



Review of JONES CORREDERA, Ed., (2021). *The Diplomatic Enlightenment. Spain, Europe, and the Age of Speculation*. Leiden/Boston. 320 pp., ISBN 9789004469068.

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Dr. Ed Jones Corredera's monograph builds further on a PhD thesis in History defended at Cambridge University (Trinity Hall, 2020), prepared under the direction of Dr. William O'Reilly.¹ The book stands at the crossroads of intellectual history ("drawing on the methodological tools fashioned by Reinhart Koselleck", note 113, p. 23, but equally implying the late John Pocock), political history and history of economic thought. Primary sources in Toledo, Valladolid, Madrid, Simancas, Seville, Lisbon, Paris, London and Pasadena (California), expressing the thoughts of political counsellors, religious and economic actors, are interwoven with original ideas on the

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public sphere and communication and the argumentative discursive appeal of economic and political reasoning behind the curtain of the Bourbon (and Bourbon-Farnese) monarchy, covering three to four generations. The author devotes attention to education, intellectual contact with theology, law (Grotius, Pufendorf), moral philosophy (Leibniz) and other types of knowledge indispensable to the management of empire (ZWIERLEIN, 2018), as well as to cross-cultural connections and migrations (e.g. Irish).

The Hispano-British author intends to bring the category of “Enlightenment” forward in time, starting in the era of Philip V of Spain (1700/1713-1746) (ALBAREDA I SALVADÓ and N. SALLÉS VILASECA, 2021). Jones Corredera asserts in the first chapter that the eighteenth century is a “missing century” (pp. 1-49) in Spanish historiography: “origins, networks and goals” of the Enlightenment, not only in Spain itself, but also in its Empire, are at the heart of the book (p. 5). The spectacularly wide timeframe generates an ambitious book, whereby the author makes multiple “*arrêts sur images*” on just over 240 pages in six chapters.

This work is a welcome addition to recently flourishing work on Empire and trade (ALIMENTO and STAPELBROEK, 2017; KUETHE and ANDRIEN, 2014). As the author neatly coins it, paraphrasing Carvalho (the Marques of Pombal), “treaties were weighed in diamonds, and were settled on the basis of economic considerations (p. 246)”. Jones Corredera emphasises the idea of the corporation (pp. 82-139: literally “investing” in the *Lucas*), following the adventures of the South Sea Company and John Law’s schemes. Focusing on Juan de Goyeneche, “the most important investor in the Spanish Crown”, corporations are framed as more “accountable” and thus more desirable structures than the *consulados*, to manage overseas trade (p. 82). A “shareholder Empire” (echoing stakeholder capitalism and the link between (con)dominium and political power) and “royal corporate councils” (p. 224) would ensure that more voices than merely the sovereign’s, could influence business decisions. Leviathan could thus be tamed by coopting private capital in both management and ownership.

It is important to emphasise that the book stresses ideas and concepts within their context, but does not aim to be representative of policy and actual legal underpinnings of the Spanish monarchy. The metaphor of the corporation guides us to the call of the

Finnish international lawyer Martti Koskenniemi, whose recent *magnum opus* on international power and legal imagination from the fourteenth century to 1870, equally tries to transcend the *summa divisio* of private and public law (KOSKENNIEMI, 2021, 2017: 381-397).

The combination of the epithet “diplomatic” with the Enlightenment hints at the management strategies (by officials and ministers, such as Patiño or Carvajal) and concepts in the “Lever of the Balance of Power” (pp. 175-202). The Spanish Empire (including Latin-America) is at the centre of the author’s reflection. This implies both the administration of trade (e.g. Patiño combating silk imports from Asia in Peru, p. 96) and the commercial relations with other European Empires (e.g. the dossier of the *Asiento de Negros* and the tumultuous relationship with Britain). The author delved into handwritten treatises kept in Spanish libraries and archives.

The author devotes considerable attention to the question of inter-imperial relations after the Peace of Utrecht, when -as is well known- the Austrian Habsburg candidate Archduke Charles (SEITSCHEK, 2018) is defeated by the Duke of Anjou. When both competitors decide to reconcile in April 1725, this is mostly discussed as a dynastic issue (MUR RAURELL, 2011). However, the author points to an issue that was at least as controversial to contemporaries: the economic empire of the Spanish composite monarchy was in a certain sense reunited through the treaty of commerce and navigation, concluded in Vienna on 1 May 1725.

In 1722, Emperor Charles VI had granted letters patent guaranteeing the monopoly of the General Imperial Company established in Ostend in the Southern Low Countries. The Company’s suspension (1727) and the retraction of its charter (1731) were a consequence of the combined Anglo-Dutch commercial wrath against this powerful competitor, which controlled half of the European tea trade at its peak. Whereas the legal battle turned on the inalienable and peremptory nature of the right to navigate on the high seas and the renunciation of this right, or at least the restrictions, accepted by Philip IV at the Treaty of Munster, Jones Corredera highlights a crucial aspect of the early modern world of trade: before 1700, the Austrian Low Countries, Spain and the Spanish possessions in the Indies were part of the same composite monarchy. Building further on the work of Ana Crespo Solana on the Flemish and Dutch trade in Spain (CRESPO SOLANA, 2009; EVERAERT, 1973), Jones Corredera

highlights the permanence of the Flemish community of merchants in first Seville and then Cadiz, as well as “Habsburg networks that had survived the War of the Spanish Succession” (p. 92).

The considerable merit of this ambitious and well argued monograph is that Ed Jones Corredera urges us to seize the consequences of the variety of schemes of geopolitical, commercial and political expressions of reform in the early modern Hispanic world. Grim reports by foreign observers (such as count Königsegg’s, during his stay as ambassador in Madrid in 1725-1726) on Spain’s wealth being dilapidated on the Church and other unproductive spending, were certainly not without a basis in facts. Continuous quarrels on interloping and contraband with other European empires were real: “attempts” to regain control of imperial trade were what this term denoted.

However, potential alternatives, perimeters of action, and paths not taken are crucial to understand both facts and perception. Reading the copious sources produced by eighteenth-century actors brings us a more nuanced, dialectical and networked or networkable understanding of the ideas that inspire practice (HERZOG, 2010; BENTON, 2010). The Spanish-speaking world, the focus of this innovative study, is certainly not to be discarded from the European Enlightenment narrative, as similarities and explicit references illustrate (Montesquieu, Saint-Pierre). Conversely, Hispanic adaptations or expressions of similar ideas are unmistakably original, and illustrate that the prominence or relevance of the Spanish Monarchy did not disappear after the “*Siglo de Oro*” (DE LA RASILLA, 2017; STORRS, 2016).

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