

Bernardo de Brito: A Misunderstood Portuguese Chronicler

Matthias Gloël¹

Abstract

This article on Bernardo de Brito seeks to analyze his historiographical work with the aim of refuting the traditional conclusion that he was opposed to the Habsburg kings ruling Portugal. I first describe the very close relationship Brito had with the court. Following this, I focus mainly on the four aspects of his work: the mythical population of the Iberian Peninsula, the ancient Spanish history, the splitting of the Portuguese County from the Leonese kingdom, and the Portuguese crisis of succession from 1383 to 1385, which ended with the enthronement of the Avis dynasty.

Keywords

Early Modern History, Portuguese chronicles, Bernardo de Brito, Portuguese History, Iberian Union

Resumo

Este artigo sobre Bernardo de Brito tem o objetivo de analisar a sua obra historiográfica para recusar a conclusão tradicional que se encontrava em oposição aos reis portugueses da casa de Habsburgo. Primeiro, descrevemos a relação próxima que Brito tinha com a corte. Depois, enfocamo-nos principalmente em quatro aspetos da sua obra: a população mítica da Península Ibérica, a história espanhola antiga, a separação do condado de Portugal do reino de Leão e a crise sucessória portuguesa de 1383 a 1385, que terminou com a entronização da dinastia de Avis.

Palavras-chave

História Moderna, Crónicas portuguesas, Bernardo de Brito, História portuguesa, União Ibérica

¹ Researcher at the Observatório Regional Universidad Católica de Temuco, Chile. *Convenio de Desempeño para la Educación Superior Regional UCT1302*. E-Mail: mgloel@uct.cl

Introduction

Most of Bernardo de Brito's (1568 or 1569-1617) adult life took place under the rule of the Habsburg kings Phillip I (II of Castile) and Phillip II (III of Castile) in the Portuguese kingdom. In 1580, the Avis dynasty was extinguished and King Phillip of Castile and Aragon inherited the Portuguese throne. Now all the Spanish kingdoms were dynastically united under one single ruler, although they did not form a United Kingdom of Spain.

Portuguese historiography has often described and analyzed the years from 1580 to 1640 as the rule of a foreign (Spanish) king, who occupied Portugal and tried to incorporate it into Spain (Rebello 1860; Sousa 1982; Rocha 1940; Queiroz 1946; Domingues 1965). This was the result of one of the fundamental concepts of nationalist historiography: the eternal nation, which had always existed in more or less the same territory since the beginning of time. This extremely nationalistic point of view dominated the nineteenth and large parts of the twentieth century of Portuguese historiography. Since the classic work of the Portuguese historian Magalhães Godinho, many recent studies have begun to alter the previously prevailing view of early modern Portugal, and especially of the years of the so-called Iberian Union (Magalhães Godinho 1968; Bouza Álvares 1986; Hespanha 1995; Valladares 2000; Cardim 2013). Portugal is now seen as part of a composite monarchy (Elliott 1992) or a polycentric monarchy (Herzog et al 2012), composed of several kingdoms and territories, each of them with their own privileges and particular relationship with the monarch.

The traditional interpretation of early modern Portugal also affected the historiographical view of the Portuguese writers of that time, particularly the historians or chroniclers. Many of these authors have not been revisited by current historiography in order to correct this image. One of these cases is certainly Bernardo de Brito, who published three important historiographical works during his lifetime: the first and the second part of the *Monarquia Lusitana* (1597 and 1609, respectively) and the *Elogios dos Reis de Portugal* (1603).

In 1806, the *Monarquia Lusitana* was republished as part of the *Collecção dos principaes autores da História Portuguesa* and António da Visitação Freire was given the task of writing an introductory study on Bernardo de Brito. His analysis was made within that traditional Portuguese view of the years from 1580 to 1640. He explained that the foreign occupation of Portugal sought to eliminate the memory of an independent past full of glory (Freire

1806: XII). In this context, Freire went on to say, Brito not only kept alive the language, but his strong patriotism also kept alive the glory and the spirit of independence during the Portuguese submission to Spanish rule (Freire 1806: XIII-XV).

This nationalist interpretation became even more prominent in the twentieth century, especially during the years of the Salazar dictatorship (1932-1968). In 1948, Hernani Cidade included Brito in what he called *literatura autonomista* (autonomist literature), a kind of literary resistance to the Spanish occupation. Among these writings, according to Cidade, Brito “se ergueria em oposição ao que no País vizinho, com igual intuito, Floriã de Ocampo ou Higuera, construíram em exaltação de Espanha” (Cidade 1948: 87-88).² Cidade anticipated the division of the Iberian Peninsula into two national states, which, in the end, was the historical outcome but was not predictable at least until the Treaty of Lisbon in 1668, when the Spanish monarchy recognized the royalty of the dynasty of Bragança, which had been on the Portuguese throne since 1640. In the opposition that he created between Portugal and Spain, Cidade saw the occupation of one by the other, with which he justified the title of his work.

Also following the same line of argument, we find Alfredo Pimenta (1943), who wrote about the chroniclers of the Alcobaça monastery. Among these were Bernardo de Brito and António Brandão, the authors of the first four volumes of the *Monarquia Lusitana* (Brito of the first and second, Brandão of the third and fourth). Pimenta defined Brito’s nationalism as the same nationalism that all the authors of general histories displayed at that time (Pimenta 1963: 7)³.

In 1973, the first part of the *Monarquia Lusitana* by Brito was republished as a facsimile version with a new introductory study, this time written by António da Silva Rego. The interpretation of the figure of Bernardo Brito had not changed. Portuguese nationalism was the guideline for his interpretation of Brito: “O seu acendrado patriotismo, por todos unanimemente reconhecido, visualizou uma história nacional, uma história de Portugal, a partir dos primórdios da humanidade” (Silva Rego 1973: XI)⁴. This patriotism, explained Silva, would be the leitmotif of his whole work (Silva Rego 1973: XX).

Since historiography on early modern history in general, and on Portugal in particular, has changed significantly, especially since the 1990s, it could also be expected

² “set himself up in opposition to what in the neighboring country, with the same determination, Florian de Ocampo or Higuera, had built for the exaltation of Spain.”

³ The first edition is from 1943. The term “general history” refers to chronicles, which tell the history of a territory of all times.

⁴ “His very strong patriotism, unanimously acknowledged by everybody, visualized a national history, a history of Portugal, from the beginnings of humanity.”

that particular authors such as Brito would be interpreted in new ways. Nevertheless, at least in Brito's case, this did not happen. In 1992, a rather short biography about Brito was finally published. However, looking at the title, one could see that the author, Álvaro Terreiro, was continuing along the same lines that Portuguese historians had followed for more than a century and a half. *Frei Bernardo de Brito, historiador profético da resistência* (Friar Bernardo de Brito, Prophetic Historian of the Resistance) was the title chosen by Terreiro. He took the idea of literary resistance already expressed very explicitly by Cidade and others. The term "prophetic" used in the title would later be directly related to the dynastic change (traditionally referred to as the *Restauração* [Restoration]) in 1640 from the Habsburgs to the Braganças. According to Terreiro, Brito was "talvez aquele que mais contribuiu para um despertar da consciência portuguesa que viria a eclodir no 1º de Dezembro de 1640, com a restauração e independência de Portugal" (Terreiro 1992: 18).⁵ This awakening would have been necessary, given that, by losing independence, the patriotic spirit of many Portuguese had been put to sleep and Brito could not remain indifferent to the concerns of the people that suffered from oppression (Terreiro 1992: 34-35).

There are also even newer studies following that line of interpretation. Similar to Terreiro, José d'Encarnação called Brito a visionary, part of the historiography of Alcobaça that wanted to show how much Portugal was losing by being united with Castile (Encarnação 2001: 387). However, sometimes it is very useful to investigate texts that have already been studied several times in order to reach different conclusions. This is what this article seeks to do in relation to the historiographical work of Bernardo de Brito.

Brito and the Habsburg Kings

The biographical facts on Brito, which have always been known to historians, lead us to the conclusion that Brito's relationship with the court in Madrid was not a distant one, and even less so a hostile one. Instead, it was rather close. He was the author of a poem called *Elogio de Felipe II de Castella*, which he offered to the monarch in 1591 during his stay at the court in Madrid. The same year his *Elogio a D. Christovão de Moura, I. Marquez de Castello Rodrigo* was also printed, dedicated to Phillip II's most important Portuguese diplomat during the Portuguese crisis of succession from 1578 to 1580.

⁵ "perhaps the one who most contributed to the awakening of the Portuguese consciousness that would burst forth on the first of December of 1640 with the restoration and independence of Portugal."

Furthermore, Brito's historiographical work was not written and published in defiance of the censorship of the Habsburg Kings nor in spite of their presence on the Portuguese throne, but very much with their approval. Phillip II and Phillip III encouraged, and even ordered, him to continue his historiographical work. Six years later, in 1597, Brito published the first volume of the *Monarquia Lusitana*, which he dedicated to Phillip I of Portugal, and was named *Chronista Geral* by the king in that very same year. The king wrote Brito a letter, thanking him for his work and dedication, and ordered him to continue his work⁶. The second volume of the *Monarquia Lusitana*, published in 1609, and also the *Elogios dos Reis de Portugal* in 1603, were dedicated to Phillip II of Portugal (III of Castile). The king even sent him 1,000 *cruzados* (a silver or gold coin used in Portugal during the seventeenth and eighteenth century) for the expenses of printing the first and second volume.

In 1614, the king made him *Chronista mór*, the official chronicler of the Portuguese kingdom, and a year later Brito traveled to Madrid to personally thank him for this appointment. The nomination of Brito also reflected the high standing that he enjoyed at the court, given that his predecessor, Francisco de Andrade, had a son who was also seeking to obtain the position after the death of his father. Furthermore, the court granted him several pensions, so that he could focus exclusively on his work as a chronicler.

It could be said (and, indeed, it has been) that all of this is somewhat secondary and actually of minor importance, and that perhaps even that Brito considered it a necessary evil to achieve what he really wanted—the awakening of the Portuguese consciousness. Freire stated that, although Brito seemed to give himself up to the “império das circunstâncias,”⁷ he never relinquished his true purposes (Freire 1806: LIII). Terreiro went even further, seeing Brito “como verdadeiro patriota, sentindo-se moralmente desvinculado das obrigações para com a Dinastia reinante dos Filípes” (Terreiro 1992: 36).⁸ Albin Eduard Beau even believed that the Spanish kings were naive when they ordered historical works out of habit and custom, but without any real interest, and without suspecting the counter forces that would be unleashed by these works (Beau 1945: 68).

We believe that the Habsburg dynasty had a very real interest in these chronicles. Usually, at times of dynastic change, there is more than one house seeking to obtain the vacant throne. Portugal in 1580 was no exception to this. So, especially in the first two

⁶ The letter was dated April 3, 1597; Brito published it at the end of his prologue in the second part of the *Monarquia Lusitana* in 1609.

⁷ “empire of circumstances”.

⁸ “as a true patriot, feeling himself to be morally released from any obligations to the ruling dynasty of the Phillips”.

generations, anything that could emphasize the legitimacy of their claims to royalty would be of use for Phillip I and II. Historiography could be one of these useful things. In his dedication to Phillip I in the first part of the *Monarquia Lusitana*, Brito explained to the king that in this book “verá vossa Magestade triumphos de seus antepassados” (Brito 1597: 2).⁹ The same thing is to be read in the dedication to his successor Phillip II in *Elogios dos Reis de Portugal*: “posso aparecer com este piqueno dom, diante de Vossa Magestade, pois levo para sanear as faltas nacidas de minha parte, não sô a lembrança do claríssimo tronco dos Reis de Portugal progenitores de Vossa Magestade, mas inda a figura e proporção de cada hum delles” (Brito 1603).¹⁰

Portuguese Preeminence at the Beginning of History

According to Brito, Portuguese history began with Tubal’s arrival in Lusitania. The appearance of the Tubal myth was something new in Portuguese historiography. As is well-known, chroniclers all over Europe were searching for the ancient origins of their territories and people. In many cases, they looked for one of Noah’s sons or grandsons, who would have initiated the population of the region after the Flood (Allen 1949; Bizzocchi 1995). In the case of Spanish historians, they began by assuming that it was Tubal, the son of Japhet and the grandson of Noah, who had started the population of Spain (Ballester Rodríguez 2013; Gloël 2017). In Castilian chronicles, the myth was already present in the late Middle Ages, especially after being used in the famous *Historia de rebus hispaniae* by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, the Archbishop of Toledo. From the second half of the fifteenth century, this myth was to be found in almost all Castilian chronicles.

In the fifteenth century, the myth also started to appear in Catalan chronicles, but with a different approach (Tomic 1495).¹¹ While Castilian authors used the myth to emphasize the antiquity of Spain as a whole, Tomic and his successors in Catalonia claimed that the arrival of Tubal and the first settlement on Spanish soil took place explicitly in Catalonia. This Catalan variety of the Tubal myth was not at all insignificant. In keeping with the belief that the more ancient something was, the more valuable and dignified it was

⁹ “Your Majesty will see the triumphs of your ancestors.”

¹⁰ “I trust that I can come to your Majesty with this little piece of work to clarify the parts I have been missing so far, not only the memory of the very clear trunk of the kings of Portugal, your Majesty’s progenitors, but also the figure and proportion of every one of them.” The dedication is without page numbers.

¹¹ The work was written in 1438.

considered to be (Fernández Albaladejo 2007: 124), the claim that, of all the Spanish territories, Catalonia was the first to be populated was of great importance.

During the Middle Ages, and for almost all of the sixteenth century, Portuguese historians did not take the Tubal myth into account. The traditionally important myth in Portugal used to be the foundation of Lisbon by Ulysses (Góis 1554). Now, the Trojan war and anything related to Ulysses clearly took place after the arrival of Tubal. This could be an important reason why a Portuguese chronicler writing in the context of his kingdom being part of the Catholic (Spanish) monarchy should seek to embrace this myth as well.

Brito's first volume of the *Monarchia Lusitana* was the first Portuguese chronicle to be published that included the myth of Tubal.¹² Brito neglected all other possible points of arrival for Tubal and stated that he came through the Mediterranean into the Atlantic Ocean, which would have led him to the Portuguese coast. What Brito wanted to point out was that “nosso Reyno foy o mais antigo na povoação, e Setubal o lugar, em que primeiro ordenarão vivenda e vecinhança comuna” (Brito 1597: 7).¹³ In this way, Brito placed Portugal in the midst of what Antoni Simon i Tarrés called “pre-eminential battles,” which were waged, at the level of literacy, between kingdoms (Simon i Tarrés 2005: 105). Therefore, what Brito wanted to show, especially to the common king, was that, among all the Spanish kingdoms, Portugal was the most ancient and therefore the most dignified.

The use of these founding myths of the nation in Spain and all over Europe shows that in early modern times nations were not considered to be eternal, but that they had a beginning. In any case, we have to bear in mind that in Early Modern Times the term “nation” did not define the population of a political entity, but instead referred to its birth or to a common origin, in other words to a natural state (Helmchen 2005).

Ancient Portuguese Singularity

In further chapters of his book, Brito used several themes and events in ancient Spanish history. This served, on the one hand, to place the Portuguese at the center of important historical events, and, on the other hand, to prove Portugal's independence and its lack of subjection to other kingdoms from very early stages. One example of this was when Brito wrote about the Carthaginians in Spain. Castilian, Aragonese, and Catalan

¹² Fernando de Oliveira used it before Brito in his *História de Portugal*, written between 1580 and 1582, but which remained unpublished until the year 2000.

¹³ “our kingdom was the most ancient one in terms of population, and Setúbal was the place where they first started a settlement and formed a neighborhood.”

chroniclers did not devote much space to Carthage in their works. In contrast, Brito dedicated a whole book (his second one, approximately 200 pages long) of his work to the Carthaginians and their history in Spain. Among the important things they did in Lusitania, Brito extensively described the foundation of Braga by a Carthaginian captain called Hymilcon (Brito 1597: 117v-119).

The real importance of the Carthaginians to Brito became clear when he described the confrontation between Carthage and Rome. The position of Spain in this matter and its subsequent division was, according to Brito, that “sendo quasi toda Espanha em favor dos Romanos, só a Lusitania lhe fez rosto e servio de refugio aos vencidos” (Brito 1597: 148).¹⁴ Brito explained that the relations between the Lusitanians and the Carthaginians became even closer when Hamilcar Barca, impressed by the majesty of the city of Lisbon, decided to marry a woman from this very city. This woman was to give birth to the famous Hannibal, who, in this way, was to have a Portuguese mother (Brito 1597: 148).¹⁵

While Castilian chroniclers pointed out the great importance of the Roman emperors of Spanish origin, mainly Trajan and Hadrian, these figures were completely absent in Brito’s work and in the works of the other Portuguese chroniclers who were to come after him. They preferred to emphasize the Lusitanian resistance to Roman rule. Special importance has usually been given historically to Viriatus, an important Lusitanian leader in the second century BC. Brito dedicated the first part of his third book to him and his anti-Roman fight. Emphasis was placed on the heroic resistance of the Lusitanians against a very superior enemy and on the fact that only the Portuguese were able to fight against the Roman Empire, unlike the rest of the Iberian people. Brito also showed once more that, even at this very early stage in their history, the Portuguese had a clearly different attitude and identity to Castile.

Count Henrique and King Afonso Henriques

The conversion of Portugal from a county into a kingdom and its dissociation from the kingdom of Leon, to which it used to belong, was another crucial theme for Brito and other Portuguese historians. Historically, Henrique of Burgundy served the Leonese King Alfonso VI in the conquest of Galicia and, as a reward, he married Teresa, the king's daughter. In 1096, he received the County of Portucale from the king, becoming his direct

¹⁴ “with nearly the whole of Spain being on the side of Rome, only Lusitania stood against it and gave refuge to the defeated,” Brito, *Monarquia Lusitana. Parte Primeira*, 148.

¹⁵ Hannibal’s mother was in fact Iberian, although there is no evidence that he came from Lusitania.

vassal. His son, Afonso Henriques, became the first king of Portugal in 1139 and turned Portugal into a kingdom of its own, although the Pope only recognized it in 1179.

These origins were a problem for Portuguese historians, because it meant that initially Portugal was a subordinate part of Leon, which in the eyes of a sixteenth and seventeenth-century reader would make it less dignified than Castile, under whose crown the kingdom of Leon was continuing by then. This fear was a real one, which could be seen in the works of the Castilian chroniclers when they wrote about these events. Around 1470, Pedro de Escavías wrote in his *Repertorio de Príncipes* that, although Henrique was Lord of Portugal, he “todavía venía a las Cortes y llamamientos del rrey don Alonso de Castilla” and “le rreconosçía señorío e basallaje quando le mandaba llamar” (Escavías 1972: 219).¹⁶

Esteban de Garibay (1571) referred to the “perpetuo reconocimiento de vassallaje” that Henrique had to swear to the Leonese kings in exchange for the county (Garibay 1628: 54).¹⁷ According to Garibay, this vassalage continued after Afonso Henriques became king and even after the Pope’s confirmation of the new kingdom, which meant that Portugal would still not have been completely independent from the Kingdom of Leon. Gregorio López Madera went even further: he rejected any division of the Iberian Peninsula in legal terms. Only Pelayo would have been a legal successor to the Gothic kings. After his victory over the Moors at Covadonga, Pelayo initiated the Principality of the Asturias, which was to turn into the Kingdom of Leon and later into the Kingdom of Castile. All the other Iberian kings (in Aragon, Navarre, Catalonia, and Portugal) may have had good intentions, but “nunca fueron legitimos, porque aviendo ya Señor y Rey propio que sucedio en todo el derecho de los Godos, deste solo avia de ser el señorío verdadero, y por lo menos el supremo, qual siempre le pretendieron tener los Reyes de León, y Castilla successores de don Pelayo” (López Madera 1597: 71v.).¹⁸

Brito found himself confronted with this rhetorical scenario. His second part of the *Monarquia Lusitana* only went as far as Henrique's marriage to the king's daughter, Teresa. Brito first explained that, as part of the marriage, the king of Leon gave the territory around the town of Porto as a dowry (the south of what would later be the kingdom of Portugal was still ruled by the Moors). According to Brito, the decisive event occurred in 1094: Henrique had a son, the future king Afonso Henriques. Brito explained that the Leonese

¹⁶ “still came to the *Cortes* and answered the calls of King Alonso of Castile,” and “he recognized his rule and vassalage when he called him.”

¹⁷ “perpetual acknowledgement of vassalage.”

¹⁸ “they were never legitimate, because there was already a lord and king who succeeded the Goths, and only he could be the lord of this kingdom, or at least the supreme one, just as the kings of Leon and Castile had always claimed to be, as the successors of Don Pelayo.”

king was so touched by the birth of his grandson that he gave the land perpetually to Henrique and his descendants. That meant that, henceforth, “podemos chamar o Conde verdadeyro Señor de todo Portugal, por lhe ser dado em titulo de Condado” (Brito 1609: 388).¹⁹ Brito was unable to publish the third part²⁰ before his death in 1617, so it was left to his successor António Brandão to deal with the later years of Count Henrique and the acquisition of royal status by his son, Afonso Henriques.

However, Brito did write about Afonso Henriques in his *Elogios dos Reis de Portugal*, which actually starts with Count Henrique. This meant that Brito could have considered him as if he were already king, given that he started the first Portuguese royal dynasty. He described the conquest of Lisbon and the legendary victory over the Moorish kings at Ourique. Brito then gave a double legitimation for the royalty of Afonso Henriques: “vio a Christo crucificado, que lhe deu o escudo de armas, que usão os Reis de Portugal, e lhe mandou tomar titulo de Rey, como fez no seguinte dia, a petição de seus vassalos” (Brito 1603: 9).²¹ This gave Afonso Henriques a divine mandate, which certainly would have been much stronger than a dowry and any possible duties that may have existed as a vassal. Brito did not mention any of them in the *Monarquia Lusitana* nor in the *Elogios dos Reis de Portugal*, so it is to be assumed that, according to him, there were no such duties owed to the King of Leon.

The Succession of João I

Another complicated subject was the acceptance of João, Master of Avis and future king of Portugal²² after the well known meeting in Coimbra of the Portuguese Cortes, in April 1385. His situation as a bastard son of Pedro I made it legally impossible for him to occupy the Portuguese throne one day. After the death of his half-brother Fernando, the legitimate successor was his daughter Beatriz, who was married to Juan I, King of Castile. João started a civil war and was victorious, initiating the new dynasty of Avis.

The Castilian point of view on these facts is also clear. Garibay made it very clear that it was Princess Beatriz and the King of Castile who were the legitimate heirs to the

¹⁹ “we can call the Count the true lord of all Portugal, because it was given to him with the title of a county.”

²⁰ He was already talking about the future third part in 1603 in his *Elogios dos Reis de Portugal* (page 6), before he had even written the second one. This meant that he actually had a long-term plan to write several more parts of the *Monarquia Lusitana*.

²¹ “he saw the crucified Christ, who gave him the coat of arms, which is used by the kings of Portugal, and he commanded him to take the title of king, as he did the next day, at the request of his vassals”.

²² To avoid confusion between the contemporaries King John of Castile (Juan) and King John of Portugal (João), I decided to maintain the names in their original language.

Portuguese kingdom (Garibay 1628: 357). Escavías wrote of João of Avis as the one who “called himself King of Portugal” (Escavías 1972: 305). He stated clearly that he may have called himself king, but that this obviously did not mean that he was the legitimate heir, but rather a usurper.

As Brito did not get far enough in his history to write about these events in the *Monarquia Lusitana*, we only have João's biography included in the *Elogios dos Reis de Portugal*, which, as is the case with all the biographies in this work, is rather short. He avoids terms like “bastard” or “illegitimate,” and does not mention the fact that João was not born within the confines of marriage. Brito emphasizes his very high and adequate education and his military merits, which in the fourteenth century were still an important aspect for a king. He also points out his nomination as “defensor do Reyno de Portugal, contra elRey dom João de Castella” (Brito 1603: 56).²³ Brito does not directly question the legitimacy of Juan of Castile. He even calls Beatriz the sole heir to the kingdom. However, he does refer to “certas capitulações, feitas ao tempor do seu casamento” (Brito 1603: 56),²⁴ which did not affect the rights of Beatriz, but those of Juan. In this way, the reader is pushed towards the conclusion that Juan actually had no rights to the Portuguese throne and that this would legitimize the defense of the kingdom and the nomination of a protector. There was, therefore, only one more step to take: summoning the *Cortes* (which he did in Coimbra), in order to become king himself.

When it came to the succession of Phillip I in 1580, Brito did not refer to any argument that could put in doubt the new king's rights to the throne, although the situation could be compared in a way to the one that existed in 1383. He actually stated that António, the rival bastard, “usava do nome e officio de Rey, batendo moeda, fazendo merces, e executando os mais poderes como se lhe conviera por direito” (Brito 1603: 103).²⁵ Therefore, Brito clearly rejected the rights of António and did not even mention the Duchess Catarina of Bragança at all, who was, like Phillip of Castile, a grandchild of King Manuel I and possibly had a similar claim to the Portuguese throne. Unlike Juan's case in 1383, however, he considered Phillip of Habsburg to be the legitimate heir to the Portuguese kingdom.

²³ “defender of the kingdom of Portugal against King Juan of Castile.”

²⁴ “certain capitulations, made at the moment of the marriage.”

²⁵ “used the title of king, minting coins, giving graces and favors, and executing all the other powers, as if he had the legal right to do so.”

Conclusion: Denying Any Subordination

The Castilian political view on the monarchy can best be summarized in these words by Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos in his *Discurso Político al rey Felipe III al comienzo de su reinado* (1599):

Los Reinos de Castilla, que son sin duda la cabeza de esta monarquía, como Roma, Constantinopla, Macedonia y Persia lo fueron de las antiguas por excusarme de la envidia y competencia de las modernas, siendo éstos los que dan más gente, más dinero y más sustancia, es justo que considere Vuestra Majestad cómo están y cómo los tienen las guerras extranjeras y los servicios propios; porque todos los demás reinos de Vuestra Majestad tienen apariencia de señorío y hacen sombra de grandeza, pero dan poca gente y ningún dinero (Álamos de Barrientos 1990: 26).²⁶

A couple of lines further on, he insists: “del reino de Portugal, de la corona de Aragón, de los estados de Italia, ningún dinero sacamos, y antes gastamos con el sustento de ellas, y aunque dan gentes, es por el dinero de Castilla, que también la diera cualquier nación extranjera” (Álamos de Barrientos 1990: 26).²⁷

So, in addition to a historical rejection of the Portuguese kings by authors like López Madera, which justified Castile’s historical preeminence, we find contemporary views on the monarchy, such as those of Álamos de Barrientos. He also emphasized the Castilian leadership within the monarchy and relegated the other kingdoms, including Portugal, to a second or even third level of importance, given that Castile could almost sustain the monarchy by itself.

Brito's work was a reaction to this Castilian view of the monarchy (present and past), and other Portuguese authors were to follow him in the first decades of the seventeenth century (Gloël 2016). Nevertheless, there is no evidence or reason to interpret

²⁶ “The kingdoms of Castile, which are without any doubt the head of this monarchy, just as Rome, Constantinople, Macedonia and Persia were in the ancient ones, to excuse myself from the envy and competition of the modern ones. These are the ones which give more people, more money and more substance, so it is fair that Your Majesty should consider the way they are because of the foreign wars and their own services; because all of the other kingdoms of Your Majesty have the appearance of a lordship and the shadow of greatness, but they give few people and no money.”

²⁷ “from the kingdom of Portugal, from the Crown of Aragon, and from the Italian states, we get no money, and instead we spend it on sustaining them and, even if they give people, it is in return for Castilian money and, in this way, any foreign nation would give them as well.”

his writings in the traditional way. Brito did not seek for Portugal to leave the Spanish monarchy. His main purpose was to deny the subordination of Portugal in his time to Castilian rule, for historical reasons. This was why, on the one hand, he rejected any suggestion of dependence (on the part of Count Henrique and his son, the first Portuguese king, Afonso Henriques) on the Leonese king. On the other hand, and for the very same reason, he did not recognize the rights of the Castilian king Juan I to the Portuguese throne in 1383, which indirectly justified the ascendancy of a bastard line, the dynasty of Avis.

Any subordination in the past would have had implications for Brito's perception of the relationship between Portugal and Castile in the present. This can be easily seen in the Castilian chronicles, which considered Portugal (and other Iberian kingdoms) to be subordinate to Castile, especially because of their origins as a part of the Leonese kingdom, as well as recognizing the further vassalage of Count Henrique to the Castilian king, and also because, in 1383, Juan I of Castile was already the legitimate heir to the Portuguese kingdom. This was what Brito and other Portuguese authors were not willing to accept.

Beyond denying any subordination to Castilian rule, Brito used very ancient history to emphasize the Portuguese preeminence among the Spanish kingdoms by pointing out that the first settlement in Iberia after the Flood had occurred in Portugal, which would make his kingdom the most ancient territory within the Iberian Peninsula. In the same way, the Portuguese singularity was emphasized by other historical events, for example in the predominant role that the Portuguese played in leading the resistance to the Roman Empire.

Therefore, all of Brito's arguments and purposes were to be understood within the context of the Spanish monarchy. Despite the fact that it was only possible to analyze parts of Brito's work in this paper, I argue that these parts portray Brito's attitude and purposes very clearly, which is why these particular aspects were chosen. As I have already pointed out, he did not want Portugal to be considered a kingdom of a second or third level of importance within the monarchy. However, his conclusion was not that his kingdom should leave the Spanish monarchy, but instead that it deserved far greater recognition, which was why he created, on the one hand, arguments that supported a preeminent role for Portugal, and, on the other hand, arguments to deny a historical subordination under the rule of Castile, which would have had its continuation in Brito's time. Brito's attitude was to enjoy its followers and continuers not only in chronicles (Faria e Sousa 1628) and geographical treatises (Nunes do Leão 1610), but also in works on the Portuguese language (Sousa de Macedo 1631). There were even suggestions that the king should be persuaded to move his court permanently to Lisbon and to rule his vast monarchy from there (Mendes de Vasconcelos 1608).

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