

Rome. While Pompa argues that the European encounters with the Tupi in the sixteenth century shaped how colonists, missionaries, governors, and military men viewed the Tapuia in the seventeenth century, she also clearly shows how the Tupi and the Tapuia responded. In her view, rituals were fundamental for the Tupi and the Tapuia—not to preserve traditions (which increasingly no longer served them)—but to reinterpret their place in a rapidly changing world. So did religion, Pompa argues, become the means through which historical change was translated and understood.

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*Politica e governo nel Nuovo Mondo: Francisco Toledo, viceré del Perù (1569–1581).*

By MANFREDI MERLUZZI. Rome: Carocci Editore, 2003. Notes. Glossary.

Bibliography. Index. xiv, 337 pp. Paper.

Italian researchers have written little about the early modern period in Latin America, as Francesca Cantù notes in her prologue. She points to this volume as a strong contribution in this slim field. *Politica e governo nel Nuovo Mondo* connects with recent scholarship that has portrayed the Habsburg monarchy as a “Monarquía compuesta” (John Elliot) and that has come to review the debate about the structure and model of the Hispanic government during the early modern age. The author analyzes the government of Viceroy Toledo as part of the periphery of the empire (a concept first proposed by Giuseppe Galasso) in relation with the theory of the “practice of empire” (defined in the 1950s by Helmut C. Koenigsberger). At the same time, this study is also related to the fruitful recent Spanish historiography that has brought to light the deep change that the territories of the Hispanic monarchy underwent during the reign of Philip II, as part of a more general process of political centralization.

The methodological approach breaks away from institutional political history and instead focuses on a complete reconstruction of the dynamics of power. In other words, the study does not limit itself to the description of the impact that the viceroy’s government had on institutions but instead analyzes how Philip II’s administration was leading to the consolidation of the monarchy’s centralizing project in the colonial territories. That meant that Toledo had to adapt metropolitan economic and political demands to the local reality of the Peruvian territory.

To demonstrate this, Merluzzi offers ample support from official and private documents housed in both Spanish and Peruvian archives. This documentation is complemented by analysis of contemporary chronicles, such as those penned by Luis de Capoche and Francisco de Gamboa. Notably, the author also provides a thorough and up-to-date bibliography.

The book analyzes the genesis of Viceroy Toledo’s reform program and how it is directly linked to the policies developed in the metropolis following the visit of Juan de Ovando to the Consejo de Indias (1567) and the reports drawn up by the Junta Magna (1568). In this context, the author emphasizes the special nature of Toledo’s assignment,

which he mainly undertook during the first half of his governing term (1568–72). In fact, Merluzzi shows how the viceroy enjoyed a higher degree of independence in his second term (1573–81). Toledo had then to maintain an “unsteady equilibrium” (p. 15) between the authorities in Madrid and those in the Indies as a direct result of the difficulty inherent to the application of crown reforms and demands in the Andean region.

According to Merluzzi, this attitude is clearly related to Toledo’s way of understanding the practice of government as a result of acquiring a progressive knowledge of the territory. This concern “to know in order to govern” (p. 81) persuaded him not only to undertake a general visit but also to search for collaborators among the best Peruvian experts. In becoming increasingly aware of the idiosyncrasies of that periphery of the empire, the viceroy gained a perspective on local matters different from that generally shared by most metropolitan bureaucrats. The project undertaken by Toledo in his long 12 years of viceregal administration involved several aspects. For example, the reform led to the application of economic measures, such as establishing tax rates for native communities and creating the “mita” to solve the problem of labor supply to the colony’s mines. The reorganization of the church in Peru through the application of Trent’s diocesan model is another significant aspect of this project. But above all, Merluzzi underlines that the main aim of the reforms was the consolidation of crown sovereignty in the political and ideological sense, rather than in the administrative order. This engaging argument distances the author from previous scholarship on Toledo, in understanding the Toledan reforms as a part of a more ambitious project. Evidently, political and administrative centralization brought reorganization in the political order. But, at the same time, the resistance to change among the colonial bureaucrats was not only due to jurisdictional disagreement but also to a deeper confrontation between two ways of understanding royal authority. The new political centralization established under Philip II gave way to a conflict between the crown and the viceregal society, especially in those sectors that had held power since the conquest and first colonization of the territory.

Merluzzi’s critical review of the Peruvian government under Viceroy Toledo gives us a new look at an essential period that allows us to better understand the Hispanic administration in the Indies. For this reason, the book constitutes an essential reading for any specialist on the subject.

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