CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

ENLIGHTENED POLITICS IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN

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INTRODUCTION: OLD KINGDOMS, NEW MONARCHIES

During the eighteenth century, the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies, each governed by their recently installed dynasties—the Braganças and the Bourbons—ruled over large areas of territory covering the four known continents. Their origins were ancient ones, but their subsequent evolution was defined by features dating from much later. Spain and Portugal shared many things in common: Catholic faith; territorial domains outside Europe; convergent institutions and dynasties; and many close and intersecting ties between the elites of both kingdoms. To a large extent, in the eighteenth century, the two Iberian monarchies also shared a negative image projected onto them by Europe’s political and cultural centres, which attributed the peninsular territories with the stigma of being isolated regions dominated by superstition. In actual fact, such images were a reaffirmation of the Protestant ways of looking at the Catholics, now strengthened and renewed by Spain’s loss of its central political and economic importance. To some extent, the reforms of the Iberian monarchies resulted from the incorporation of those images and the attempts to overcome the diagnosed lack of development.

After considering all the differences between the two peninsular neighbours, the question of the Iberian Enlightenments is largely a problem that arises from the general concept of enlightenment that is adopted, and from the acceptance, or not, of the fact that, despite everything, this was a cosmopolitan and unitary movement. The reforms and the reformers had their own particular chronologies. In Spain, a great impetus was provided by the arrival of Philip V in 1701. However, no one would define such reforms as enlightened, not even, for example, those introduced by Melchor de Macanaz. In Portugal, the great impulse was given by the Marquis of Pombal’s accession to the government in 1750. And, similarly, his characterisation as an enlightened reformer is still far from being unanimous. On the other hand, it is proving increasingly difficult to uphold the view that the Iberians remained totally on the fringes of the cultural movements of eighteenth-century Europe, in all of their
many different expressions, although it has to be admitted that their subsequent
inclusion in this world took place in accordance with each country’s own rhythm
and historical context. Lastly, it seems difficult not to acknowledge that in the last
third of the century these Iberian enlightenments did, in fact, exist, albeit in a more
restricted sense of the term.

Bearing in mind all the differences, the Iberian enlightenments seem to have
been combined with the reforming initiatives of the two countries’ respective mon-
archies, although without ever becoming confused with them. Some of the essential
characteristics of the Portuguese monarchy were already part of the country’s long
history, while others resulted from the complete rupture with the Spanish Habsburgs
in 1640, and yet others derived from the times of the Spanish War of Succession. The
years (1640–1668) of the Portuguese wars with the Spanish monarchy in Europe
and with the Dutch in the empire had brought some important changes in the short
term: the affirmation of an anti-Castilian culture as part of the dynasty’s identity
(relating to the topic of the “natural king”); the restoration of the “constitution”,
initially expressed by the summoning of parliament and the reinforcement of the
polysynodal system; the predominance of the Atlantic Ocean region and Brazil in
the Portuguese monarchy’s financial, institutional, and symbolic plans. The official
designation given to Portugal and its empire as a whole was constantly changing.
“Kingdom(s) and conquests” and then “kingdom and overseas dominions” were the
terms that were most widely used. These names reflected the fact that the Portuguese
Crown in Europe consisted of just one single kingdom and, at the same time, it
indicated the undeniable importance of the overseas dimension, which also meant
the State of India, but increasingly the “States” of Brazil and Maranhão. Salvador da
Bahia and São Luís do Maranhão were already represented by proxy at the Cortes in
the second half of the seventeenth century. But it was only in 1815 that the country
and its empire as a whole came to be officially called the United Kingdom of Portugal,
Brazil, and the Algarves (Cardim 2012).

In Europe, there did not exist any problem with regard to the integration of
territories. Portugal consisted of just one single kingdom, without any political or
administrative regions. The counterbalance to the central power was provided by
the local authorities, namely the municipal councils, over whose actions the lords of
the manor had drastically lost their control and influence, ever since the enthron-
ement of the greatest of them all, the Duke of Bragança, in 1640. The new dynasty
had been setting itself up in such a way as to be able to resist its absorption by the
neighbouring monarchy, and, from 1703 onwards, after the Treaty of Methuen and
its participation in the Spanish War of Succession, Portugal could also count on its
alliance with England. Furthermore, at the turn of the century, the arrival of gold
from Brazil led to gradual changes in the political centre throughout the reign of
Dom João V (1706–1750), seeking to reinforce the king’s authority. The Cortes
met for the last time in 1697–1698; the Council of State, the fulcrum of what later
came to be referred to as an “aristocratic republic” of Grandees (already evident
in the last third of the seventeenth century), stopped meeting from 1725 onwards;
the offices of the three Secretaries of State (of the kingdom, Foreign Affairs (and
War), and the Overseas (and the Navy) were created in 1736, although there remain
some doubts regarding their effective functioning. The reforms implemented by its
Iberian neighbour necessarily made themselves felt, but their impact was rather
a limited one in times of such financial prosperity. The direct exercise of political power by the aristocracy was curbed, but this increasingly restricted group continued to monopolise the revenues of the rents from commanderies of military orders and seigneuries that were distributed by the crown (Monteiro 2003), besides the military governorships, the most important ecclesiastical dioceses and viceroyships in the empire. Furthermore, the reinforcement of the royal power depended on the strengthening of the ecclesiastical institutions that it endowed, together with continued investment in the Holy See, most notably the transformation of the Royal Chapel into the Patriarchal Church of Lisbon and the closer links formed between the king and the Inquisition. That also led to a significant increase in the royal patronage of arts and culture.

At the same time as a scientific culture was being developed with new inspirations, the political criticisms that were made during this period were levelled precisely at the relationship between the royal and the religious power, at education, and, in a more unequivocal fashion, at the Portuguese Inquisition, echoing the European image of this institution, which had been reinforced by such works as those of Charles Dellon (Marcocci and Paiva 2013). The persistent persecution of the New Christians, in particular, lay at the very heart of such criticisms, largely produced by diplomats (like D. Luis da Cunha, cf. Furtado 2012) and other members of the monarchy’s institutions, who were sometimes referred to later on by the name of “estrangeirados”—Portuguese intellectuals who promoted the circulation of foreign ideas (Macedo 1974). What these critics shared in common was a series of doubts about the advantages of the commercial Treaty of Methuen signed with England, defending the promotion of manufactures within the kingdom. They considered the influence of the religious orders to be excessive, frequently had a negative perception of the agrarian structures, criticised the performance of the Inquisition and the persecution of the New Christians, sought to change the teaching methods, which some claimed to be dominated by the Jesuits, and denounced the “puritanism” of some families from the high nobility.

In the case of Spain, it is already quite a number of years since historiography ceased to identify eighteenth-century political reformism with the reign of Carlos III. There was a prior (and non-linear) path of development that consisted of the growing conquest of the social space by the sovereign, who was himself converted into the effective centre of the system of government. Such actions were accompanied by the explicit wish to expand the administrative apparatus, to tackle the serious financial situation and to set in motion a regalist policy designed to recover royal prerogatives. Elsewhere, intensive propaganda activities based on the circulation of pamphlets and manuscripts, which were typically found in war years, led to an increase in publications and the opening up of public fora for discussion. The crisis of succession and its final solution, the treaties of Utrecht and Rastatt, were foundational events that changed the territorial structure of the Habsburg monarchy, leaving its presence in Europe reduced to its peninsular portion and giving rise to a new system of government from an internal point of view. The Indies, that is to say the kingdoms of the Castilian Indies, “the Islands and Mainland of the Ocean Sea”, and the island territories of Asia and the Pacific, the East Indies, remained intact, albeit with important commercial concessions being made in favour of England. The figure of the king was reinforced as a link between the
two parts of the monarchy, America and Spain, until these were both incorporated into one single kingdom in the 1812 Constitution, under the title of Overseas (Bellingeri 2000).

The war (1702–1715) brought an end to the organisation of its many different kingdoms under an almost confederal system that, with the exception of Navarre and the Basque territories, disappeared as a consequence of the dissolution of the Crown of Aragon as a historical institutional whole of medieval origin. This amounted to a radical change in the political model, which forced the key problems to be addressed: a greater centralisation of decision-making and the effective control of a territory which was divided into provinces with somewhat confused boundaries. The so-called Nueva Planta decrees introduced, into the kingdoms of Valencia, Aragon and Majorca, and the Principality of Catalonia, the customs and habits of the Castilian government, but not in a uniform manner, because, although these decrees were punitive, there was behind them a political desire to change a system that many supporters of Felipe V, and therefore of Louis XIV, considered to be inoperative (Orduño Rebollo 2015, 185–201).

Yet behind this Nueva Planta, which affected the former Crown of Aragon, there were other plans designed to reform the Castilian institutional apparatus and to admit into it the nobility of Philip V, formed from soldiers, bureaucrats, and businessmen, among whom there was no shortage of Italian or Flemish subjects, as well as French subjects who had arrived with the king or Irish subjects who supported his cause. The first measures to be adopted, between 1713 and 1715, affected the councils, but they proved to be a failure. A solution was therefore sought that would enable the king to govern without their contribution and support. Above all, it was the successive divisions of the cabinet office that had been the key to the dynastic transition, with this being converted into the central hub of the new system in 1714. The nature of its concentration in the figure of one person and its powers over matters of government allowed for greater agility in decision-making, thanks to procedures that involved only a few people who were in direct communication with the monarch, and with business being conducted privately in conversation with the king. There were predominantly five departments - State, War, Treasury, Justice, and the Navy and the Indies, which were run by secretaries and ministers. This reform was instrumental in nature, altering the flow of information, which previously had arrived through the councils, and bringing a radical change in the form of government. The heads of these departments were increasingly less administrative and increasingly more political, complying with the king's wishes, but also guiding them in a difficult balance that depended on many different factors. Only two of them, Carvajal and Aranda, belonged to the high nobility: the rest were hidalgos, graduates from one of the kingdom's universities who had been rewarded for their services. Some of them were of Italian origin, such as Patiño, Esquilache, and Grimaldi, or of Irish origin, such as Wall and O’Farrill, and continuity in the post was the norm. There were also many who were promoted from within the institution itself, such as the Marquis of Villárias, Miguel Múquiz, and Eugenio Llaguno, among others. In their turn, they amounted to relatively qualified staff who, over two generations, frequented the salons and the court, and formed part of the large group of “organic intellectuals” who worked in the administration (Dedieu 2011, 53–73; López-Cordón 2014, 113–156).
If achieving a stable and non-deliberative government was a key part of this institutional reform, then confronting the serious financial situation was an absolute necessity. In order to carry out this task, Louis XIV sent Jean Orry (1652–1719) to Spain, a jurist who had made a brilliant career as a purveyor of the armies of the French king. He was in Spain on three occasions, 1701, 1705, and between 1706–1713, at the same time that the Marquise of the Ursinos. Although their proposals were hardly initiated, they were the basis of the measures that in this matter were taken between 1714 and 1718. These involved integrating the regional treasuries and the new taxation systems of the former Crown of Aragon, reorganising the Castilian treasury and dividing the various tax revenues into four categories (provincial income and its equivalent, general income, and income from the salt and tobacco taxes), and establishing another system of tax collection with the creation of a general treasury to centralise income. The Treasury Minister was the central hub of this process (Dubet 2008; Dedieu 2014, 161–187).

The measures did not change the bases of the Castilian tax system, but they brought an organisational improvement that increased the short-term collection of taxes. However, by the middle of the century, they proved to be insufficient, since they had not managed to break the monopoly of the local oligarchies and the war in Italy had multiplied expenditure. This brought the need for a tax review, based on wealth and population censuses, just as had been undertaken in Catalonia. With Campillo, the idea began to take shape and in 1749, the Marquis of Ensenada, the Treasury Minister, set it in motion. The Catastro de la Ensenada, which was named after him, or the Single Tax, was a large-scale undertaking that did not survive his later exit from the office (Durán Boo and Camarero Bullón 2002, 113–387).

The treasury was the key to solving another pending matter: a territorial organisation that was based on the province. In the Crown of Aragon, there was an automatic transition from a kingdom to a province; in the case of Castile, the organisation was centred around the cities that had a vote at the Cortes, but 1718 brought the institutionalisation of the intendants, with 21 being appointed for the whole of Spain, and then, in 1749, the Spanish territory was divided into 26 intendancies, to which was added that of the Nuevas Poblaciones de Sierra Morena, with Carlos III. These formed the basis for the country’s subsequent division into provinces and represented a first step towards reaching an agreement between the distinct territorial institutions (Garrigós Picó 1982, 3–106; Abbad and Ozanam 1992).

In a Catholic confessional monarchy such as the Spanish one, the Church formed part of the government apparatus, although it was, at the same time, independent from this. It legitimised the king, but, without the universal patronage and restraint of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, its sovereignty was limited. Without this being a new problem, the peak of absolutism and the reorientation of the Italian policy increased the tension between the two powers in relation to both jurisdictional and economic questions. Despite the failure of Macanaz (1670–1760), prosecutor of the Council of Castile over this period, whose Pedimento fiscal served as the guidelines for the negotiation of the first Concordat between Spain and the Holy See, his ideas, which also included the reform of university teaching and the control of the Inquisition, still went ahead (Martín Gaite 1992).

The previous concordats and secret negotiations, led by the Jesuit P. Rávago, the confessor of the king, and D. Zenón of Somodevilla, Marquis of the Ensenada
(1702–1781), besides the official negotiations led by the Secretary of State D. José Carvajal and the secretary of Benedict XIV, Cardinal Valenti Gonzaga, were needed in order to reach the agreement signed between Madrid and Rome in 1753. The Pope did not recognise universal patronage as a privilege of the crown, but he accepted its dominion over the ecclesiastical benefices, except for 52 of them, testifying to the fact that this was a grace and not a right. In practice, the king’s power over ecclesiastical appointments and benefices was complete. A harsh blow was thus dealt to the financial system of the Roman Curia, although not all the disputes were resolved (Alcaraz Gómez 1995, 505–530).

An abundant political and economic literature on these questions (Uztariz, Ulloa, Zabala y Auñón and Argumosa) shows that there was a good knowledge of the ideas that were circulating around Europe. A better evidence of the circulation in the peninsula of European ideas is the work of the empiricist and eclectic Benedictine Fr. Jerónimo Feijóo (1676–1764), a reader of Bacon, Newton, Gassendi, Descartes, Boyle and Locke, and a user of the dictionaries of Bayle and Moreri. From his monastery in Oviedo, he devoted himself to writing and maintaining an abundant correspondence with scholars and scientists from within and outside Spain, as well as to writing his essays, largely included in the Teatro crítico universal y las Cartas eruditas y curiosas, probably the works most often printed in eighteenth-century Spain. He considered himself to be a “free citizen of the Republic of the Humanities”, thus confirming that not only he, but also his audience, were children of their time (Feijóo 1778, Vol. VII, Disc 13).

**THE CYCLE OF REFORMS**

In the multi-continental Portuguese monarchy, the beginning of the cycle of intensive reforms was, above all, associated with the reign of Dom José I (1750–1777) and with the services rendered in the different offices of the Secretaries of State by the de facto “Prime Minister”, Sebastião de Carvalho, who was later made the first Marquis of Pombal. His connection with the 1755 earthquake and the subsequent expulsion of the Jesuits and reconstruction of Lisbon was widely reported in the European press of that time. Yet the classification of his measures as “enlightened” is far from unanimous among historians. On one side of the balance, we must consider the unprecedented violence of his methods, legitimised by a new theoretical framework of absolutism and the broader scope afforded to the notion of the “crime of lèse majesté”, the suppression of the periodical press and the belated creation of monopoly trading companies at a time when this recipe was already being abandoned in Spain. And to be weighed against this, on the other side, were his anti-Jesuitism, the establishment of the so-called Diretório dos Índios (the Directory of Indians), in Brazil, the creation of privileged industries and the Board of Trade, driven by the need to diminish England’s proportional share in the national economy, the education reforms (including the belated introduction of modern natural law at the University of Coimbra), the suppression of the distinction between New Christians and Old Christians, and, in general, his obsession with placing Portugal among “Europe’s most refined nations”. The personal stamp that he imprinted on his actions means that we tend to talk about the “Pombaline period”, and more about the prime minister (in reality, only the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and then Secretary
of State for the Home Affairs of the kingdom) than about the king, although the latter’s death led to the removal and trial of his former favourite, who escaped the death penalty that many had foreseen for him. One thing is certain: the concern for, and interaction with, the European public space were central dimensions of the Pombaline government (Macedo 1982; Maxwell 1995; Monteiro 2008).

Born in the last year of the seventeenth century, Carvalho did not have any legal training and his first known activity was as a member of the Royal Academy of History, before his surprising appointment as the ambassador to England in 1738, and then later in Vienna. What is known about his political thought before he was made Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1750 is that this was founded on mercantilist precepts, theories of reason of state and readings of modern natural law, but from the viewpoint of international relations. When he joined the government, he was seen by many as a supporter of the Jesuits, since, like these, he was opposed to the Treaty of Madrid, negotiated between the two Iberian Crowns in previous years, which enshrined an enormous territorial expansion of the frontiers of Brazil in favour of Portugal. In fact, his position in relation to the treaty was “ambivalent”: he

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Image 23.1 Portrait of the marquis of Pombal. 1882? Copy of the original painting by Louis Michel van Loo and Joseph Vernet, 1766
Source: Public domain/Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisbon, Portugal

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considered it to be prejudicial to Portuguese interests, as it provided for the return to Spain of the fortress and trading post of Colónia do Sacramento, but he knew that he should begin its implementation. The fierce opposition to the treaty in America, with the subsequent Guaraní wars, as well as to the monopoly trading companies that he created (Grão Pará and Maranhão (1755), Pernambuco and Paraíba (1756), in America, and the Upper Douro Vineyards (1756)) contributed to his change towards an anti-Jesuit stance, which then became the hallmark of his regime. Furthermore, the 1755 earthquake, to which he responded most vigorously, cementing his status as the king’s favourite, marked the beginning of a vertiginous political cycle. The rebellion in Porto against the Companhia das Vinhas do Alto Douro (1757) and the assassination attempt against the king (1758), in which various figures of the highest nobility were implicated, unleashed a wave of violent acts of repression. Such vehemence was combined with campaigns against the Jesuits, initiated by Portugal and only proving to be successful a decade and a half later. They were promoted with the printing of tens of thousands of leaflets justifying the repression in different European languages and, for a brief while, placing Portugal and the minister Carvalho under the spotlights of enlightened European opinion. In the midst of all this, there was a prolonged break in relations with the Holy See.

The Diretório dos Índios (1755–1757) in Brazil was among the first and most innovative of Pombal’s initiatives, although it was only made known to the European public rather belatedly through works such as those of the Abbé Raynal (1770, 1774, 1781). Responding to the need to replace the ecclesiastical administration of the missions, which already had an important role to play in the process of expelling the Jesuits, this measure not only sought to set up municipal councils of Indians, but it also provided incentives for marriages with Europeans and imposed the use of Portuguese as the official language (Domingues 2000; Almeida 2015). Much celebrated when it was put into force (because it was based on the principle of freedom for all the indigenous peoples), the Diretório’s implementation was very heterogeneous and varied from one region to the other. It ended up being revoked half a century later. In the same way, although he continued a long tradition of military engineering in the empire, Carvalho’s prompt action after the 1755 earthquake and the geometrical plans that were drawn up for the city’s reconstruction earned Lisbon the subsequent name of the “City of Lights” (França 1965). The Inquisition was subject to close supervision and witnessed the disappearance of its main target with the end of the distinction between New Christians and Old Christians (1773) (Pedreira 2016), which preceded the publication of his new Regimento (Standing Order) of 1774 (Marcocci and Paiva 2013). Imports of slaves were prohibited (1761) and the “freedom of wombs” was decreed (1773). It is important to stress that these laws were only enforced in peninsular Portugal, not in the colonial territories, in particular in Brazil, where the enslaved Africans were the bulk of the labour force. The text of one of these laws explicitly states that its intention was to emulate “outras cortes polidas”. In any case, one of the major motivations was to concentrate in the colonial territories as many enslaved persons as possible (Fonseca 2010). Also important were the efforts to centralise financial administration, with the creation—in 1760—of the royal treasury (Erário Regio). Finally, the reforms of the University of Coimbra (1772)—which at that time was the only one in the Portuguese monarchy—brought the introduction of natural philosophy and the new
natural law, meriting the title of “enlightened” given to them by posterity. After reaching power, Pombal created a close circle of advisors, with figures who played a major role in determining the nature of the final stage of his reforms.

Meanwhile, in recent analysis of the European political and cultural history of the eighteenth century, growing importance has been given to the enlargement of the “public space”, understood as a sphere for the circulation of ideas, practices of sociability, and the consumption of cultural goods in a relatively autonomous fashion in relation to the court and to the political power of the monarchies, in which the press (legalised or not) played an important role. Portugal was a small monarchy in European terms. Lisbon’s macrocephalous predominance, with 6 to 8% of the kingdom’s population, and a disproportionate concentration of social, economic, and administrative elites, encouraged the accumulation of people in an almost unique urban space, area, which also facilitated their control and led to the subsequent gradual atrophy of the “public space”.

The conceptions of political power that prevailed during the reign of Dom José were fairly clear. Portugal had been a monarchy since its separation from the Crown of Leon, and the king’s power was only restricted by the Fundamental Laws of the Kingdom that established the rules of succession in the crown, and which, in the Portuguese case, were the so-called “Laws of Lamego”. They imposed just this one restraint: based on the ideas of Gaspard de Réal, it was said that it was a:

Monarchic Government, in which the Supreme Power lies entirely in the Person of just one Man, who must also be guided by reason and who must not, however, recognise any other power that is Superior (in the Temporal sense) other than God himself, so that he makes the Laws and revokes them whenever he deems this to be appropriate.

(Sylva 1768, Vol. 2, 393)

For this very reason, the simple disagreement with a law was repeatedly described as a “crime of lèse majesté”. The presentation of a petition and a subsequent vote upon the matter had previously formed part of the day-to-day business of the administration under the former system of councils. This system had been in force in earlier reigns and presupposed a considerable margin of discrepancy, allowing for a possible confrontation of different opinions. The most expedite and executive forms of “ministerial power”, especially in the extreme formulation that they came to adopt, thus entered into a head-on collision with this old way of doing things. Now it was the king who chose the ministers, and these then proposed decisions, as Pombal would say, “in the secrecy of the cabinet”, after which the king signed the decree. It was not possible to state one’s opinion on any of these matters, much less disagree. These were the new and triumphant conceptions, which enjoyed an abundant translation into practice.

Despite the limited resources with which it was endowed, the creation of the General Intendancy of the Police in 1760 had provided the government with an instrument that it could use to supervise political suspects. From 1762 onwards, when the publication of the Gazeta de Lisboa was suspended, there had ceased to be any periodical press in Portugal, a situation that was maintained, with only a few brief interruptions, until the end of the reign of Dom José in 1777. The mechanisms
of censorship were also changed through the creation, in 1768, of the Real Mesa Censória (Royal Censorship Board), which replaced the Inquisition and the bishops in this area of activity. Its actions were ambivalent, not just because it simultaneously banned the dissemination of pro-Jesuit and ultramontane books, as well as those that were reputed to be “enlightened” and “libertine”, but also because, through the criticism set in motion by its own acts of censorship, this institution with Jansenist influences also came to be regarded as the centre for the production of an official culture of the regime, including its notorious regalism (Marques 1963; Tavares 1997; Sousa 2004).

Educational reforms were similarly an integral part of official policy. While the reform of the minor studies, which produced the first network of royal teachers, was a direct response to the suppression of the Jesuits, the creation of the College of the Nobles and the Course of Commerce (1759) expressed different objectives and revealed a clear and deliberate effort to reform the elites, although the results only partly corresponded to the desired aims. The culmination of these interventions was, however, the reform of the University of Coimbra in 1772. It had been prepared by the Junta da Providência Literária (Board of Literary Providence), a kind of circle of reformers, composed of jurists and regalist clergy (Vaz 2009). Along with the traditional areas—Theology, Canon Law, and Civil Law—the new faculties of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy were created. Institutes were formed to support these new areas, such as the Chemical Laboratory, the Anatomical Theatre, the Cabinet of Experimental Physics, and the Astronomical Observatory. The teaching staff at Coimbra University was profoundly renewed, with roughly 50 new admissions, including a number of foreigners. To a large extent, the effects of this reform were to become more visible in the following reign (Araújo 2000).

In the Spanish case, the cycle of reforms coincided with the reign of Carlos III (1759–1788), especially after 1766, when the Esquilache Riots took place (Fernández 2016). Then, a coherent reformist team took power and brought improvements to the economy, promoting a new social model, through direct action in favour of greater productivity and education. This was followed by the policy initiated by Philip V and Fernando VI, aimed at recovering control over American trade and giving an impetus to manufactures, though the creation of royal factories and trading companies, as well as by granting commercial and tax privileges to private companies or manufacturers, as part of a general mercantilist policy. All of this was promoted and supervised by the Junta General de Comercio y Moneda (Royal Committee for Trade and Money), restructured in 1730 (Molas Ribalta 1978; Larruga y Boneta 1789). Just as he had done in Naples, Carlos III fostered the production of luxury articles, through the creation of factories such as the porcelain factories of Buen Retiro and Santa Bárbara de Telares, or the royal glass factory of San Ildefonso, as well as others producing linen textiles and cloths. However, the private manufactures were better than those of the Colbertian model, as demonstrated by the development of the linen industry in Galicia, the expansion of foundries in the Basque country or the changes brought to textile production in Catalonia, exemplified by the Compañía de Hilados de Algodón (Royal Company of American Cotton Yarn) in 1772 (González Enciso 2000, 137–171; Thomson 1996).

Reformists who were closely bound to the administration and traders who were favourably received at the court had the merit of promoting Spain’s inclusion in
Image 23.2  Portrait of Charles III of Spain, Rafael Ximeno Planes, 1783
Source: © Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain
the process of the circulation of economic ideas, through translations and original works. Among the first of these groups were to be found Bernardo Ward, a cabinet minister, who, in 1762, was the author of *Proyecto Económico*, or Pedro Rodríguez Campomanes (Llombart 1992; Castro 1996). The second group included Francisco de Craywinkel, who disseminated the work of Richard Cantillón, the *Essai sur le commerce*, whose references to Spain were interesting because of their criticism of the harmful effects caused by the overmining of precious metals, which confirmed the diagnosis that the *arbitristas* had made about the curse of gold. Another successful trader was Simón de Aragorri, who in his *Reflexiones sobre el estado actual del comercio de España* adapted the physiocratic theories of Accarías de Serionne, the author of *Considerations sur les Finances d’Espagne*. This work, which influenced the *Reflexiones sobre el comercio español en Indias* by Campomanes, anticipated the reforms that he proposed in 1764 in *Resposta fiscal sobre abolir la tasa* (Astigarraga and Zabalza 2014, 225–247; Astigarraga 2013, 13–44).

Two reforms were implemented under these influences: that of the grain trade and that of the colonial trade, both of which were liberalised. The relationship between the writings of Campomanes and the law known as the *Pragmática de libertad de comercio de granos*, on 11 July 1765, is evident. The measure, which was implemented in the depths of a serious subsistence crisis, had immediate negative effects. Prices rose, discontent became even more acute, and in March of the following year the riots broke out. Free trade was maintained, but duties were re-established until 1778. This experience meant that the Spanish government did not lend its backing to the liberalising offensives of France and Tuscany, and it also explains the official support that was given to the theses of Ferdinando Galiani, whose *Dialogues sur le commerce des blé de* were translated in 1775 and dedicated to Campomanes (Galiani 1775; Guasti 2013, 229–244).

The *Reglamento y Aranceles Reales para el Comercio Libre de España a Indias*, the free trade regulation promulgated on 12 October 1778, had more success. It was preceded by an important debate about a change in the mercantile policy and an alternative to the India Run, adapted to the international context after the Seven Year War (Walker 1979, 258–276). And it was also preceded by other measures, such as the *Decreto del Comercio* (Trade Decree) of 16 October 1765, which entitled nine Spanish ports to engage in trade with America and simplified the tax system. The results have been widely debated, leading to Fisher’s figures, which showed an important increase in American imports and in the shipments of metals. The freedom of this trade was relative, and the result was not very uniform, being affected, from 1797 onwards, by the war against England and the decree about neutral boats, whose consequences could not be reversed by the brief truce of 1801 (García Baquero 2003; Fisher 1985, 89–90; Fisher 1993, 29–44).

The experience of the riots and the high prices meant that the decade of the 1770s was rich in debates, with political economy as its backdrop, already under the influence of Galiani, Genovesi, and Filangieri, the writings and edicts of Turgot, as reported in *La Gaceta* and *El Mercurio*, while in the 1780s, these same debates were marked by the influence of Jacques Necker after the publication in 1776 of his *Mémoire au roi sur l’établissement des administrations provinciales* (Astigarraga 2011, 3–27). At the same time, the most widely disseminated works of Campomanes were published: the *Discurso sobre el fomento de la industria
popular in 1774; the *Discurso sobre la educación popular de los artesanos* in 1775; and the *Discurso sobre la legislación gremial de los artesanos*, which was published as an Appendix in his *Discurso sobre la legislación gremial de los artesanos*. With the attention that the press was showing in these questions, the publication of these works clearly demonstrated the role that this discipline played in the creation of a public sphere. Notwithstanding, agriculture was to play an even greater role, not only because of the impact of the riots, but also because of the continuous lawsuits that were generated by the disputes over the renewal of censuses, leases, and sub-leases (VV.AA. 1989). Yet none of this took place under the inspiration of physiocracy, as is proved by the most ambitious undertaking of the reign of Carlos III, the colonization of Sierra Morena y las Nuevas Poblaciones, which had been achieved through “soft and gentle” legislation that sought to establish an agrarian model distinct from the one postulated by the French theoreticians (Llombart 2009, 109–136).

Somewhat riskier was the implementation of an agrarian law, the first of its kind in Spanish history. It was set in motion in 1766, when the Council of Castile initiated an inquiry to determine the “damage and decline that Agriculture suffers from, its reasons, and the means for its recovery and development”. Reports and statements were gathered together, some of them previously compiled, with most of the work being entrusted to the intendents and other authorities. This resulted in a huge pile of papers that, in 1777, were sent to the *Sociedad Económica Matritense* (the Madrid Royal Society of Friends of the Country), so that they could be organised and studied. They remained there for ten years until the Society requested Jovellanos to produce what was to be the *Informe sobre el expediente de ley Agraria* (Report on the Agrarian Law), a clear and systematic text written in a grand literary style. Contrary to the commonly accepted public opinion, he denied that Spanish agriculture was condemned to fall into decline, since it was not natural factors, but the very laws themselves, that were the cause of its poor state. His proposal was that these laws should serve as a stimulus for the agents, who were the only ones capable of generating progress in the agrarian field. His sources were Spanish authors, ranging from the *arbitristas* to Uztariz and Campomanes, the French authors Buffon and Saint-Pierre, and the British authors Gibbon and Adam Smith, whose *Wealth of Nations* had been translated into Spanish by Alonso Ortiz in 1794, and, without its being a predominant influence, it was nonetheless very much present in Jovellanos’ report (Ánes 1991; Llombart 1996, 105–159).

The regalist nature of the reign of Carlos III was marked by the long period that he had spent in Naples. On his arrival in Spain, he immediately demonstrated his firmness and resolution by bringing into force the “Pase Regio”—the “Exequatur”—in 1761, which called for the prior censorship of the orders from Rome; he established the Spanish Court of La Rota in 1771, which restricted the delegated jurisdictions of the Nunciature; and, in 1778, he created the *Agencia General de Preces* (The General Agency for Petitions to Rome) in Madrid, to regulate the petitions and dispensations granted in Rome. No measure had such major repercussions as the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 for their involvement in the riots against Esquilache. Historiography has left no doubt that, behind the social unrest, there was a major subsistence crisis, although the case of Madrid had its own very specific features (Gállego 2003; López García 2006).
At the court, both the king and the queen mother, as well as the ministers of the Treasury and of State, Esquilache (1699–1785) and Grimaldi (1710–1789), both Italians, the first arrived with the monarch of Naples, or the Count of Aranda, Pedro Pablo Abarca of Bolea (1719–1789), military and diplomatic, president of the Council of Castile in the aftermath of the riots, were opposed to the Society of Jesus. Yet it was the prosecutors of this institution who were the most decisive: Campomanes drew up the Dictamen, in which he accused the Jesuits of being responsible for the revolts; the other prosecutor, José Moñino, future Count of Floridablanca, collaborated actively in the process and, already in 1772, as the Plenipotentiary Minister in Rome, administered the definitive dissolution of the society in 1773 before Pope Clement XIV, a service that earned him the title of Count of Floridablanca. The arguments against the Jesuits, as set out in the Dictamen, left it clear that it was not a religious, but a political question. Once the proposal for their expulsion from Spain and the Indies had been ratified, this process was implemented from March 1767 onwards. It served as explicit proof of the king’s determination to make his authority over the Spanish Church effective (Egido y Pinedo 1994, 64–95; Guasti 2006, 181–188).

The consequences of these expulsions were important ones: the “temporalities” of the Jesuits, their urban and rural properties, were sold at a public auction, with the churches being left at the disposal of the bishops and the buildings being given over to other orders or used for educational purposes. Some were converted into diocesan seminaries; others were used for other purposes, such as the Colegio Imperial de Madrid, which was converted into the Reales Estudios de San Isidro, opened in 1770. It had a library and a laboratory and incorporated the teaching of such disciplines as ancient history, together with a chair in Natural and International Law, and with lessons being given in the works of Puffendorf, Barbeyrac, and Vattel, translated in 1771 by Olmeda y León. Also set in motion was the Seminario de Nobles (Seminary of Nobles), designed to educate the children of the nobility and the bourgeoisie, with other similar ones being created in its image and in that of the seminary in Vergara. In this way, the abolition of Jesuit chairs at the Spanish universities set in motion the reform of the universities, which had previously been subject to royal authority, in accordance with a plan developed by Mayans, who suggested a uniform regime and the secularisation of their teaching. These reforms were carried out between 1771 and 1786, with distinct rules for each case. Salamanca, whose legal studies introduced natural and international law, was followed by Seville, for which the project was drawn up in 1769 by the intendant Olavide (1725–1803), who at that time was carrying out the initiation of the New Populations of Andalusia, who proposed the secularisation of its teaching. These two universities were followed by Valladolid, Oviedo, Zaragoza, Granada, and Valencia, in 1786. A Royal Charter of that same year gave the Council of Castile responsibilities in matters of government and university administration (Andújar 2004, 201–225; Chaparro Sainz 2011).

The ecclesiastical policy of the Spanish Bourbons was firm and decisive, achieving a great number of successes, without in any way compromising the Catholicism of its ruling monarchs and their recognised piety. The same period also brought the development of Jansenism, which witnessed a great leap forward under the reign of Carlos III. Rather than being theological, this movement was related with regalism and episcopalism, being characterised by openness to new knowledge and the
defence of an intimist and “reasonable” religiosity. Among Jansen’s followers were those who sought to bring an end to the Inquisition and promote a greater secularisation of society (Tomsich 1972; Mestre 2001, 549–558).

Some specialists have suggested, without openly postulating the theory, that this institution entered into decline in the mid-eighteenth century. Others have spoken of a certain accommodation, or perhaps also of its transformation from within, since the Inquisition’s activity diminished, and its members lost their privileges. Some public manifestations of its activity completely disappeared, such as the reading of edicts, but, even so, an auto-de-fé was still held in Seville in 1781. Its control was centred on the censorship of writings, which, on occasions, had already been authorised by the royal censors, as well as on “minor” crimes, such as blasphemy, superstition, bigamy, or soliciting (Defourneaux 1973; Domergue 1996; Martinez Millán 2007, 131–143).

The novelty under the Bourbons was not the protection afforded to culture, but the integration of initiatives and people into an institutional apparatus protected by the crown, directed towards a critical defence of national culture (Pérez Magallón 2002, 309–319). One of the responses to this aim was the foundation of the Royal Library, whose first statutes of 1716 established its public character and, at the same time, revealed an organisational bicephaly, by being under the supervision of both the royal confessor and the librarian (BNE, Mss. 2829, Constituciones de la Real Biblioteca hechas por orden del rey N. Señor D. Carlos III). The royal library’s constitutions of 1761, approved by Carlos III, reaffirmed its integration into the administrative scheme of the monarchy, by dispensing with the royal confessor, and establishing strict regulations regarding its functions and its staff. In their own ways, the Real Tribunal del Protomedicato or the Real Botica (the Tribunal of the King’s Physicians), the Real Jardín Botánico (Royal Botanical Garden), created in 1755, and the Real Gabinete de Historia Natural (Royal Cabinet of Natural History), created in 1776, also institutionalised these activities.

Another clear example of cultural patronage was to be found in the scientific expeditions. Under Carlos III, such expeditions included those of Ruiz y Pavón to Peru, in 1777, Mutis to Nueva Granada, in 1783, and Sessé to Nueva España, in 1787, while approval was also given to the one undertaken by Alejandro Malaspina (1754–1809), a noble and experienced Italian sailor in the service of Spain, which ended in 1794 (Pimentel 2008). Was this an enlightened form of government? Yes, if we consider that encouragement was given to the activities of the cultural elites and to laying the foundations of a civil history, complemented by another ecclesiastical one and resulting in systematic archival and archaeological research (López-Cordón 2006, 151–173; Fernández Albadalejo 2007, 197–244). Writers, artists and scholars understood the advantages brought by official protection and it was not long before the gatherings and meetings that they held among themselves began to form part of a network sponsored and overseen by the crown in the form of the Royal Academies—the Spanish Royal Academy, the Royal Academy of History, and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. Of course, such protection was not a mere manifestation of the king’s liberality, yet the dependence of these academies upon royal patronage scarcely led to conflicts, because their members, who held positions both in public administration and at court, completely shared the government’s strategies. The Republic of Letters itself was also able to take advantage of the opportunities
that were offered, and its members began to open themselves up to politics, the press, and the market, thus leading to a weakening of the ideal of the Parnassus because of both the growing competitiveness and professionalisation of literary activity (Álvarez Barrientos 2006, 29–37, 84–87).

The Sociedades Económicas de Amigos del País (Economic Societies of Friends of the Country), which numbered almost 100 between 1774 and 1808, echoed the proposal put forward by Campomanes in his Discurso sobre el fomento de la industria popular. Taking La Bascongada (the Royal Basque Society) as a model, we can see how political induction was beginning to take root in the social elites. These societies were an important channel for the spread of the enlightened ideals that were fundamental in shaping a space of sociability where communication and debate were encouraged (Astigarraga 2011, 235–260; Enciso Recio 2010). And nor can one ignore the development of the printing press. Favourable treatment ceased to be given to certain publishers and, by 1781, the Imprenta Real (the Royal Publishing House) was already up and running. There was also a considerable increase in periodicals, in their different types and in their geographical spread, with a notable shift in their contents, moving from an enlightened reformism to the adoption of more critical stances (Larriba 1998; Cruz 2013; Guinard 1973).

For a long time now, the Spanish reformists have been characterised as pragmatic men, interested only in concrete administrative, economic, and educational measures, considering the fact that most of them were servants of the crown and, as such, were in direct complicity with the seat of power. Yet this did not prevent scientists and writers of genuine intellectual stature from flourishing, nor did it impede the implementation of reforms with a certain impact. The gradual imposition of a new sociability and the circulation of ideas between Spain and Europe, and between Spain and America, became an undeniable reality (Astigarraga 2015).

THE CROSSROADS AT THE END OF THE CENTURY

The fall of the Marquis of Pombal did not mean that the essential foreign policy of the Bragança dynasty was to change. Its main orientations continued to be an opposition to the country’s absorption by Spain (with which it had already fought in the peninsula or in America in 1735, 1762, 1777, and 1801), and an intransigent defence of Brazil, the monarchy’s financial base, through the re-exporting of its productions, supported by the English alliance. Nor did this represent the end of a model for the functioning of the central administration, which, having been designed earlier, had become truly effective under the rule of Pombal: the offices of the Secretaries of State had been turned into the centre of political decision-making, in detriment to the councils (Monteiro 2015). And, finally, the reforms continued into the reign of Dona Maria I, but now with a different complexion, drawing closer to the liberal political economy. After the king’s death in 1777, the Marquis of Pombal fell from grace, being arrested, tried, and found guilty, although no punishment was imposed. The following years have become known as the period of the “Viradeira” (the overturning or reform of earlier policies). With the seal of official approval, a violent libel was published at that time, stating that “blood was still oozing from the wounds torn in the heart of Portugal by this blind and unlimited despotism that we have just endured” (AGS, Legajo 7312, Oração à Fidelíssima Rainha Nossa...
Senhora no dia da sua feliz aclamação, 1777). Deriving from this were the “wise measures of the present government”, prominent among which were the release of prisoners, the granting of “graces and favours to the Nobility”, “reverence to God”, the authority given to the Courts, “freedom in trade”. In fact, the entry into the government of leading figures from the aristocracy and the return of commanderies of military orders to the houses of the Grandees were the hallmarks of these years. The “Viradeira” became cloaked in two apparently paradoxical aspects: together with the dimensions that have already been referred to and which can be associated with a phenomenon of “aristocratic reaction”, many of the political staff were maintained and new “enlightened” initiatives were even introduced.

The decisive impetus in the dissemination of culture and science was given through the creation of the Academia Real da Ciências (Royal Academy of Sciences) in 1779–1780, at the initiative of the second Duke of Lafões (1719–1806), successor of one of the main aristocratic houses who had recently returned from a long period of exile. With the crown’s approval, the Academy was able to publish its works without any prior censorship. However, this undeniable impetus was limited by the fact that it coincided with a tightly imposed literary censorship and with the activities of the General Intendancy of the Police and the famous intendant Pina Manique. Globally, the dissemination of a new culture, with many forbidden books written in French, and the new enlightened sociability, including those of private individuals, was very strong and undeniable (Lousada 2011). But it was still subject to quite remarkable limitations. There was nothing in Portugal with a similar scope to that of the economic societies “of friends of the country” that existed in Spain. Naturally, these new sociabilities and interpretations should not be confused with the discussion of, and much less the opposition to, the political model of the monarchy (Araújo 2003).

In fact, the boldest reformist projects were formulated within the government itself. During those years, several scientific expeditions were conducted across Brazil (Raminelli 2008). Various new navy schools were created (1779, 1790, 1796). These schools played a highly relevant role in the implementation and dissemination of scientific knowledge. In addition, they also produced officers with a new technical profile (Carolino 2017). At the level of the basic principles of economic thought, although many different sources of inspiration had always coexisted with one another, it is possible to talk about a certain softening of mercantilist ideas in favour of what was already an economically liberal way of thinking (Cardoso 1989). The Pombaline monopoly companies in America were closed down and the factories lost many of their previous mechanisms of protection. In the midst of a certain commercial prosperity, with an emphasis on Brazil, there were great difficulties to be noted in foreign policy, as well as a split between those who accepted making concessions to France and those who refused to do so. Prominent amongst these was Dom Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, an exponent of the so-called “English party”, as well as a minister on various occasions between 1796 and 1812 (Diniz Silva 2002–2006).

In order to maintain his circle of intellectual patronage, he reached the point of encouraging the formation of what amounted to almost his own publishing company. Despite accepting forms of parliamentary representation in accordance with the British model, he was, according to his own words in 1789, a defender of an “enlightened despotism submitted to the public opinion of certain great nations in Europe” (Diniz Silva 2002, 260). Although he proposed completely different recipes,
he claimed to have inherited the interventionism of Pombal. Unlike most of the thinkers from the Academia das Ciências, in many of his writings, Dom Rodrigo expressly questioned the agrarian constitution of the Ancien Régime, in keeping with an inspiration that, at the level of civil law and its theoretical foundations, may be considered to have been based on the liberal political economy. Considering that “a land will never be well cultivated when whoever possesses it is not its absolute owner” and, being concerned with the profitability of the capital invested in agriculture, he therefore defended the abolition of entailed estates, private chapels, emphyteusis, and the confiscation of church property. Greatly preoccupied with the financial question and with the duplication of taxation, he proposed the suppression of the dízimos (the religious tithes paid to the Church), the feudal taxes paid to the lords of the manors, and the décima (a tax that was to be paid to the State), replacing them all with just one single tax. Among other ideas, he also defended the suppression of all tax exemptions on the part of the clergy and the nobility and of their jurisdictional privileges. Only nineteenth-century political liberalism was to bring the implementation of these proposals. His ideas in matters of finance, education, and the creation of specialised schools, among others, were less important than his metaphorical conception of the monarchy as a multi-continental space, in which Portugal was not the “best and the most essential part”, so that, in the event of a European war, it would be left to the sovereigns “to create a powerful Empire in Brazil, from where it would be possible to reconquer what may have been lost in Europe”. This project, with both recent and more remote antecedents, ended up being implemented in 1807 with the departure of the royal family to Brazil, an event with lasting consequences. Just as had happened in the previous century, the destinies of Iberia and America were to cross paths with one another, but even so they continued, at the same time, to diverge from one another, at least in part (Alexandre 1993; Pedreira and Costa 2006).

After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, the monarchy of Carlos III reached its zenith. In 1787, as the prime minister, Floridablanca established the Junta Suprema de Estado (Supreme Council of State), which performed the functions of a council of ministers, in order to coordinate and guarantee the imminent succession. Shortly after the king’s death, the junta was accused of “obscuring the king”, and the constant issue of government debt was accompanied by bitter and ingenious satires in El Censor, muted, but nonetheless reflecting some ideas that, while being enlightened, were no longer identified with the royal policy. Already under the rule of Carlos IV, this situation was exacerbated by the impact of the events taking place in France. The choice was firstly for silence, then subsequently for prohibitions and the control of suspicious publications, and, finally, in 1791, for the suspension of all periodical publications, except for the official ones, followed by careful surveillance of the frontiers and repressive measures against the French residents in Spain (Aymes 1999).

The worsening of the French situation and Floridablanca’s attempt to intercede on behalf of Louis XVI led to his dismissal and the appointment of the Count of Aranda, who had been the ambassador in Paris for many years and was well regarded by French public opinion. He had sufficient experience to see not only the dangers of the revolution, but also those of the counter-revolution and the compromised position of the Spanish monarchy in the case of a reversal of the alliances. He opted
for neutrality, which would be unsustainable after the impending trial of the French king. He was then replaced by a young man without any political experience, Manuel Godoy, who, with the title of Secretary of State, was the head of the government until 1798, and then, without it, filled the same post between 1801 and March 1808. He had moved in the circles of the kings when they were princes of Asturias, later accumulating a series of military promotions, honours, and an informal power that was made manifest by his appointment as Prince of Peace in 1795 (La Parra 2002).

The War of the Convention caused people to forget the unusual nature of his appointment, but he proved to be a destabilising figure for the administration of the monarchy, due to the unease felt by the councillors, magistrates, and government officials at the interferences taking place in their professional careers and the rapid advancements that were being made by those who replaced them. In turn, those who benefited from the generational vacuum also appreciated the effects of the network built up by the king’s favourite, who was lacking in discretion. Its impact must be understood from two possible viewpoints: that of the rupture of personal ties with the king, who was no longer involved in the promotion of his servants, and that of the awareness of individual merit at the time when such promotion was being sought. The disaffection that this caused aroused few republican dreams, because the majority did not question the monarchy, but instead the way in which they related with it (Andújar 2008, 179–211; López-Cordón 2008, 309–338; Dedieu 2010, 51–80).

In this context, once the Alliance with France had been resumed, the public sphere rapidly gained in maturity, and a more radical, but rather belated generation of enlightened politicians burst onto the scene: Aguirre, Arroyal, Foronda, Salas, Urquijo, and the magistrates, Jovellanos and Meléndez Valdés, whose approaches were no longer those of enlightened absolutism. This was a group that attained power between 1798 and 1801. Jovellanos only lasted for a short time as Minister of Grace and Justice, while Mariano José de Urquijo did not last much longer as Secretary of State. Long enough, however, to develop a regalist policy that greatly upset the regular clergy and obliged Rome to intervene before the kings. His target was not the privileges that the Church enjoyed, nor the episcopalism with which it was governed, but he sought instead to assert secular power over ecclesiastical power, or civil power over clerical power. The Secretary of the Treasury, Soler, who was under pressure from debt, also began to sell off the properties of the Jesuits and their pious works (Friera Álvarez 2007; Bejarano Galdino 2005, López-Cordón 2013, 39–47).

Godoy’s thirst for power and the mistakes that he made in international politics must not allow us to forget that, without being an enlightened politician, he understood the public dimension of a policy that was inspired by those ideas in order to justify his favouritism. Among his priorities was the support for useful sciences and technical advancements, the undertaking of scientific expeditions and support for some educational institutions, such as the Real Instituto Pestalozziani, created in 1806. He also sponsored publications of an economic nature, such as the Semanario de Agricultura y Artes dirigido a los Parrocos (1797–1808), in order to spread certain knowledge among the farmers (La Parra 2002, 176–180; Herr 1958, 290–313; Larriba and Dufour 1997).

During the reign of Carlos IV, social protests were scattered but constant. There were also conspiracies and riots that displayed an openly political intent, ranging
from those promoted by Juan Picornell (1759) or Malaspina, to the return of their trips, both in 1795, to the Conspiracy of El Escorial in October 1807, in which Prince Fernando was involved. It was one such protest, under the form of a popular revolt, the Riot of Aranjuez, in March 1808, which brought an end to his reign. But, in those years of political crisis and war, the fundamental problem of the Spanish monarchy was one of a financial nature. Until 1796, it had been possible to offset the expenses of the administration, the Royal Household, and those generated by the war against France, with the remittances arriving from the Indies. However, thereafter, the difficulties faced by maritime trade impeded the arrival of silver, reduced exports, and caused general revenue to fall, without any income to compensate for this. In reality, the cause was not just the war situation, but the government debt issues that had to keep being made (Ruiz Torres 2007, 571–584).

The Abdications of Bayonne and the war brought an end to a period of increasing politicisation. The supporters of José I were, broadly speaking, enlightened men who had become disenchanted, remaining faithful to an idea of a reformist and secularising monarchy, although they were relativists with regard to the dynasty within which this ideal should be embodied. The men who opted for the Regency and the Government of Cadiz were divided between those who strongly supported the idea of a constitution, in some cases following the English model, founded on tradition, or in other cases admiring the French Constitution of 1791, and those who supported a return to the old system.

CONCLUSION

Separated in the mid-seventeenth century, the two asymmetrical Iberian monarchies entered the eighteenth century not only by sharing common legacies and being neighbours in various continents, but also by having the same depreciative image projected onto them by the northern powers, with roots in ancient religious disputes that had taken on yet other dimensions with the affirmation of the new European hegemonies. To a certain extent, the proposals and initiatives for reform sought to respond to these images, which were now associated with a perception of the peninsular “backwardness”. There was a certain discrepancy in their chronology. In Spain, there was clearly a first stage with the arrival of Felipe V, with the reforms undertaken in the reign of Carlos III bringing renewed inspiration. In Portugal, the reforms increased in intensity during the so-called “Pombaline” cycle, with a clear renewal of models towards the end of the century. In both contexts, but much more evidently in Spain, changes were conceived in quite autonomous areas, but the new ideas nonetheless remained closely linked to the initiatives of the monarchies themselves. This was one of the reasons why many have raised doubts about their qualification as “enlightened”.

Finally, it can be said that the destinies of the two monarchies were greatly conditioned by their European connections, which, to a large extent, tended to be confused with the links that they established between themselves, as well as with those that were being strengthened with their territories outside Europe. The links with America were fundamental in the trade, finances, and even the actual reform projects of the Iberians. And while everything was brought to a head by the
Napoleonic invasions, it was in America that the end of the peninsular monarchies was consummated in accordance with the specific makeup that they had acquired throughout the eighteenth century.

NOTE

1 Translation by John Elliott with the support of ICS-UID/SOC/50013/2013.

ABBREVIATIONS

AGS   Archivo General de Simancas
BNE   Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid

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