478; James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580–1640* (Baltimore 1993); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *L'Empire portugais d'Asie 1500–1700* (Paris 1999); Ernst van Veen, *An Inquiry into the Portuguese Decline in Asia, 1580–1645. Decay or Defeat?* (Leiden 2000); Rafael Valladares, *Castilla y Portugal en Asia (1580–1680). Declive imperial y adaptación* (Louvain 2001).

posite” or “aggregative” monarchy of Spain through the ideological association produced by a “unique” language based on the love of a father-shepherd towards its flock.⁸⁸ At the same time, in the overseas periphery, a similar operation was being developed by the soldiers and merchants serving there. With the reports, *arbitrios*, and other pieces of information that they sent to the institutions of Madrid, they were trying to reshape the disperse and badly articulated maritime empire of the Pacific, uniting it with that of the Atlantic, which was more profitable in financial terms and perhaps the least difficult to assist. These proposals would have meant a change in the traditional nature of the Portuguese Empire, and they started some decades before 1640. They were motivated by feelings of helplessness when it came to defending, by means of force and pen, the commercial monopoly in Asia which had been acquired in the fifteenth century thanks to the bulls issued by the papal chancellery.

We should not dismiss how valuable it is for the humanities to reflect upon and classify empires according to the historical drift of this particular “civilising” period. It is convenient to remember that the intellectual manoeuvre against Iberian expansion was greatly bolstered by the uncritical dissemination of the “black legend” and Nicolas Masson de Morvilliers’s 1783 article “Espagne” for the *Encyclopédie Méthodique*.⁸⁹ However,

⁸⁸ John H. Elliott, *Lengua e Imperio en la España de Felipe IV* (Salamanca 1994); José María Iñurritegui Rodríguez, *La Gracia y la República. El lenguaje político de la teología católica y el Príncipe Cristiano de Pedro de Ribadeneira* (Madrid 1998); Pablo Fernández Albaladejo, “Common Souls, Autonomous Bodies: the Language of Unification under the Catholic Monarchy 1590–1630”: Jon Arrieta/John H. Elliott (eds.), “Forms of Union: the British and Spanish Monarchies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries”: *Revista Internacional de los Estudios Vascos* 5 (2009), p. 73–81; idem, “Lecciones de Roma. Monarquía y patria común en el reinado de Felipe III” (unpublished manuscript; I am indebted to the author for providing me with a copy); Xavier Gil Pujol, “Integrar un mundo. Dinámicas de agregación y cohesión en la Monarquía de España”: Óscar Mazín/José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez (ed.), *Las Indias occidentales: procesos de incorporación territorial a las monarquías ibéricas, siglos XVI a XVIII* (Mexico City 2013), p. 69–108; Pedro Cardim/Tamar Herzog/José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez/Gaetano Sabatini, *Polycentric Monarchies. How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* (Brighton 2012); Pedro Cardim, *Portugal unido y separado. Felipe II, la unión de territorios y el debate sobre la condición política del Reino de Portugal* (Valladolid 2014); Carlos Martínez Shaw/José Antonio Martínez Torres (dirs.), *España y Portugal en el Mundo, 1581–1668* (Madrid 2014); Etienne Bourdeau/Antonio de Almeida Mendes/Guillaume Gaudin/Natividad Planas/Pascale Girard, *La péninsule Ibérique et le monde, 1470–1650* (Paris 2014).

⁸⁹ Ricardo García Cárcel, *La leyenda negra: historia y opinión* (Madrid 1998), chapter 2; Juan Pimentel, “The Iberian Vision: Science and Empire in the Framework of a Universal Monarchy, 1500–1800”: *Osiris* 15 (2001), p. 17–30; Brendecke, *Imperio e información* (note 4), p. 479–492; María M. Portuondo, *Ciencia secreta. La cosmografía española y el Nuevo Mundo* (Madrid/Frankfurt am Main 2012), p. 17–36 and 331–338; Anthony Pagden, *The*

another piece of evidence which is useful for the analysis of the nature of this “dual empire” and which will help us understand its “decline” (whether in terms of “crisis” as pointed out by Reinhart Koselleck or in terms of “resilience” as proposed by physics) is the weight that the stoic tradition and the thought of state theoreticians such as Giovanni Botero may have had in Spain and Portugal.⁹⁰ In opposition to Machiavelli, this thinker born in Bene Vagienna was much more interested in the “conservation” of power than in “conquest”. It is precisely for that reason that the role he ascribes in his works to the overseas fortresses and to the conqueror-merchants, as colonisers and members of the local governments, is an essential one. Angola, with its territorial prolongation towards Mozambique and its more or less regular contacts with Brazil, became a decisive territory for the Spanish Monarchy after the loss of the Eastern axis with the disaster of Ormuz in 1622, brought about by the pressures of English and Dutch sailors.⁹¹

Diego de Herrera, Domingo de Abreu e Brito, Jerónimo Castaño, Antonio Diniz, João Salgado Araujo, García Mendes Castelo Branco, Baltasar Rebelo Aragão, Fernando de Sousa, Antonio Bezerra Fajardo, and many other royal officers serving in the coasts of Western Africa presented themselves sometimes as loyal and disinterested informants moved by their love to their king, sometimes as badly rewarded victims who had provided important services, and sometimes even as reporters of fraud, disorder, and plots engendered at the centre of political power. Jerónimo Castaño’s story is a case in point. The obstruction of the conquest of Angola in 1575 involved the king of Congo, the merchants of São Tomé, and some members of the Council of Portugal in Madrid who saw how the commercial monopoly acquired almost without opposition before the union of Portugal and Castile in 1580 was now faltering. By specifying these entangled alliances, Jerónimo Castaño provides us with a key to the interpretation, understanding, and re-thinking of this process of “collective introspection” suffered by

Enlightenment and Why It Still Matters (London 2013); and Antonio Sánchez, *La espada, la cruz y el Padrón. Soberanía, fe y representación cartográfica en el mundo ibérico bajo la Monarquía Hispánica, 1503–1598* (Seville 2013), p. 25–43 and 303–306.

⁹⁰ Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge 1982); Peer Schmidt “Neostoicismo y disciplinamiento social en Iberoamerica colonial (siglo XVII)”: Karl Kohut/Sonia V. Rose (eds.), *Pensamiento europeo y cultura colonial* (Madrid/Frankfurt am Main 1997), p. 181–204; Schmidt, *La monarquía universal* (note 17), p. 443–450; Pagden, *Señores de todo el Mundo* (note 17), p. 58, 63, and 140–149, and the bibliography there indicated.

⁹¹ Charles R. Boxer, “The Portuguese in the East, 1500–1800”: *Opera Minora*, 3 vols. (Lisbon 2002), vol. III, p. 251–322; Van Veen, *An inquiry* (note 87), p. 75–81 and 147–171; André Murteira, *A Carreira da Índia e o Corso Neerlandês, 1595–1625* (Lisbon 2012), p. 95–212.

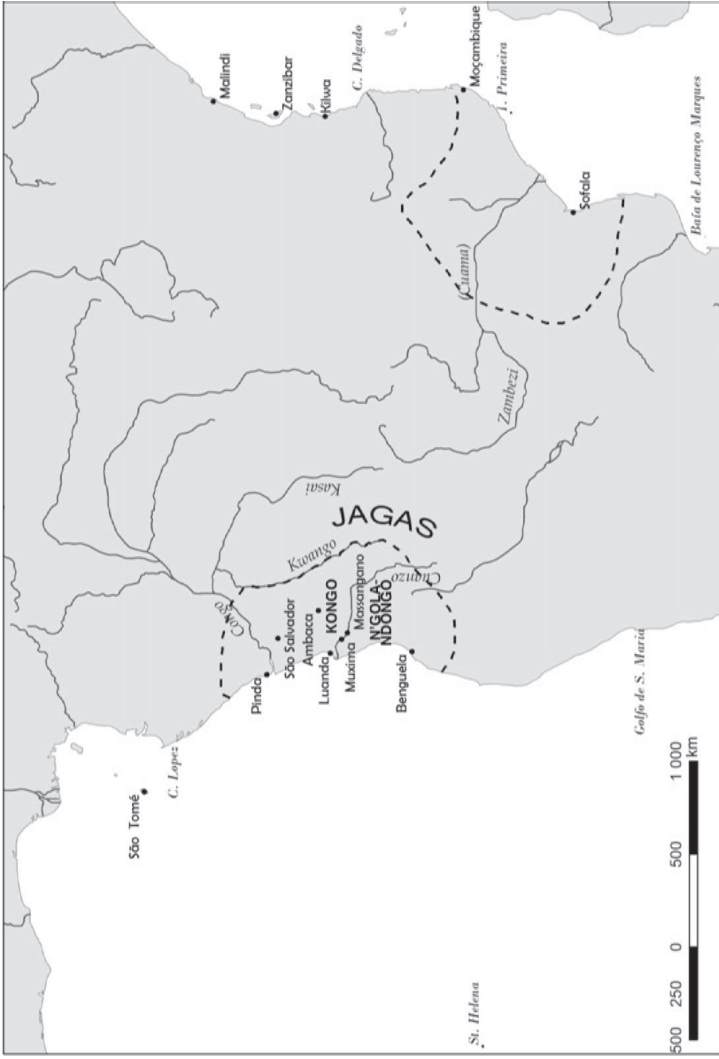
“the Monarchy” – the empire of the Spanish Habsburgs – in all its amplitude and through all possible angles.⁹²

Appendix1: Rulers of Angola (1575–1630)

Paulo Dias de Novais (1575–1589)
 Luis Serrão (1589–1591)
 André Ferreira Pereira (1591–1592)
 Francisco de Almeida (1592–1593)
 Jerónimo de Almeida (1593–1594)
 João Furtado de Mendonça (1594–1602)
 João Rodriguez Contino (1602–1603)
 Manoel Cerveira Pereira (1603–1606)
 Antonio Gonçalves Pita (1606–1607)
 Manoel Pereira Forjaz (1607–1611)
 Benito Banha Cardoso (1611–1615)
 Manoel Cerveira Pereira (1615–1617)
 Luis Méndez de Vasconcelos (1617–1621)
 João Correia de Sousa (1621–1623)
 Pedro de Sousa Coelho (1623)
 Simão Mascarenhas (1623–1624)
 Fernando de Sousa (1624–1630)

⁹² I am currently involved in a series of research projects dealing in detail with colonial politics and discourse in the Iberian overseas possessions (especially in Africa and Asia) between 1575 and 1640. See recently: José Antonio Martínez Torres, “‘There is but one world’: Globalisation and connections in the overseas territories of the Spanish Habsburgs (1581–1640)”: *Culture & History Digital Journal* 1 (2014, in press), and the bibliography found there.

Appendix 2: Map of Portuguese Africa, 16th–17th Centuries



Map elaborated by Werner Stangl, based on a map from C. R. Boxer, *O Império Marítimo Português, 1415–1825* (Lisboa 2001), p. 20.

