



Introduction

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An Economic History of Iberia: The Dream and Project of Pedro Lains

We can consider, quite rightly, that this book, while being the collective work of more than 70 authors, is overall the posthumous work of Pedro Lains, who sadly passed away on 16 May 2021. Pedro always expressed concern about southern Europe not being sufficiently represented in the analyses of the continent's economic past. Therefore, he believed that the countries of the Iberian Peninsula shared sufficient common features so as to deserve a monograph, published in English, to address their trajectory and facilitate their integration in European economic history.

His efforts with this book were titanic. He designed the structure of a text that had to span from the Early Middle Ages to the present day. The perspective that he sought was not to analyse the Iberian territories separately but to integrate them in a common vision. This implied integrating the economic past of the Christian and Muslim territories from the early Middle Ages, of Aragon, Castile and Portugal in early modern times and finally of Spain and Portugal in the contemporary age. Furthermore, he selected authors to write the different chapters and editors to assist him in this immense task. He organized two conferences in Lisbon (2016) and Zaragoza (2019), where the authors were able to discuss the project and the drafts of the different chapters.

Pedro's academic trajectory allows us to understand his project. After having published extensively on the economic history of Portugal, he considered that its parallelisms with that of Spain justified this effort. It has to be said that he had a profound knowledge of Spanish economic history. Not only did he carry out a post-doctoral stay in the Universidad Carlos III of Madrid, with which he always maintained close contact as a member of the Instituto Laureano Figuerola, but he also participated in many research projects developed in the universities of Barcelona and Zaragoza, collaborating with their economic historians over many years and forging close friendships with them.

Sadly, a cruel illness prevented Pedro from completing a task in which he had invested many years and a lot of effort and enthusiasm. The editors and

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Excerpt

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authors of this volume wish to offer this book as a warm tribute to an admirable person and an excellent economic historian.

From a very young age, Pedro dreamed of becoming a university professor.² This vocation was reinforced by his idea that this profession would give him great freedom of movement and also commitment. After finishing his baccalaureate studies, he chose to study Economics at the Universidade Nova of Lisbon, as he considered that some of the subjects in which he had obtained the best results, such as Mathematics, Geography or English, had prepared him well for it. In the Faculty, from which he graduated in 1983, early on he developed a concern for the lower level of economic development of Portugal compared with other European countries. After finishing his degree, he considered that, with its theoretical models or mathematical instruments, his field did not allow him to respond to his big question and what he had studied was merely an instrument to bring him closer to real economics. This is when he found economic history, a discipline which he felt would help him to resolve his questions about Portugal's backwardness.

Although he joined the Instituto de Ciências Sociais (ICS) of the Universidade de Lisboa in 1984, shortly afterwards he went abroad to complete his training. First, he went to the University of Oxford and immediately afterwards to the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence to undertake his doctorate, which he finished in 1992. He returned to the ICS after conducting a post-doctoral stay in the Universidad Carlos III in Madrid. He spent the rest of his academic life in this centre, except for a year in the United States in Brown University.

His thesis addressed the effect of Portugal's international integration during the first globalization on the country's backwardness, concluding that the unfavourable starting point made it impossible to correct this backwardness with a few decades of internationalization. This constituted one of his main fields of study over many years; the analysis of the relation between Portugal's economic growth and international integration, from a comparative and long-term perspective. At that time, as he recognized later, Pedro did not contemplate publishing his thesis in English in book form or as articles in international journals. He translated it into Portuguese and published it as a book (Lains, 1995), which was translated a few years later into French (Lains, 1999). As we previously mentioned, his analysis of Portugal's economic past was a constant theme throughout his career, with monographs such as Lains (2002a) (Spanish translation, Lains, 2006a) or the formidable work co-authored with Leonor Freire Costa and Susana M. Miranda (Costa et al., 2014), analysing the economic

² Responding to the request of the Portuguese Association of Economic and Social History, Pedro Lains wrote a text published online in May 2020 in which he summarizes his life and academic career: www.aphes.pt/images/Docs.pdf/thomas/APHES_Lains_2020_05_18_Revisao_final.pdf

history of Portugal over a period of 900 years, which had enormous success, with several editions and an English translation published a few years later (Costa et al., 2016).

Many other topics of the Portuguese economy also captured Pedro's attention. We can highlight his studies on the Portuguese financial system, particularly the books on the Caixa Geral de Depósitos (Lains, 2002b and 2008), the loss of the Brazilian empire, or the integration into the European Union and Portugal's economic growth.

But in recent years, although Pedro published many of his studies as articles in prominent journals, mainly specialized in economic history, he began focusing on leading ambitious projects to publish books that would enable him to answer complex questions, something which, in his opinion, was not possible through articles. The ambition of the studies in which he was involved, normally as a co-editor, is remarkable. He addressed broad subject areas such as the relationship between agriculture and economic growth in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Lains and Pinilla, 2009), public finance and the construction of liberal states in this same continent in the nineteenth century (Cardoso and Lains, 2010a) or the agricultural history of Portugal in the second millennium (Freire and Lains, 2017). This was an activity that aroused passion and excitement in him, as he expressed to many of his friends in recent years. It is within this context that the book that we are presenting in this introduction can be framed.

But Pedro was not only a great researcher. He also taught classes in universities such as La Católica in Lisbon or Évora, and tried to make his knowledge as an economic historian useful to society, furthering the understanding of current problems with a historical perspective. He wrote for the most important Portuguese newspapers, participated in television programmes, wrote a blog commenting on Portugal's problems during the crisis beginning in 2008 and published two books that included his journalistic interventions (Lains, 2007a and 2014). Finally, he also devoted substantial effort to the Economic History profession, being secretary of the European Historical Economics Society, president of the Portuguese Association of Economic and Social History and the director of the journal *Análise Social*.

This is the trajectory of a prominent and exemplary academic and an excellent person, without whom this book would never have been published. All co-editors and authors of this volume have worked over the last two years, without his direction, in order to conclude it as he would have liked. He was able to read all chapters and made many suggestions to improve them. There is no doubt that his direction has profoundly marked this project. Pedro launched and developed a magnificent idea which authors and editors have all also made our own. We believe that having completed it satisfactorily is the best way to pay tribute to him. Pedro will always be remembered among European economic historians and this is our tribute to his memory.

As Pedro Lains' preface reminds us, the peninsula is as much a European gateway to different parts of the world as a peripheral point at the western end of a continental mass. Both attributes would merit consideration in economic history and, indeed, their far-reaching implications cut across the book's 25 chapters. However, this collective effort very dear to Pedro Lains is not based on the aprioristic identification of an area on a map. It fills a gap in current knowledge by addressing a European area from an overarching perspective. A growing scholarly interest in Spain and Portugal economic performance in different timespans has brought about new data supporting this entirely new view on the peninsula as a whole. That output contributes to a comparative history of regional dynamics in the face of economic integration.

From almost complete insertion into Muslim polities to full membership in the European Union, the Iberian Peninsula has experienced over the last thousand years shifting political boundaries and changing patterns of economic integration, but has also comprised cultural and linguistic resilience. If economic growth has been widely studied in the framework of the sovereign state, it is also true that Iberian diversity is not simply the result of the formation of nation-states and domestic integrated markets over the last two centuries. Diversity involves climatic and resource specificities at the regional level, and, for the subject under consideration in the design of the book, it reflects income inequality that has accompanied a long-term process of economic change. This book tackles the factors for some areas to prosper, and others to decline. Apart from Madrid district bolstering the very continental core of the peninsula, the most dynamic regions have been located on the Mediterranean and Atlantic coastlines, thus contemporary economic geography questions the economic role of the north–south divide between the Iberian countries since the medieval period. This book's approach is free from pre-defined political borders, but it does not ignore them either.

We start in the year 711 with the Islamic conquest of large parts of the peninsula. But we take the symbolic date of the year 1000 to begin a detailed analysis of the economic development of all Iberian regions over the past millennium. The book unfolds in three separate parts. The Iberian transformations and their intersection with major transformations taking course in the rest of the world construct each part. Part I – The Making of Iberia – observes the peninsula under Muslim influence and the subsequent creation of kingdoms in the orbit of the expansion of the Christianity in Europe; Part II – Globalization and Enlightenment – considers Iberia's participation in the globalization of the world economy and the relative alienation of this area from the major reforms of the Enlightenment; Part III – Industrialization and Catching Up – addresses the virtually synchronic performance of the two Iberian national economies, both undergoing economic divergence in the nineteenth century and catching up after 1950. Despite particularities inherent to the chronological periods covered, the three parts bear a similar structure.

Each of the chapters of one part focuses on a theme or a set of themes that finds a corresponding chapter in the other two. This arrangement allows the reader to use the book to explore a single theme in diachrony, or several themes in a single period.

Part I: The Making of Iberia

The Historical Context

From the eighth century onwards, the medieval history of the Iberian Peninsula was marked by the consequences of the Muslim expansion and occupation of much of the territory, the establishment of a Christian zone in the north and a number of kingdoms and territories that gradually developed in both Christian- and Muslim-controlled regions. The characteristics of these circumstances can be found in the nine chapters that make up this part of the book, and are dealt with in greater or lesser detail.

By way of introduction, it is worth noting that the Muslim space (al-Andalus) evolved from a unified political structure to the fragmentation which characterized the so-called *taifa* kingdoms between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, and also, thereafter, by the influence of the Almoravids and Almohads, dynasties originating in North Africa. Granada was the only Muslim kingdom that persisted up until the fifteenth century. Meanwhile, in the Christian sphere, a number of polities were gradually established which ended up, especially from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as the kingdoms of Portugal, Castile, Navarre and Aragon. The overall picture is one of changes in the military and territorial balance of power between Christians and Muslims throughout the period, with Muslims predominant until the twelfth century, when there was a shift in favour of Christians.

This pattern of political and territorial diversity was also a reality in the economic sphere, and the specific characteristics and patterns of evolution of the economies of the different Iberian spaces were manifestly diverse. The most marked differences were those between Christians and Muslims: the two worlds displayed differences in terms of economic organization and patterns of development over time. Three major stages can be identified in the development of the Christian economies: first, establishment and gradual expansion from the eighth century; second, a period of growth from the eleventh century; and third, the difficulties and transformations experienced from the fourteenth century. In the Islamic side there are indications of the hegemony and strength of the Muslim economy from its origins, and its vitality was evident up until the thirteenth century, despite the inevitable setbacks and fluctuations that characterized the history of al-Andalus.

In terms of the Iberian Peninsula, this helps to put into perspective the significance that historians of medieval Europe have assigned to the year 1000

as the starting point for the expansion of Western Christian countries and their overall domination of the societies based in the east (Islam and Byzantium). Although the year has been taken as delimiting periods examined in these chapters, it should be noted that if it can be held true for Christian territories, it is not for Muslim territories.

Questions of Research and Historiography

The available studies on the period clearly reflect the aspects of plurality and differentiation indicated above, with a clear divide between authors who focus on periods either before or after the eleventh or the fourteenth century and those who cover al-Andalus or the Christian areas. In turn, each of these two groups is divided between studies focusing on the various states and/or regions that were established.

It should also be noted that comparatively fewer written sources are available for the Early Middle Ages than for the late Middle Ages, and for Muslim territories than for Christian spaces and, among Christians, for the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile than for the kingdoms of Navarre and Aragon. In this regard, the contribution of archaeological research is crucial, especially in relation to the Muslim world and periods prior to the year 1000, although this does not always compensate for the lack of archival documentation.

The content and intrinsic characteristics of the majority of available manuscript sources, as well as the theoretical and methodological approaches of the majority of experts in medieval Iberian economics, explain the existence of research in which qualitative approaches predominate over quantitative ones. Whatever the case, the difficulty of the synthesis has been classically and strongly felt, which is a result of the diverse characteristics of medieval Iberia and the academic and historiographical traditions of Spain and Portugal.

In fact, two elements posed a challenge, at both the academic and personal level, for the 25 authors who contribute to this first part: the need to break down barriers between different historiographical approaches and the need to include in the analysis ideas (and perspectives) as diverse as those required not only by the historical reality of medieval Iberia but also by the distribution of chapters and themes for this part of the book.

In fact, we are unaware of any other work with similar aims to those of the studies included in this part of the book: a reasonable attempt to produce a synthesis of the array of Iberian economic scenarios during the Middle Ages, covering the different stages of the development of the economy in the different territories from the eighth century while adopting a perspective that, besides allowing for the separate treatment of kingdoms and societies, attempts to focus on the great issues of economic history: production, population, politics and institutions, currency and credit, technology, living standards and trade.

Structure and Content of the Chapters

What has been said above provides the rationale for the structure of Part I, which is divided into two sections: the first, composed of a single chapter, covers the period from 700 to 1200; the second, comprising seven chapters, deals with the period from 1000 to 1500. The aim of the ninth and final chapter is to draw overall conclusions and contextualize the medieval Iberian economy from a global perspective over the long term. The chronological overlap of Sections I and II is explained by the interest in demonstrating in practice how the economies of Christian and Muslim Iberia developed at a different pace, a fact that has already been commented on. And, at the same time, taking into account the influences these spaces had on each other, as well as factors of continuity in terms of spaces, powers and economies; thus, this overlap is more apparent than real.

Section I deals with the initial prolonged prominence of al-Andalus at a number of different levels during the period examined (from 700 to 1200), as well as with all aspects regarding Christian territories from 700 to 1000 and the links between these and al-Andalus from 1000 to 1200, the period during which we witness the transition of the peninsula from Muslim to Christian control. The chapter in this section deals with these aspects and, to this end, is divided into two parts. The first copes with al-Andalus and its characteristics as a monetary economy, in which the role of state institutions and their policies are examined, covering aspects such as urban development and the integration of the al-Andalus economy in the Mediterranean context. The role of power centres as regards the minting of coinage, market regulation and the creation of a tax system is highlighted, the last of these emerging as particularly burdensome during the period when the *taifa* kingdoms were required to pay *parias* to Christian kingdoms. The second part of this chapter focuses on the Christian kingdoms and counties of the north of the peninsula, their initial economic features and gradual expansion, closely linked to the perception of the frontier with Muslim territories as a zone for occupation, the accumulation of wealth, and social and economic prosperity. Particular attention is paid to the geographical diversity of spaces, the different political solutions that took shape in the northernmost regions of the peninsula, and to the models for the appropriation of the territories that were gradually integrated into areas under Christian control.

Section II focuses on the development of Iberian Christian societies from 1000 to 1500, involving processes that began with the growth of such societies from the eleventh century, and culminated in their expansion beyond the peninsula from the fifteenth century. Of course, this focus on the Christian world does not mean that the Muslim sphere is ignored. On the contrary the Muslim sphere is dealt in the different chapters taking in account: (1) a focus on the kingdom of Granada from 1200 to 1500, although there are also notes

on the *taifa* kingdoms and the Almoravids and Almohads from 1000 to 1200, especially when they serve the purposes of contrast and comparison with the Christian world or as essential elements for gaining an understanding of the latter; and (2) the legacy of al-Andalus and its later influence on the Iberian Christian kingdoms following the conquest of the former by the latter.

Deriving from an analysis of peninsular productive patterns, the first chapter in this section, Chapter 2, sets out the main chronological and territorial milestones in the development of the Christian economy: (a) the period of growth and expansion of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, and that of the crisis and recovery of the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries; and (b) the spaces in which economic activities were carried out, taking into account landscape features and different forms of resource use by agricultural, manufacturing and commercial activities. In both cases, and despite the difficulty involved, the discussion in this chapter is accompanied by the available quantitative estimates on, for example, agricultural production and productivity.

Chapter 3 deals with population: demographic trends and human mobility, as well as patterns of rural and urban settlement and the distribution of occupations. Serious limits are placed on research deriving from the lack of documentary sources and difficulties regarding the production of reliable population figures. Even the use of coefficients for the conversion of households into inhabitants does not ensure the reliability of the figures analysed, since these always depend on the value of the coefficient adopted. This chapter also highlights the specificities of population growth and population distribution over the different regions and discusses the consequences of the effects of the so-called ‘crisis of the fourteenth century’ on the evolution of population figures.

Chapter 4 deals with politics and institutions, mainly focusing on their relationship with the economy. Similar to Chapter 1, the political and institutional narrative is unfolded separately for the Muslim and the Christian worlds, highlighting in the latter case the distinction between the periods before and after 1300. In particular, the process of the territorial and political construction of the Iberian monarchies is analysed, as well as the way in which they played a role as economic protagonists in an economically and politically fragmented world. Also highlighted is the role of taxation as a source of revenue for central governments and how the imposition of a tax structure involved the creation of a collection system and led to the growing complexity of the administrative structure.

Chapter 5 focuses on currency, credit and banking, by means of an analysis that underlines the complexity of these aspects, and especially the monetary system, in the peninsula and also, for example, the gradual expansion of private and public credit mechanisms in the Christian kingdoms. Emphasis is thus given to the way in which the political fragmentation of the Christian space led to the emergence of different monetary systems, as an alternative to the Islamic

model, while they were nevertheless influenced by the latter, but also by the Carolingian and Visigoth heritage. Despite the scarcity of precious metals, which marked the monetary and minting policy of the different kingdoms, the chapter highlights the tendency to an increasing integration of the monetary systems of the peninsular kingdoms in international circuits.

Chapter 6 examines technology. It begins with some conceptual considerations and then moves on to an explanation of technology in agriculture, manufacturing, energy sources and transport. It also highlights the importance of the Islamic influence on the dissemination of certain techniques in the Iberian case, in particular associated with agriculture.

Chapter 7 examines standards of living and deals with the problems involved in researching the subject for the medieval period. This does not preclude an approach to the issue through the analysis of prices and wages, the distribution of income in the peninsula and existing models of the consumption of food, housing and clothing. In the context of this analysis the negative image prevalent in part of the historiography on peninsular standards of living is called into question by means of a comparison with regions outside the peninsula, while improvements in food, housing and clothing during the course of the late Middle Ages are highlighted.

Chapter 8 is concerned with trade and, above all, with its international dimension. The focus is on trade routes, the products that circulated within Iberia and those which were traded with other countries, local and foreign agents for trade, the institutions that formed the framework within which these agents operated, and the variables that underpinned the development of Iberian trade in the late Middle Ages in the case of Aragon and, especially, Portugal and Castile. This chapter also highlights the process of transition from the eleventh-century trade marked by the dominant influence of al-Andalus to the development of trade by Christian kingdoms from the twelfth century.

As has already been said, the last chapter in this part, Chapter 9, serves to contextualize the medieval Iberian economy in a global and long-term perspective. Global because it compares the Iberian economy with other European and Mediterranean regions. Long-term because it deals not only with the specific period from 700 to 1500 but also aspects of the prehistoric and ancient eras, including references to the post-Roman or Visigoth period. The chapter proceeds to an analysis of Iberian regional economies at the end of the Middle Ages, which completes and complements what is set out on the subject in previous chapters.

Compared with Parts II and III of the book, what stands out is the specificity of the peninsular economy of the Middle Ages and the differences (and difficulties) involved in researching the topic as compared with early and late modern times. Also, throughout the nine chapters, several notable aspects are evident, which while well known are presented here in

a combined approach: the multiple effects of the contrast and contact between Christian and Muslim communities; the social and economic bases of the peninsular states that were established from the eighth to the tenth century; the consequences of the great Christian military and territorial expansion that occurred from the eleventh to the thirteenth century; the dual perception of the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries as a period of crisis and recovery on the one hand and difficulty and transformation on the other hand (although with differences among territories and economic sectors). And at last the idea, which may be applied to the entire period from 700 to 1500, that factors working for diversity and fragmentation in the peninsula developed in parallel with other factors involving interaction and even integration between spaces, countries, cultures and individuals.

As emphasized in the chapters in this part of the book, there were no closed and isolated Iberian medieval economies: on the contrary, they were at all times willing to connect with other areas – the rest of Europe and the Mediterranean. In addition, the peninsular economies shared many similarities with these ‘other worlds’, and in some cases can even be regarded as pioneering or relatively advanced. These elements, along with many others that are described in detail in the chapters, help to confirm not only the fact that the peninsula never played a subordinate or ‘peripheral’ role at the European level in the Middle Ages, but also that, as we approach the end of the Middle Ages, the characteristics of its economy provided the essential foundations for the overseas expansion of Iberian societies, which started in the fifteenth century and culminated in the period following 1500.

Part II: Globalization and Enlightenment

A Historical Context

Throughout the centuries covered by Part II, Iberia became the first European region to push the economic frontiers beyond the ‘Old Continent’. The first move forward began in the fifteenth century with the conquest of Islamic territories in North Africa, still before the full Christian conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. The integration of Granada (1492) in the south-east of the peninsula consolidated the political borders of the united Castilian–Aragonese polity. Portugal’s conquest of Ceuta (1415) and Tanger (1437) in Morocco pushed the border between Islamic and Christian polities beyond the peninsula. The pursuit of a Christian ‘holy war’ in North Africa would lead to the death of Portugal’s young king Sebastião at the battle of Ksar el Kebir (1578) without issue. The ensuing succession crisis resulted in the Habsburg Philip II to claim the Portuguese crown in addition to those of Castile and Aragon. Thus, between 1581 and 1640 all Iberian territories were for the first and the last time ruled by the same monarchy.