

Brazil and the Politics of the Spanish Habsburgs in the South Atlantic, 1580–1640

ABSTRACT: During the period of the Union of Spanish and Portuguese Crowns (1580–1640), known as the “Iberian Union” or “Philippine Period,” global connections inside and outside the Spanish or “Universal Monarchy” underwent an important impulse. Specifically, Portuguese America and the territories in the South Atlantic experienced important transformations. Brazilian, Spanish, and Portuguese historiographical traditions in the past have dealt with this issue in very different ways. Nowadays there is a new historiography that has started to contemplate the question from a very different point of view, without nationalistic concerns. Questions about defense, administrative reforms, mine discovery, or global connections are emerging as the principal aspects to be considered.

KEYWORDS: Iberian Union (1580–1640), new historiographical approaches, South Atlantic.

During the period of the Union of the Crowns of Spain and Portugal, 1580–1640, a vast row of territories was united under the same king. From Macao to Lima, from Antwerp to Goa, from Olinda to the Maluku Islands, huge extensions of land separated by enormous spaces occupied large areas on maps and in the strategies of the counselors of the monarchs of the House of Austria in Madrid. The empire was complex and was in contact with different political, religious, and cultural realities. This was a Catholic empire—the “Catholic Monarchy,” as this conglomerate was known in those times—that confronted another large empire, also religious but not unified: the Islamic empire. When a vast territory was added in 1580 to the possessions held by Felipe II, this huge theater entered the first phases of globalization, or *mondialisation*, as Serge Gruzinski pointed out in a classic publication, since some 225 cities were under the reign of the same king and the same faith (Mass was heard every half an hour in some place on earth).¹ This macroempire was the corollary to the processes being devel-

oped since the arrival of Columbus in America and of Vasco da Gama in India at the end of the fifteenth century. However, this is only part of a historical phenomenon—the origins of globalization—that had already experienced an important chapter with the expansion of Islam. There is no doubt that the incorporation of South American and Asian territories to the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns during the sixteenth century led to planetary connections that were to transform the societies of the modern era in all its aspects, but mainly in the spheres of economy, religion, and culture. In this *world in motion*, configured under the power of the House of Austria, people witnessed monetary transactions, the transport of military contingents and merchandise, the transmission of ideas, the expansion of the Catholic religion, the migration of populations, and the transfer of artistic styles, all on a planetary scale. The Baroque, the first “global” artistic style, began its extraordinary expansion precisely during these times. Under the umbrella of the Catholic monarchy, two large networks with economic and religious connotations became consolidated: those of the Jesuits and the Sephardi Jews. The Jesuits, who had already taken positions in Africa and in Asia in preceding years, extended their sphere of action in this “world without borders,” achieving—for a religious order—an unprecedented degree of influence in political activities, beginning to construct their economic empire, and broadening their actions from Peru to Japan. Their expulsion from this Asian country in 1639 and from São Paulo in 1640 was, curiously, contemporaneous with the end of the Dynastic Union.

The Sephardim, with a base first in Antwerp and then in Amsterdam, and sometimes working with the new Christians, used such bases to set up an immense network of businesses, which had repercussions spreading to all four corners of the earth.

The immensity of South America and the Brazilian territory belonging to the Portuguese Crown, in particular, were another piece on this gigantic game board whose different parts were united precariously by political, economic, linguistic, and cultural links. It is thus essential to look at the “Philippine” period in Brazil from this perspective. With this in mind we shall strip ourselves of the different historiographical traditions that have hindered a global, impartial, and unbiased understanding of the important historical moments in the early modern era.

The historiography relating to this period has been especially affected by the peculiar relations that, as of 1640, arose between Spain and Portugal, and later

by the distance marked by Brazil with respect to its former metropolis since 1822. Indeed, the period of Dynastic Union was traditionally seen by Portuguese historiography with a nationalist bent as a dark period, with a catastrophic result for the situation in Portugal in the international arena. This interpretation is well known, and according to it the Portuguese “Restoration” of 1640 would have been a movement of the Portuguese people to liberate Portugal from Spanish tyranny.² According to this interpretation, the Portuguese empire underwent a marked decadence during the years of the Union of Crowns, shrunken in its capacity for defense, and directed from a city in the interior (Madrid), where, as noted by Father Vieira, “you could only see the ocean in the pictures in the ‘Alcázar.’” The negligence of the Habsburgs in regard to Portuguese possessions, their extreme preoccupation about the wars in Europe, and their lust for American silver would have been responsible for the marginalization of the overseas Portuguese empire.³

For Brazilian historiography, this period had a very different meaning. Insistent on showing the country’s differences with Portugal, aimed at the building of its own identity, Brazilian historians saw this period not as interference by another country in Brazil’s own affairs but as a period marking the start of two contemporary processes that, from north to south, served as embryonic phenomena around which Brazilian identity was to be constructed, since both contributed importantly to defining some of the keys to contemporary Brazil. These two processes were the Dutch invasion of the Northeast and the consequent resistance by the inhabitants, and their later victory “a custa de nosso sangue e fazenda” (at the cost of our blood and our money), and the *bandeirante* phenomenon in the South. These two processes constituted the starting point for the construction of a regional identity both in Pernambuco and in São Paulo. As of 1822, both processes would serve as strong motivation to reinforce political vindications in these regions with respect to the central Brazilian state, first during the empire and then during the Republican period. Accordingly, Brazilian historiography did not accord much importance to the Dynastic Union and its consequences.

Toward New Approaches

The situation described above is now beginning to change very fast due to new interpretations. The 1580–1640 period and the specific issue of the role of Brazil among the territories belonging to the House of Austria have recently been at-

tracting special attention. On the one hand, modernist historians such as Fernando Bouza, Rafael Valladares, and Jean Frederic Schaub have radically changed the former view of the period of the Dynastic Union and have placed it in its correct context after analyzing the complex relations of power between the different factions of the Portuguese elite and the Spanish Habsburg.

With regard to studies addressing Brazil, we should not overlook the classic books of Boxer, above all his extraordinary *Salvador Correia de Sa and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola*, one of the best books dealing with the period.⁴ Another classic that is still valid is the book by Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão, *Do Brasil Filipino ao Brasil de 1640*, an admirable work of historical research in Portuguese, Spanish, and Brazilian archives.⁵ The above Valladares, too, has gone deeper into political issues during the Dynastic Union to analyze the role played by Brazil during this period.⁶ Also important is the book by Professor Alencastro entitled *O trato dos viventes*, now a classic, although its chronology does not coincide exactly with that of the Union of the Crowns. This work invites us to view the Brazil of the seventeenth century in more precise terms, integrated within the context of the South Atlantic.⁷

Today there is rekindled interest in these matters. The special relation that has developed between Spain and Brazil over the past ten years shows that mutual interest has been generated on both sides. The Spanish and the Brazilians have suddenly become aware that in the mists of history there were already fore-runners of this "special relation." Roseli Santaella Stella has published, in both Spanish and Portuguese, the work *Brasil durante el gobierno español, 1580-1640*, which extols the richness of the General Archives of Simancas in Spain for research into this period.⁸ The most important work to emerge recently is probably the thesis of Rafael Ruiz, entitled "São Paulo na Monarquia hispânica," which was defended at the University of São Paulo and published in 2004.⁹ This is the most advanced work addressing the issue in recent years. The most incisive points of the author's reflections are the integration of Brazil within the context of the imperial politics of the Spanish Crown and, above all, the comparison between the policies destined for Brazil and those of the other parts of the Habsburg Empire in Latin America. Other works are now under way and should soon offer us novel approaches and interpretations. One example is the thesis of Alirio Cardoso, "Maranhão na Monarquia Hispânica," which he is currently preparing at the University of Salamanca; another is that of Guida Marques, defended in 2009 at the École de Hautes Études de Paris, with the title "L'invention

du Brésil entre deux monarchies: Gouvernement et pratiques politiques de l'Amérique portugaise dans l'Union Ibérique.”

The results reported in these works are very important. They begin to answer the following important but still unresolved question: what historical significance can we give to the entry of Brazil into the Spanish empire in America in 1580? It has been suggested that Brazil represented a good asset in terms of both its economic riches and its strategic importance. In the words of Valladares, “The same as Portugal with respect to the Iberian Peninsula, [Brazil would be] the perfect defensive complement for the deployment of the imperialistic strategy of the Catholic King.”¹⁰ Nevertheless, around 1580, the benefits from the Brazilian sugarcane industry were still not very important, and the structure of the Portuguese Crown was too weak to guarantee that taxes would be collected in a timely fashion and with complete security in Salvador or Olinda. It was deemed necessary to set up a much more efficient fiscal and administrative structure. And although Brazil might indeed have represented a strengthening of the Spanish position south of the equator, taking into account its strategic value, the reality was that in 1580 the territory was almost undefended, which demanded a tremendous effort in construction and workforce to guarantee possession of the territory and prevent it from falling into the hand of the Catholic king's enemies. The geographic location of Brazil meant that it was both the “back” of Peru and the “doorway” into it. The way in which the Habsburg had conceived the transport system and communication routes meant that silver was sent to the port of El Callao, where it was loaded for transport to Panama, eventually to arrive, via Cuba, in Spain. The passage through Brazil, or through the territory more to the south, the Río de la Plata, was to be avoided at all costs. However, with the Union of the Iberian Crowns, the territory began to be considered in a different light: the geographic location of Brazil constituted a huge shield that could act as a defense of the most valuable territories of Spanish America. Moreover, its privileged location could also be used as the doorway toward the same territories or as a point of departure for mining production, using the ports of Santa Catarina or Rio de Janeiro as export points for silver. This was a hypothesis that was not considered by the Crown, who had no intention whatsoever of changing the above-mentioned transport system, but was a wish expressed continually by the elite of Portuguese America, who wished to share the unceasing flow of precious metals with Spanish America.

The commercial exclusivity and the transport system were designed to protect the goods from the many enemies of the Crown that threatened the Atlantic routes and also seemed to threaten Portuguese possessions in Hispanic America. From the documentation consulted, one may conclude that the Spanish Crown was really worried about the defense of the Brazilian territory. Shortly after coming to the throne of Portugal, Felipe II sent an important fleet (twenty-three ships and five thousand men) under the orders of Captain Flores Valdés to populate the Magellanic strait and clear the area of English ships. Another task for the fleet was to reconnoiter the Brazilian territory and show off the power of the new king, thereby extending the military operations involved in the conquest of Portugal to the territories abroad. During this important expedition, Valdés left some five hundred men, women, and children in São Vicente, where he ordered the construction of a fort. It was also during this expedition that the first fort in Paraíba was built (later renamed Forte Velho), the origin of Filipeia, the first urban nucleus in the zone. Valdés himself, in one of his letters to the king, referred to the territory of São Vicente as "the back of Peru." It was necessary to populate the territory to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemies of the Catholic Monarch. Felipe II felt personally worried about the situation on the Brazilian coast, and also about the situation of Valdés, according to the annotations he made with his own hand on the reports arriving from the region telling him about the presence of the English close to Rio de Janeiro.¹¹

Some years before 1624, the year of Dutch attack against Salvador de Bahía, the Batavians began to arouse the interest of the authorities in Madrid. In 1613, in the times of the Twelve-Year Truce, Felipe III wrote to the Portuguese viceroy informing him that the Dutch were preparing a fleet to attack Pernambuco.¹² Also, during the same period, the Crown approved the launching of several relief fleets to stop the French from becoming definitively entrenched in Maranhão.¹³ Another consultation from the Council of Portugal directed to the Duke of Lerma in 1615 warned of the danger to the Spanish empire of the constant presence of the English and the Dutch in the "Río de las Amazonas." In his words, foreign presence was "the most important issue of the times, since this river [The Amazon] marks the limit with Peru . . . and at the same time . . . [we must] castigate the French at Maranhão."¹⁴ As it is known, the Portuguese in the same year, with the aid of some Spanish soldiers, an indigenous army, and the forces at Pernambuco, expelled the French from the region. Moreover, on

9 April 1607, the Junta de Hacienda de Portugal, meeting in Madrid, asked the Portuguese authorities (Conselho da Fazenda) to order the governors of Brazil, Angola, Santo Tomé, and Mina to embark and go to their posts to strengthen the security in the area, threatened by the Dutch fleets. In this request we see that the authorities in Madrid understood that security in the South Atlantic was not an individual issue of each territory; on the contrary, it had to be reinforced on all flanks if territorial losses were to be prevented.¹⁵

The preoccupation with the defense of Portuguese America was therefore one of the most important issues of the overseas policies of the Hispanic monarchy in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth. It was at this time that an important string of forts was created along the coast. Some of them constituted the origin of the coastal cities that are now the capitals of the coastal states of Brazil. The forts built at the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth were Forte Preseprio (Belem); São José in Macapá; São Felipe in Maranhão (São Luis de Maranhão); São Sebastião (the origin of Fortaleza), plus another two forts in Ceará; Reis Magos at the mouth of the Potengi; Cabedelo and Santo Antonio in Paraíba; São Jorge and Forte do Mar in Pernambuco; Monte Serrate, Santo Antonio da Barra, Santa Maria, São Diogo, and another three forts in Bahia: three forts at Espiritu Santo; five forts at Rio de Janeiro; and Santo Amaro da Barra Grande in São Paulo, which was joined to the two preexisting ones.¹⁶ We cannot say that the construction of this line of defense was “planned,” but it is unquestionable that the joint action of men “on the spot” and the interests of the Crown in strengthening its power in the territory were determinant.

As was suspected since the sixteenth century, it was also believed that the Brazilian territory harbored important deposits of precious metals. Tales about the existence of gold and silver within the Brazilian territory (the *sertão*) were innumerable, but toward the end of the sixteenth century the Crown did give some credibility to the project of Gabriel Soares de Sousa, the author of *Tratado descritivo do Brasil*.¹⁷ Gabriel had received news from his brother João Coelho de Sousa about the existence of important deposits of gold inside the captaincy of Bahia, along the São Francisco River (curiously, this river was to be one of the axes used to penetrate the interior toward gold-producing areas from the start of the eighteenth century). Gabriel Soares was so sure of the truth of what his brother had told him that he traveled to Madrid trying to “sell” the story to Felipe II in exchange for a fair number of important exceptional powers that the

king agreed to bestow on him if he found the mines. He stayed in Madrid between 1587 and 1590. His voyage was a big success, since Felipe II gave him great privileges, which Gabriel communicated to the new governor of Brazil, Francisco de Sousa. The extent of his powers is even more striking if we note that at that time the Spanish empire in America was undergoing a profound administrative reorganization (ordered by Felipe II and put into effect by Viceroy Francisco de Toledo), through which the power of the Crown was increased substantially; the establishment of the *corregidores* and of the *alcaldes mayores* was set up, and this decreased the power of the first *conquistadores* and of the Church, although these measures helped to create a new economic and administrative elite.

Gabriel Soares de Sousa benefited from powers that can be compared with those of the *donatarios*, among which the king distributed the territory of Brazil as from 1534. He garnered a personal guard of two hundred men. He was awarded the right to appoint the officials of the justice and treasury systems, and could even award the habits of the Order of Christ to some of his closest relatives, as well as the title of “cavaleiro-fidalgo” to one hundred men in his five surroundings. The explorer began the expedition to the mines in 1591, together with five companies of men, but he died in the attempt.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the lure of fabulous treasures in the form of deposits of gold and silver did not end with the death of Gabriel Soares de Sousa. His project was taken up again by the governor himself, Francisco de Sousa, who must have long dwelt on the possibilities of making a fortune as the discoverer of the mines, or perhaps on the possibility of being awarded powers similar to those of Gabriel Soares. In fact, he convinced himself that it would be better to take that risk than await the favors of the king in the hope of obtaining a better position in the future.

Before leaving the post of governor to his successor, Diogo Botelho, Francisco de Sousa visited the southern regions, the *capitanías de baixo*, in particular the territory of São Paulo, to gather firsthand information about the existence of the mines. In 1606 he traveled to Madrid to try to persuade the authorities of the advantages of his plan, but the Council of Portugal asked him for further information. The ex-governor therefore drew up the twenty-four *apontamientos* with details about what he wanted to do and the advantages of his project. Sousa demanded (and was mostly granted) important privileges: those formerly received by Gabriel Soares de Sousa, as well as other new pluses, such as 5 percent of the

revenue from the mines and the title of marquis (if the revenue exceeded 500,000 cruzados). Above all, he was awarded the privilege of becoming the new governor, completely independent of Salvador de Bahía, of the three *capitanías de baixo*, that is, São Vicente, Espirito Santo, and Río de Janeiro, which actually meant the division of the “state of Brazil” into two parts: the North, with its governor in Bahía, and the *capitanías* of the South, or “Repartição do Sul,” with Francisco de Sousa as the governor. The king also exonerated him from having to do his *residência*, the process scrutinizing his past as governor-general of Brazil.¹⁹ The request to abolish the restrictions to commerce between Buenos Aires and the “Capitanías do Sul,” proposed by Francisco in the thirteenth *apontamiento*, with the argument that it would be much easier and profitable to send supplies from the Hispanic-American region than from Portugal, was judged favorably by the Council of Portugal but was rejected by the Junta de Hacienda de Portugal, a kind of economic council formed by Portuguese and Spanish members, overarching the Portuguese institutions, that ran from 1602 to 1608 as a counterweight to Portuguese power.²⁰ Accepting this request would have meant the official recognition of the end of the economic exclusivity (enforced by the Crown of Castile since the beginning of Spanish presence in America) and would have opened the door officially to commercial relations that, clandestinely, were already taking place.

Sousa’s plan also considered the possibility of “reducing” the Indians for work in the mines that were to be discovered. As the same time that he vindicated aid for the arrival of Portuguese colonists, he also suspected that the most “flexible” and servile manpower would come from the indigenous population, which was very large in the region of São Paulo. This was nothing new: was it not also the case in Peru and Mexico, where the mines received thousands of workers for the extraction of ore? It was merely a question of putting into practice what the Spanish had been doing over the previous twenty years. The Crown accepted the request on the condition that the natives were recruited peacefully. However, the underlying issue was much more complicated. In Portuguese America, the question of the indigenous peoples’ role in the colonial system had been addressed only marginally by the different governments. The Crown had left it to the Jesuits to tackle the problems of these populations (above all the Tupís from the coast). The timid attempts to implement a specific policy had been condemned to failure. The legislative measures concerning the indigenous had started with the *regimento* of the first governor, Tomé de Sousa, but it was the law

of 1570, in the reign of D. Sebastião, that represented the first attempt to prohibit the enslavement of the indigenous peoples. The Portuguese Crown tried to take control of the native peoples with the creation in 1564 of the figure of *capitão de aldeia*, an agent of the Crown who was responsible for the administration of the indigenous populations. These measures were inefficient and did not really work. In 1595 and 1596 Felipe II renewed the prohibition of slavery with the law “Sobre se não poderem captivar os gentios . . .” and the law providing for the freedom of the Indians, which was the most important attempt to implement a coherent policy for the Tupís in the territory of Portuguese America. The power to subject the indigenous peoples continued in the hands of the Jesuits, but the law put into effect a work regime for the Indians and created the post of *procurador*, designated by the governor, whose job was to supervise the situation within the *aldeias*. Thus it was a specific legislation that, on one hand, prohibited slavery (except in the case of war declared by the king) and, on the other, organized a system—reminiscent of the one put into practice in Peru—so that the natives could serve as a workforce in the mines (which were still to be discovered), on agricultural exploitations (*fazendas*), and in public works in the Brazilian *capitanías*.²¹

Neither of these legislative measures was effective. The authorities of the Habsburg monarchy soon had to legislate so that the Jesuits would have a new position in the colonial system. The Spanish monarchy believed that the Portuguese Crown had given too much power to the Company of Jesus during the first years of power consolidation in Brazil. In order to counteract this situation, the authorities promoted the *alvarás* (decrees) of 1609 and 1611. Through the decree of 1609, Felipe III set up a system to use the manpower of the indigenous peoples, which placed the Jesuits in the role of intermediates between those and the objective needs of the colonists. In 1611, the Crown went much further by publishing the decree to strip the Jesuits of their temporal power definitively, returning to the institution of *capitães de aldeia* for the governor of the indigenous communities.²² At the same time, the Spanish Crown encouraged the organization of *entradas*, expeditions with the dual aim of searching for precious metals and capturing Indians for work in the mines or on agricultural plots in the region of São Paulo, but always avoiding their enslavement and guaranteeing their protection through the Jesuits present in the zone. It is possible that this was one of the origins of the “*bandeiras*,” the famous adventures of the Paulist inhabitants during the colonial period.

It is important to recall that during the same period the Crown had asked other religious orders, perhaps with fewer scruples than the Jesuits when organizing obligatory work for the indigenous peoples, to install themselves in the southern regions of Brazil; this facilitated the expansion of the Franciscans, the Carmelites, and the Benedictines. The imperial policy must have represented a serious drawback to the aims of the Portuguese Jesuits, who at that point began to support the noble factions opposing the power of the Spanish Habsburgs.²³

As it is known, at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth the Spanish Crown started an important legal and administrative reform of the imperial institutions in the Portuguese empire: this period saw the creation of the Conselho da Índia, the Ordenações Filipinas (the civil code in force in Brazil up to the twentieth century) and, above all for the case of Brazil, the court of the Relação de Bahía (the Supreme Court), founded in 1609. Although the Conselho da Índia was no longer functioning by 1614, it is clear that in Madrid, above all in the period of Felipe III, the authorities wished to change the way in which the matters of the Portuguese empire had been dealt with before the Dynastic Union. The aim was to establish a structure similar to that of the Spanish empire in America (which also had a Consejo de Indias). The Relação, which was very active up to 1619, brought royal justice closer and afforded a more efficient legal system, somewhat chaotic since the sixteenth century. It was also a way to harmonize the Brazilian colonial administrative structure with that of the Spanish territories in America, where the tribunals of the *audiencias* had been developed since the beginning of the sixteenth century.

It is likely that the most important measures of the Spanish Crown in regard to Brazil were the reforms in the configuration of the territory. As mentioned earlier, the Crown designated Francisco de Sousa as governor of the Repartição Sul, one of the main crafters of this new system, with the same powers as the governor-general of Bahía. The measure was struck down by the very king—Felipe III—who had promoted it, but the idea of a “southern region,” different from the other territories, was to mark for a long time the configuration of Brazil and the direction that the relations between the Paulistas and the imperial authorities would take before and after the Portuguese restoration.

However, the most important measure concerning the organization of the Brazilian territory was taken in 1621—the division of the territory into two administrative units: the Estado do Brasil, with its capital in Salvador, and the Estado do Maranhão, to the north, which first had São Luiz as its capital and,

later, Belém do Pará. Although the measure seems logical, since communications between São Luiz Maranhão and Lisbon were easier than those with Salvador, there remain still many questions about this decision, which lasted much longer than the division of southern Brazil (this configuration was to be maintained by the Braganças and was not abolished until 1772). It was also an important measure regarding defense in a territory that was to be the vanguard of the Portuguese expansion in Brazilian territory. It would be useful to know what role was played in the reorganizational process by local actors, who were always present at the debates addressing colonial organization within the metropolitan institutions.

Consequently, we must abandon our former views about the question of the Hispanic monarchy's actions in the South Atlantic and reinstate Brazil within the general context of the "universal monarchy," and even within a global context. There are issues that remain to be explored. The problem is no longer one of knowing whether or not the Habsburg monarchy meddled in Portuguese matters, or even whether or not it was interested in the Portuguese empire in America, Africa, and Asia. It has been some time now since historians such as Charles Boxer and others, pointed out the interest of the Habsburgs in the Portuguese overseas empire, and we only have to look in the archives at Simancas, in the sections "Estado" or "Secretarías Provinciales," to see the amount of activity deployed by the different agencies based in Madrid or by people close to the king with regard to Portuguese interests abroad. The question today is how to clarify the origin of that unquestionable interest: was it an interest associated with the rest of the territory of Spanish America, either to facilitate better integration or, on the contrary, to prevent Portuguese America from becoming a problem for defense and a terrain favorable to escape from the monopole system? Or were they seeking to develop a specific policy only for Brazil? The question is, finally, how was Brazil considered in the Spanish court in the seventeenth century?

We cannot yet answer this complex question in all of its ramifications. We need more precise knowledge about the consideration given to Brazil within the heart of a monarchy that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, had reached its maximum extension and had begun, at the same time, a slow process of collapse and decline. It would first be necessary to place these issues within the scenario of the general development of the Spanish presence in America. It is natural to speculate that the Habsburgs wished to adapt the system of Portu-

guese America to the one that they had put into operation in Spanish America since the middle of the sixteenth century. This was a system based on the production of precious metals in which the indigenous people played a very important role in terms of both the provision of manpower and the collection of tributes. It was a system in which the Crown had established a very extensive, but fairly inexpensive, administrative structure, which became increasingly financed locally through the sale of public offices. Perhaps there was no "strategic" plan designed by Madrid for the Brazilian territory. Instead, it seems more likely that most of the measures and decisions taken for Portuguese America were implemented after events had occurred. But one could equally argue that the men on the spot wished to portray Brazil as "another Potosí" and that the Crown itself believed that the territory might be similar to that of Peru, and—why not—that it would have possibilities for development by following the same principles already established for the Peruvian territory during the previous century. The "mirage" had disappeared in the 1620s, at the start of the reign of Felipe IV, since at that time the main issue was not to find gold but to try to hold the territory in face of the Dutch threat. Conservation of the territory was linked not only to sugar production, but also to the possibility that the Dutch might use the Brazilian territory to attack Peru or as a base to whittle down and weaken the Iberian commercial system in the Atlantic.

The administrative reforms, the fiscal and territorial organization, the search for mines, the reaction against the threats of other European powers (mainly the Dutch and the French), and the policies relating to the indigenous peoples were the most important lines of action of the Spanish Habsburg in Portuguese America. There was no precise plan, but there was undoubtedly an internal logic: that of considering the ensemble of territories of the Universal Monarchy in America from a common perspective.

What can we say about cultural issues? If the economic, political, and administrative aspects of the Philippine period cannot be ignored in the configuration of colonial Brazil, can the same be said of cultural aspects? Were they as important as other matters? First, it seems necessary to make a few observations concerning this scenario. Beginning with the autonomy ceded by Felipe II to Portugal in the structure of the Hispanic monarchy, there is no doubt that the Spanish kings took important decisions that were sometimes ratified by the autonomous Portuguese institutions, while on other occasions they were imposed without dis-

cussion.²⁴ It is because of this that we can say that the period of the Dynastic Union had important repercussions on the legislative and political development of Portuguese America. The case of cultural development is a priori very different, since in theory there was no “standardizing” cultural policy launched by Madrid. However, as Serge Gruzinski pointed out, during the period of the Union of the Iberian Crowns a phenomenon of *mondialisation* took hold; this affected a large number of cultural manifestations in that period, which undoubtedly also affected Portugal and its territories abroad. Despite the difficulties in installing efficient control, the Habsburg were interested in the politics of propaganda and the control of dissidence.²⁵ Mannerism became the first “global” artistic style, clearly marking the expansion of the universal Baroque of the Counter-Reformation, which was to have centers of expansion “in all corners of the world.” Castilian was spoken in the intellectual spheres, especially in Portugal, where Spanish became the working tongue of many Portuguese writers. The intellectual trends, objets d’art, exotic products, and so on all traveled from one side of the Atlantic to the other, just as they traveled between the Asian, European, and American continents, in such a way that for the first time in history one could speak of an “interconnected” world. In this sense, it is possible to regard the Dynastic Union as a period that enabled the entry of Portuguese America into the “world theater.” From 1580 on, the Brazilian territory saw the development of very important aspects of European cultural life, especially the circulation of literary and political works. At that time, thanks to the exchange of information, material objects, and experiences, seventeenth-century Europe received the news and events taking place in Brazil with great curiosity, and they were re-created in many artistic works. The entry of Brazil into the universal monarchy of the Habsburgs was at the same time accompanied by a period of important economic and demographic development (e.g., the production of sugar increased, above all in Pernambuco and in Bahia).²⁶ During these times, an important expansion began in the already established urban centers. Around the recently built fortresses, urban centers began to flourish, such as those at Filipeia, Natal, and São Luiz Maranhão. The ports in particular, including Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and Olinda/Recife, underwent the strongest development. A description of the most important artistic and architectural achievements of the period is beyond the scope of this present contribution and has been done elsewhere.²⁷ However, it is important to note the lack of works devoted to this aspect, one of the most important angles for those who want to understand the Brazil of the

Habsburg Empire. We do not know whether Portuguese America was affected by the process of “Castilianization” observed among the Portuguese intellectuals of the period. We still lack a detailed study of Brazilian urban elite in this rich period.²⁸ In general, the Brazilian culture during the Dynastic Union has been neglected by historiography. The historians who have worked on this period, with a few exceptions (e.g., the work by Ricardo Evaristo dos Santos),²⁹ have not paid much attention to the cultural side, whereas art and literary historians have addressed the issue in an isolated way, apart from the political and social events. As Rafael Ruiz has pointed out, it is interesting that the legislation concerning the Indians enacted by the Habsburg (and above all Felipe III) during the first years of the seventeenth century had the final aim of reducing the power of the Jesuits. In the long run, this favored the expansion of other religious orders, the same ones who were in the vanguard of introducing into Brazil new architectural and aesthetic canons that, at that time, were in vogue in Europe. To gain further insight into these marginalized aspects it would be necessary to broaden the scope of study, combining the documents with archaeological remains. This would undoubtedly help us to progress in our study of this fascinating period.

NOTES

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1. Socolow and Hoberman, *Cities and Societies in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 1986), 3, cited in Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde*.

2. Valladares, *Portugal y la monarquía hispánica, 1580–1668*.

3. Ferreira Martins, *O Domínio de Castela e o Império Oriental*.

4. Boxer, *Salvador Correia de Sa*.

5. Serrão, *Do Brasil Filipino ao Brasil de 1640*.

6. Valladares, “Brasil: De la Unión de Coronas a la crisis de Sacramento (1580–1680),” and “El Brasil y las Indias españolas durante la sublevación de Portugal (1640–1668).”

7. Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes*.

8. Stella, *O Domínio Espanhol no Brasil durante a monarquia dos Felipes, 1580–1640*.

9. Ruiz, *São Paulo na monarquia hispánica*.

10. Valladares, "El Brasil y las Indias españolas durante la sublevación de Portugal (1640–1668)," 152.
11. University of Salamanca Archives, Ms. 2657, "Consultas a Felipe II," 1583.
12. General Archives of Simancas (AGS), "Secretarías Provinciales," Libro 1506.
13. AGS, "Secretarías Provinciales," Libro 1596.
14. AGS, "Estado," 260.
15. AGS, "Secretarías Provinciales," Libro 1466, fol. 193.
16. Ruiz, "The Spanish-Dutch War and the Policy of the Spanish Crown toward the Town of São Paulo," *Itinerario* 26, no. 1 (2002), 109.
17. Serrão, *Do Brasil Filipino ao Brasil de 1640*, 62.
18. *Ibid.*, 66.
19. *Ibid.*, 119; AGS, "Secretarías Provinciales," 1466, fol. 299 *passim*.
20. Luxán Meléndez, "El control de la hacienda portuguesa desde el poder central."
21. Santos, *Guerreros antropófagos*, 91–92.
22. Ruiz, *São Paulo na monarquia hispánica*.
23. Valladares, *Portugal y la monarquía hispánica*.
24. Stella, *O domínio espanhol no Brasil*.
25. Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde*.
26. Gonzalo Rivero, *Brazil: The Crucial Years (1570–1612)*.
27. Santos Pérez, "Brasil durante la Unión Ibérica."
28. Silva, "Fidalgos, capitães e senhores de engenho."
29. Santos, *El Brasil filipino*.

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