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One conquest, two worlds: an introduction

Félix Retamero & Josep Torró

The majority of the articles contained in this volume derive from the works presented at the International Colloquium 'The Unending Conquest. Al-Andalus and the Americas (13th-17th c.). Destruction and Construction of Societies', held in Granada between 28 and 30 January 2010. This meeting was organised in order to celebrate Professor Miquel Barceló's retirement. Sadly, neither he nor Professor Manuel Ardit have lived to see this publication.

The essence of the colloquium's spirit can be summarised in the title of Charles Verlinden's famous 'Precédents médiévales de la colonie en Amérique', published for the first time in Mexico in 1954.1 This title, for its part, evoked Jaime Vicens Vives's 'Precedentes mediterráneos del virreinato colombino', published in 1948.2 In this article, Vicens Vives discussed the "logical and direct predecessors [of the administration of the Indies] in the Crown of Aragón". Verlinden's booklet included a list of topics which, once fully developed, could be used to build a solid and precise narrative of the 'filiation' of

[1] Charles Verlinden, *Précédents mediévaux de la colonie en Amérique* (México: Editorial Fournier S.A, 1954).

[2] Jaime Vicens-Vives, "Precedentes mediterráneos del virreinato colombino." *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* V (1948): 571-614.

different colonial experiences, from the medieval Mediterranean to the modern Atlantic. Verlinden thus presented an ambitious attempt at compared history which amply transcended not only Vicens Vives's institutional perspective, but also challenged traditional academic "compartments" and provided new perspectives which are far from being exhausted even today.

Verlinden was neither the first nor the only scholar to draw a connection between medieval and modern social and colonial practices.3 Shortly prior to Verlinden's booklet, Merril Jensen and Robert Reynolds referred to the Mediterranean and American projection of the Italian expansion by pointing out "the oneness of the two colonising enterprises".4 For his part, Luis Weckmann stressed that in studies on the early colonisation of America, little attention was

[3] For example, in the early 20th century, Albert G. Keller highlighted some precedents of the Atlantic expansion in the medieval Iberian Peninsula: "the religious unity and political coherence forced upon them by the western crusade against the Moslem invader; the enthusiasm, love of adventure, taste for gambling with large hazards, impatience with a humdrum existence, and the overpowering greed begotten of preceding generations of war and rapine; and finally the benefits derived from the presence and efforts of an alien industrious people, and the deep national disaster incurred or about to be incurred through its expulsion". Albert G. Keller, *Colonization. A Study of the Founding of New Societies* (Boston-New york-Chicago-London: Ginn & Company, 1908): 168.

[4] Merril Jensen, M. and Robert L. Reynolds, "European Colonial Experience: A Plea for Comparative Studies", in *Studi in onore di Gino Luzzatto*, vol. 4. (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1950), 75-90. Reprinted in *The Medieval Frontiers of Latin Christendom* ed. James Muldoon and Felipe Fernández-Armesto (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 37-52.

paid to the experience of what he called “the land of perennial crusading”.5 In a similar sense, Charles Bishko observed that studies about colonial America were peppered with sporadic references to the “Iberian background”.6 Some Spanish examples of these “sporadic” references are Juan Pérez de Tudela’s connections between ‘Castilian commerce and population’ and the colonisation of America, the already-mentioned work by Vicens Vives, and, more lately, Claudio Sánchez Albornoz’s notion that the conquest of America could only be explained by evoking the essential components of the Spanish “enigma”: “the hyper-dynamism, the religious hyper-sensitivity, and the colonising tradition”.7

However, a full historiographical account of the relationship between the medieval and modern colonial experiences is well beyond the scope, and the aim, of this introduction. Few scholars question that this connection exists, and the “elements of conceptual continuity”, as called by Fernández-Armesto, between the conquest and colonisation of the Peninsula, the Canaries and the New World have already been the subject of many noteworthy studies.8 However, some connections still need to be explored in depth. In a recent

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[5] Luis Weckman, “The Middle Ages in the Conquest of America,” *Speculum* 26:1 (1951): 130-141.

[6] Charles J. Bishko, “The Iberian Backgroun of Latin American History: Recent Progress and Continuing Problems.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 36:1 (1956): 50-80.

[7] Juan Pérez de Tudela, “Castilla ante los comienzos de la colonización de las Indias,” *Revista de Indias* 15 (1955): 11-88. Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *La Edad Media española y la empresa de América* (Madrid: Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, 1983), 28.

[8] Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus. Exploration and Colonization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 212.

example, the book coordinated by José Roldán and René Chipana juxtaposes "ancestral" irrigation systems in the Peninsula and America in different periods, but the relationship between late medieval and later agricultural practices is not developed.9 Similarly, some recent compendia which examine the growing importance of historical archaeology for the study of the American colonial societies restrict the link with the Iberian precedents with vague allusions to the "Reconquista".10 It seems that the Iberian precedents are an accepted fact, but imprecise, which explains why that Jeremy Mumford commences his excellent work on the massive displacement of populations in the Andes after 1569 by claiming that the sudden transformations undergone by the indigenous societies were 'something new in the history of European colonialism', to cite but one example.11 This statement presupposes a breach between Iberian (and European) earlier colonisation processes and that which took place in America in the Modern Age. This book aims to stress that such a breach does not exist: we present new materials with which to reinforce Verlinden's powerful argument and expand this avenue of enquiry.

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[9] José Roldán and René Chipana, eds., *Sistemas ancestrales de riego a ambos lados del Atlántico* (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2011).

[10] For example, Martin Hall and Stephen W. Silliman, eds., *Historical Archaeology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

[11] Jeremy R. Mumford, *Vertical Empire. The General Resettlement of Indians in the Colonial Andes* (Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2012), 1.

The conquests with which this volume is concerned were not merely ways to impose political and tributary control structures without fundamentally altering the composition and social structure of the subject population. Far from it. All the articles in the volume refer the reader to colonial orders that extended over time, that substantially reduced indigenous populations, that imposed new productive strategies and created a new social hierarchy. It is difficult – if not inappropriate in heuristic terms – to draw a distinction between strictly military expeditions, the arrival of armed migrants and the operations launched in order to subjugate the vanquished by different strategies (including captivity and exile). If we understand these "unending" conquests as a process, it seems inadvisable to determine causes *a priori*, as though these causes were unrelated to the actual process.

The medieval expansion of northern Christian societies at the expense of al-Andalus was driven by non-centralised political orders which operated under the rule of monarchies whose authority and scope were only partial. The dynastic pretensions of kings were subordinated to the task of conquering, the legitimacy of which was conferred by the Church; their military and political power was always counterbalanced by that of competitive aristocracies, in a model that varied widely according to the period and the geographical area. In the Iberian Peninsula, the process certainly involved the enlargement of kingdoms and the progressive reinforcement of monarchic hegemony, but this is not enough evidence to consider the Iberian case an exception within the general framework of Latin Christendom. In fact, the Iberian case presents more peculiarities which probably contributed to the continuity of the process overseas.

Towards the end of his magnificent work, *The making of Europe*, Robert Bartlett points out that the driving force behind the expansion of the West in the Middle Ages was not the kings, but rather *consortia* or associations which could well have involved aristocrats, churchmen, merchants and urban communities.12 The Catalan conquest of Tortosa (1148), Lleida (1149) and even Mallorca (1229), which were preceded by the signing of *convenientiae* and solemn vows for the allocation of responsibilities and profits, fits well within this framework. It is also true that in Catalonia the control of the high aristocracy by the Crown proved to be more problematic than it had been in the western Iberian kingdoms, at least until well into the 13th century, forcing the Crown to resort to this sort of agreement.13 At any rate, even if the kings in Castile and Leon or Aragon had the ability to muster large armies, these were always heterogeneous and unstable forces which combined the king's own and the aristocratic retinues, groups of autonomous knights, urban militias and, from a certain period, also paid men. Each of these units had their own identity, were organised more or less independently and enjoyed considerable freedom of action: they did not need to operate within a larger force to be effective. Their military might, moreover, was kept constantly honed by the frontier that invariably preceded the Christian advance. Here resides one of the most characteristic features of the Iberian process. Naturally, frontiers were not

[12] Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), 306-7.

[13] On Catalan *convenientiae*, see Adam J. Kosto, *Making Agreements in Medieval Catalonia: Power, Order, and the Written Word, 1000-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

exclusive of the medieval Iberian Peninsula (see for example the Celtic fringe, or the territories to the east of the Elbe), but nowhere else did they play such a decisive role as sources of wealth and social promotion. Unsurprisingly, Castilians and Portuguese were soon to transfer typically Iberian frontier tactics to their footholds in Northern Africa, the Atlantic islands and the New World.

It is important not to lose sight to the fact that frontiers exist because there is booty for grabs. Those operating at the frontier acted on the basis of what could be obtained and what needed to be done to obtain it – Antoni Virgili's "balance between risk and profit". Resource-pooling agreements were thus presided over by risk-profit considerations, regardless of whether we are dealing with a small band of one-off raiders or a large army bent on territorial conquest. In every case, profits were distributed proportionally; in the Iberian Peninsula, booty-distribution techniques reached unequalled degrees of sophistication.14 There is, moreover, no rupture between earlier – when the booty consisted chiefly of movable property, including livestock and captives snatched during rapid raids– and plunder-allocation techniques, with the systematic distribution of land in the *repartimientos* that followed the major 13th-century conquests (reproduced again with variations in the conquest of Granada and the Canaries in the 15th century, and even the conquest of Oran in 1509), and the apportionment of the conquered groups in America, the *repartimientos* of Indians, without whom the land was valueless for the conquerors.

[14] James F. Powers, *A Society Organized for War. The Iberian Municipal Militias in the Central Middle Ages, 1000–1284* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 162-87.

The chapters by Josep Torró, Enric Guinot and Antoni Virgili demonstrate that the permanent presence of the frontier was a key factor in the maintenance of the military nature of urban communities, a point made obvious not only by the formation of militias under the authority of the town councils, but also by the emergence of autonomous raiding associations (*cabalgadas*) with close links to the structure of the militia. As shown by Carmen Mena and Josep Torró, these associations of raiders, which continued operating at the frontier of Granada throughout the Late Middle Ages and evolved into coastal raids launched against the North African coast, became the ideal model for the associations of adventurers which were to have such success in the New World.

The fact that America was largely conquered by these small armed bands, instead of large royal armies, is at the root of one of the most characteristic aspects of the process: the extreme violence and the systematic terror with which the raids were executed. Antonio Espino's contribution presents and discusses the details of a pattern of behaviour developed during the war against the infidel, which was also transplanted to the conquest of the Canaries or the African beachheads. Adopting an argument originally set forth by Joanna Bourke, Espino points out that the military success of these groups depended on them acting with extreme brutality. This was particularly important in the American case. Conquering bands were isolated, small and, therefore, fragile, and could afford no mistakes. The same can be said of the bands of *almogávares* operating in the Iberian frontiers or even the Catalan Company in Greece. Las Casas's claim, quoted by Antonio Espino, is therefore exact, that massacre is a common technique for the few to break the will to fight of the many, especially when extreme cruelty is systematically applied over time in

order to subjugate the vanquished on a permanent basis: a never ending conquest.

Although murderous behaviour cannot be explained merely as a reaction against a hostile and unpredictable environment, the stress generated by such conditions can sometimes be behind extreme actions taken on the part of autonomous and isolated bands which often severed all links with the world from which they came, either by way of sedition –epitomized in Lope de Aguirre and his *marañones* – or by way of integration into the foreign medium in which they operated. The latter may be noted in relation to the *tornadizos* or "renegades", which so prominently featured in the frontier of Granada in the 14th and the 15th centuries, and the Portuguese *degenerados* of Guinea described in António de A. Mendes's chapter and termed by the scandalised Jesuits in 1604 as "idolaters, perjurers, miscreants, murderers, degenerates, traitors and thieves".

Those armed bands were organised according to the same principles that inspired the formation of commercial companies: pooling resources and men, distributing risks and costs in order to obtain a profit. The technical terms used to define both kinds of enterprise were virtually exchangeable. Based on this notion, Carmen Mena claims that the American conquest was undertaken by private companies led by leader-entrepreneurs which were open to the participation of the king, who could shoulder some, and in exceptional circumstances all, of the capital needs of the enterprise. Obviously, the investors, the military leaders and the representatives of the Crown were chiefly responsible for the success of the expedition but also kept the lion's share of the profits. Military groups sometimes formed larger "free companies", such as

the Catalan Company in Greece, whereas merchant associations tended to merge into huge monopolistic corporations which, in addition to their commercial activity, also could, and did, make use of armed force. In the early 17th century, within the context of the English and Dutch expansions, these processes led to the formation of the colossal East India Company (EIC) and the Dutch East India Company (VOC), but this had already been put into practice in the late medieval period by 'commercial' companies that tried their hand at colonial, political and military control.

This is clearly the case with the companies supported by the Italian urban communes, for example the Genoese *maona*, considered "the direct forerunners of the Portuguese and Spanish empires, to the shaping of which the Italians contributed so heavily, and in the profits of which they so largely shared".15

The military dimension of the commercial companies was not limited to the control of colonies and the imposition of monopolies, but was also a crucial factor in the transport and control of slave contingents. Despite the innovations introduced by Atlantic slavery (the plantation system, the lack of ransom mechanisms), rightly pointed out by Adela Fábregas, it is not possible to deny the connection between captivity in the medieval Mediterranean and the Atlantic slave trade. The conquest of Ceuta in 1415 may be seen as a symbolic landmark of this sequence; although this episode laid the foundations for the Portuguese expansion in Atlantic Africa, it is still closely connected with the flow

[15] Thomas A. Brady, Jr., "The Rise of Merchant Empires, 1400-1700: A European Counterpoint", in *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires: State Power and World Trade, 1350-1750*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 150.

of Mediterranean slaves towards Valencia, where large numbers of captives taken were sold. António de A. Mendes regards this episode as "the first mass deportation of human beings in modern times", making it clear that this would not have been possible without the participation of Florentine and Genoese mercantile companies. Later, when the Portuguese Crown extended its manhunts to the south, it not only transplanted the slave-managing model used in the Maghreb to sub-Saharan Africa, but entrusted this task to Italian agents. From 1510 onwards, Dutch financiers also participated in these activities, and contributed to redirecting the flow of slaves towards the Atlantic plantations. Mendes's chapter thus emphasises the connections between the Portuguese expansion in Morocco, the beginnings of the slave trade in Senegambia and the growing use of slaves in the Atlantic islands with the beginning of the sugar economy around 1525.

The fact that commercial companies shared so much with others which were more clearly military in character underlines the idea that all these associations were to some extent based on the Christian discourse on fidelity (*fidelitas*). This discourse was an essential factor in the shaping of social relations in medieval Europe, where the state was weak or simply non-existent. Fidelity was not only the vehicle of vassal-lord relationships, but also of alliances between peers: to a degree, *convenientiae* and *pacta amicitiae* played the part that kinship did in other societies.16 Urban communities were also built

[16] Gerd Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 65-101; Joseph Morsel, *L'aristocratie médiévale. La domination sociale en Occident (Ve-XVe siècle)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2004), 88-128.

on the basis of multifaceted and changing associative structures: political factions, professional collegia, commercial companies, and, naturally, military societies.17 It is significant, writes Josep Torró, that the Catalan Company, formed by military associations of urban origin, adopted the institutional model of the *universitas*, or urban citizen corporation, and that it ultimately reverted to a colonial urban corporation in Athens and Thebes. Equally significant, according to Carmen Mena, is the apparent casualness with which the members of conquering bands turned into *vecinos* with military obligations, reproducing the practices of Castilian *concejos* in American towns.

In the medieval West, the urban community was an institution based on principles of mutual fidelity and harmony for the furthering of common goals (even if that only partially masked the existence of internal hierarchical divisions), and it ruled according to its own norms and government structures. This formed the basis of the political autonomy of towns, and was an easily replicable model which was to have an enormous impact on conquest and expansion processes. Maritime Italian cities reproduced their communal constitutions in their colonial foundations in Syria, the Bosporus (Pera) and Crimea (Caffa), but these are extreme cases which can only be explained by the absence of an overarching royal authority. Enric Guinot explores in his chapter an interesting Iberian example: the role played by Aragonese and

[17] See Pierre Michaud-Quantin, *Universitas. Expressions du mouvement communautaire dans le Moyen Age* (Paris: Vrin, 1970). This was not, from our perspective, a horizontal alternative to the hierarchical links typical of vassalage, as claimed by Susan Reynolds in *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), but rather a network of relations presided over by a common logic.

Catalan urban militias in the conquest of Valencia (1238). The city and its hinterland were divided into blocks and distributed among the different urban corporations (*universitas*) taking part in the conquest; these blocks were thereafter allocated between the corporations' individual members according to their own internal rules. However, the king invested the city of Valencia with its own legal personality, thus creating a new urban unit that reproduced the essential features of those that had taken part in the conquest, but without having any organic link with them: it was a controlled replica.

Iberian medieval monarchies controlled the warrior impulse of towns by implementing an ambivalent policy towards their militias, which were encouraged and reined in equal measure. As a result, towns ultimately became an instrument of monarchic supremacy. This process of political centralisation was a requirement for further expansionism. Autonomous companies, militias and other armed partnerships were impotent before well-fortified strongholds armed with cannons, such as those that had to be subjugated during the War of Granada. To a large extent, as Antonio Malpica points out, conquering armies, including professional soldiers, artillery, formal supply systems and stable camps, were beyond the reach of any purse but the king's. This, naturally, contributed to reinforce the hegemony of the Crown, which rewarded the frontier aristocracy handsomely (*mercedes*) while preventing the aristocratic control of large blocks of land. In the New World, where paradoxically these huge royal armies were not used, a decisive further step was taken, with the legal blocking of the formation of seigneurial estates. According to David Abulafia, the system that came to replace traditional aristocratic estates, the *encomienda*, kept the beneficiaries under the control of the king while extending the authority of the

Crown to all natives. The theoretically free status of the Indians favoured the monarch by preventing an excessive power from accumulating in the hands of the Spanish aristocracy. It may be said that the advance of the frontier in the Iberian Peninsula gained an imperial dimension in America that was in tune with the growing centralisation of the monarchy.

In any case, the unquestionable advance of the monarchy did not undermine the role of the towns, which still played a crucial part. As pointed out by Josep Torró, the urban community situated on the frontier had everything required to keep the process of expansion alive: legal conditions for the formation of companies, either for trading or raiding for booty and captives (activities that, especially in coastal cities, tended to become mixed), and a market for the commercialisation of the proceedings. These conditions were ideal for the intervention of the Crown, by way of taxes, particularly the *quinto* (the share set aside for the king, which gives plunder legal sanction). In addition, towns also operated as centres of settlement and consumption, as well as springboards for introducing the influence of aristocracy to new territories and imposing new agrarian models, as illustrated by Antonio Malpica in his analysis of the Castilian occupation of Granada.

II

The conditions of the migrants' departure to the newly conquered areas remains an understudied topic. In this volume, Antoni Virgili, referring to Tortosa in the 12th-13th centuries, and Carmen Mena, alluding to Darién in the early 16th century, coincide in that they present a quasi-Turnerian moving frontier dynamic in which the frustration of the expectations of the less successful settlers led to

the continuation of the push towards ever more distant regions. More controlled migration initiatives, for instance in Granada after the conquest of 1492, with the arrival of, chiefly, former inhabitants of the Guadalquivir Valley, should not be neglected. Antonio Malpica stresses the need to explain the mechanics behind these movements of people: how were they set in motion and how did the nobility and the Crown operate their pyramidal personal networks to further the settlement and colonisation of their new kingdom.

Naturally, as Malpica himself recognises, immigration in this case does not only involve the displacement of people, but also a process of transformation of agrarian ecosystems. The works included in Section II ('The agrarian organisation of the new colonial societies') cover a very wide chronological and geographical span, as well as very different topics and approaches. However, all focus on two fundamental issues which are concerned with the limitations posed by the agricultural practices in operation prior to the conquest, with the development of new productive choices afterwards, and finally with the destruction or transformation of agricultural landscapes and their associated management models. This question was synthesised by Miquel Barceló in a single sentence contained in his seminal work on the principles that governed Andalusi irrigation systems: 'Continuity is in the technological unit – the hydraulic network – and not in the social unit that maintains it and manages it'.18 Barceló was referring to Andalusi irrigation

[18] Miquel Barceló, "El diseño de espacios irrigados en al-Andalus: un enunciado de principios generales", in *El agua en zonas áridas: arqueología e historia. I Coloquio de historia y medio físico* (Almería: Diputación de Almería, 1989), xxii. Reedited in Miquel Barceló, Helena Kirchner

systems, but it is our belief that his claim can be applied to all agricultural systems, in the Iberian Peninsula, the Atlantic and America alike.

The chapters of this section examine the implementation of new productive priorities in the pre-existing agricultural spaces, the size and morphology of which responded to these different choices. For instance, after the 13th-century conquest, cereal and vines became the new hegemonic crops in the Balearic Islands and the Kingdom of Valencia, as shown by Helena Kirchner and Manuel Ardit. The hegemony of these crops is a European-wide phenomenon and is well documented in both the written and the archaeological record in various 13th-century conquest scenarios. A key factor in the "cerealisation of Europe" was the preference for species with naked grains, which were particularly suitable for milling; this preference was behind the process of substitution of *Triticum aestivum* for *Triticum spelta* and the partnership of rye and oats in central and western France, especially from the mid-9th century onwards.19

Other Iberian examples of this is the planting, in post-conquest Granada, of sugar cane in areas previously used to grow cereal, as shown by Adela Fábregas, and the systematic planting of vines in pre-existing irrigated areas in the Balearic Islands, as presented by Helena Kirchner. The demands of new lords introduced new production criteria, which were more specialised and

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and Carmen Navarro, *El agua que no duerme. Fundamentos de la arqueología hidráulica andalusí* (Granada: El legado andalusí, 1996), 51-71 (55).

[19] Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 152-156. Jean-Pierre Devroey, "La céréaliculture dans le monde franc", in *L'ambiente vegetale nell'Alto Medioevo. XXXVII Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: CISAM), 240-241.

market-oriented, as also demonstrated by Manuel Ardit, in his work on Valencian Moriscos, and Inge Schjellerup's examination of the agrarian practices in colonial Peru.

The tension between new productive criteria and the pre-existing agrarian landscape was solved in different ways. Often, many fields were abandoned, as documented by Helena Kirchner in relation to the Balearics and Inge Schjellerup in relation to Peru. It is obvious that the decimation of the population caused by murder, expulsion, captivity and the arrival of new diseases was a determinant factor in this abandonment. At any rate, it seems clear that the colonial production priorities were also key factors in the selection of which agricultural spaces were to remain in use as well as in the "contrasting patterns of setlement", in Fernández-Armesto's words.20

Also, pre-existing agricultural systems were enlarged, and new ones were built from scratch, for instance in some regions of Aragon and Valencia in the 12th and the 13th centuries, as illustrated by Helena Kirchner, in Casarabonela (Malaga) from the late 15th century onwards, as shown by Félix Retamero and Virgilio Martínez-Enamorado, and, very soon after in the Atlantic islands and America, as evidenced by Adela Fábregas in her study of the expansion of sugar cane overseas. Although the position of pre-existing agricultural areas determined the location of new ones, colonial productive criteria played an essential role in the shaping of these new fields.

In any case, it should be stressed that the expansion of pre-existing agricultural spaces always took place within a context of notably diminished populations which often took centuries to reach pre-conquest levels, in spite of

[20] Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus*, 213.

the arrival of colonists. Indeed, the expansion of agricultural systems responded to new productive choices in which local demands often played but an ancillary role. Thus, Madeira, Tenerife and Gran Canaria witnessed the emergence of sugar cane – and to a lesser extent vine – plantations at the expense of areas which were suitable for cereal, to the point that these islands suffered permanent wheat shortages.21 The primary target of these new strategies was to supply supra-local, sometimes overseas markets, as indicated by Adela Fábregas's study of sugar production, or to satisfy the taste of the colonial and hegemonic elites, as Inge Schjellerup illustrates in relation to the production of European crops in Peru.

Another aspect which Barceló mentions that is also present throughout Section II of this volume is the friction between old and new agricultural regimes, involving agricultural calendars and tools, working systems, the uses and the relationship between cultivated and uncultivated areas, and the emergence and development of political institutions related to agricultural ownership and production as well as the new management of agricultural productions. In the Balearic Islands, Helena Kirchner presents the relationship between the new hegemonic role of milling and the decreasing importance of irrigation for post-conquest hegemonic crops, cereals and vines, within the framework of the traditional Andalusi irrigation networks. Conversely, when the new crops demanded abundant irrigation, for example with sugar cane on the coast of Granada, these additional demands had to be fitted into the pre-existing water distribution procedures. Eventually, the extra strain of the new

[21] Fernández-Armesto, *The Canary Islands After the Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 76-92.

demands threatened the stability of these hydraulic systems, which were tailored to suit very different productive demands, as demonstrated by Félix Retamero and Virgilio Martínez-Enamorado. These examples clearly illustrate the important political dimension of the management of agrarian systems. Changing water distribution systems or species hierarchies, transforming work regimes and tools, as Inge Schjellerup discusses for colonial Peru, not only dismantled traditional peasant practices, but also the associated social constructs.

Sometimes the combined result of these processes was the annihilation of indigenous groups and the obliteration of traditional organisation regimes. This, naturally, did not happen overnight, and in some areas the indigenous groups remained and adapted to the new order. In Valencia and Granada, for example, the *Mudéjar* and *Morisco* communities yielded to the pressure of the new lords and adopted the agricultural production to their demands. Yet, as pointed out by Ardit, they stuck until the end to one “typically Andalusi” feature: the small size of agricultural plots and the dispersion of land holdings. In consonance with this, these communities presented little social differentiation, as also underlined by Ardit. Indeed, the smallness of fields and the dispersion of possessions were stubbornly maintained, which suggests that these choices formed part of the foundations of the social order now under threat. More study is needed if we are to ascertain whether these features, the small size and dispersion, were also involved in the genesis of said social order and whether they were the last ‘pre-colonial’ traits to disappear.

III

The survival of indigenous population 'pockets' demanded the formulation of status categories which could be used to justify and legitimise their subservient condition. David Abulafia addresses the possible influence of the categories applied to Jews and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula on the way indigenous Americans were treated. Specifically, he is concerned with the consideration of these 'infidels' as *servi* of the Crown, which certainly posed a challenge to the exercise of the traditional jurisdictional rights of the aristocracy. This principle, on the other hand, could be regarded as a form of protection bestowed by the monarch, but also as a potential argument for expropriation or expulsion. In fact, the order of expulsion of Spanish *Moriscos* in the early 17th century was proof of the consolidated supremacy of the Crown over the nobility.

Although subject to the *encomienda* and forced labour regimes, American Indians were considered "free subjects and vassals", and thus clearly distinct from captives and slaves, a category that was reserved for Africans and "war Indians" – the *bravos* of the new frontiers that were never quite conquered.22 We must also keep in mind that the "freedom" of the Indians was closely related to their categorisation as tribute-payers, which leads David Abulafia to point out an important analogy between their status and that of Jews and *Mudéjares* in late medieval Iberia. The role assigned to *caciques* as community leaders is also reminiscent of the forms of self-government allowed to the Jewish and Muslim *aljamas*, which occupied their own, clearly segregated, district.

[22] David J. Weber, *Bárbaros. Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

According to Abulafia, the novelty in the New World was a disconcerting combination of forced labour, tribute and “free status” (which means that Indians could not be made slaves privately) among indigenous populations. This seems to confirm Karen Spalding’s cycle of labour obligations, wages established by tariff (at necessarily low rates) and the payment of tribute. Josep M. Fradera’s chapter focuses on this cycle and makes it a crucial part of his argument for the Spanish being the first “genuinely multi-ethnic” empire, owing to its ability to integrate different social and ethnic groups into its colonial structure. These characteristics are clearly in evidence when the Spanish colonial empire is compared with those of its rivals, for example the English colonisation of New England or the French settlement in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which tried to reproduce agricultural societies and landscapes from north-western Europe. Naturally, the Spanish model was also very different from the Portuguese empire largely based on the importation of colonial products produced in plantation regimes that were themselves based on large-scale slave labour. Slavery was not absent from the Spanish Empire, but as Fradera suggests, its economic role was only secondary to that of indigenous forced labour.

For Josep M. Fradera, the key to the originality of the Spanish Empire was the emergence of mining hubs fostered by the international demand of precious metal – especially silver – which was made possible by the labour regimes imposed upon the indigenous population. The remains of the major agrarian civilisations of the Andes and Mesoamerica played a prominent part in this process: none of the Spanish Crown’s colonial competitors found anything remotely similar in their own spheres of action. Although these populations suffered gravely during the 16th century, enough survived to make the

systematic appropriation of indigenous labour viable and the basis for the social reconstruction of the conquered territories. Most Spanish colonists settled in towns, which became the centres of economic activity and colonial institutions. This system stands out from the model followed by both settler colonialism and slavery-based plantations, and also from the feature which both these systems shared: the expulsion or virtual extermination of indigenous populations. As concluded by Fradera, the will to build new colonial social structures and to use them, which characterises Spanish imperial peculiarities, anticipates the modern colonialism that unfolded in the 19th century.

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