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Reviews of Books

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the year of Dom Manuel's accession, to either 1481 or 1479, something the author herself appears unsure of. The main thesis is that there was considerable 'political centralization' in this period of forty-odd years, defined essentially in two ways: first, the 'massive expansion of the royal household'; and second, the emergence and growth of 'strategic cross-appointments to office', so that 'a greater number of locations [...] come under the direct control of the king and his emerging class of courtiers' (7). The author is of course aware that political centralization can also be interpreted in many other ways, including through architecture, urbanism, political ritual, symbolic language and so on. However, the key to the book appears to be this quite simple idea that an analysis of the composition of the royal court and extended household must be at the heart of the matter.

After a brief historiographical survey, Ferreira opens her book with an all-too-rapid account of the Portuguese chronicling tradition, which adds little to what we already know. The four more substantive chapters that follow then deal with the reconstitution of the royal household and its patronage networks; the reforms that began in the 1490s, as a result of the return of the exiled house of Bragança, and the question of the 'expulsion' (or non-expulsion) of Jews and Muslims from the kingdom; attempts to control religious offices and the military orders; and, finally, the question of fortifications and warfare. These are all recognizable themes in the historiography, each with a reasonable literature on it. Besides using this literature, Ferreira's original contribution is to analyse prosopographic material from the royal chanceries, as well as a group of financial documents from the Núcleo Antigo collection at the Torre do Tombo. Such materials help her show (63–65) how and in what measure the royal household grew under Dom Manuel. She then largely depends on others for such themes as the effect of royal urbanism of the period, or the analysis of the *Ordenações manuelinas*, the important legislative initiative of the epoch. On the question of the Jews, she hardly goes beyond the work of François Soyer (*The Persecution of the Jews and Muslims of Portugal: King Manuel I and the End of Religious Tolerance [1496–7]* [Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007]).

What is puzzling in this book, however, is its insistence that the overseas factor has been exaggerated in Portuguese history in the period. Firstly, Ferreira seems singularly ill-informed regarding the empire, making all sorts of elementary errors, and building entirely on odd selections of secondary literature. Second, she does not seem to have a proper idea of how the institutions of empire functioned at the time, and what she says about the Casa da Índia is actually quite trivial. The secretary António Carneiro, a rather central figure in regard to India, is not even mentioned. Third, Ferreira seems unaware that empire and metropole need not be seen as in a zero-sum game; rather, the interactions between the two were far more complex than she is willing to recognize, or her simple framework will allow. If the best parts of this book show the salutary influence of historians like Ivana Elbl, others demonstrate the influence of her adviser, the late A. J. R. Russell-Wood, whose tendency towards generalizations is unfortunately echoed here. The theme of this book is nevertheless a worthy one, and one hopes it will eventually find a better treatment.

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Before Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513–26. Edited and translated by Trevor P. Hall. Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate. 2015. xvi + 300 pp.

Before Middle Passage offers English-speaking scholars, students and the wider public a translation of two important Portuguese sources for the study of the early sixteenth-century

slave trade between Portugal, Spain, the Canaries, Cape Verde and West Africa. The first manuscript, translated and edited by Trevor P. Hall, is a customs records book from Cape Verde for the period 1513–1516—a fiscal source produced by representatives of the Portuguese crown based in the island of Santiago and in charge of controlling the collection of taxes and the circulation of people and goods. The second source is the on-board log-book of the ship *Santiago*, which sailed from Portugal to West Africa in 1526 to carry out trade on the coast, and acquire enslaved Africans. The English translation of this second document covers only certain sections of the log-book and is based on the Portuguese annotated edition of this source published by A. Teixeira da Mota in 1969. The original documents are deposited in the Portuguese National Archive (Torre do Tombo), as part of the Núcleo Antigo collection (books 757 and 197, respectively).

This English edition is divided into three main parts. The first part includes a Preface to the translations, introducing readers to the Portuguese sources, the context of their production and the process behind their translation, including the transcription of the original handwritten text, the rules adopted for that daunting task and the difficulties associated with the translation of a sixteenth-century manuscript into modern English. The Preface is followed by an Introduction, in which Hall offers readers an overview of the historical context of the period, including an outline of early Portuguese expansion and settlement in the Atlantic and the political and economic situation in West Africa during the fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

In the second part of the book, Hall presents his annotated translation of the two aforementioned sources in a series of chapters. His edition of the first source is divided into six chapters (1 to 6) dealing with the customs duties paid in Cape Verde on exports from the islands to Portugal, Spain and the Canaries, and on imports from West Africa into Cape Verde, between 1513 and 1516, which mainly included taxation on slave-trading. The first set of taxes was paid on commodities and enslaved Africans acquired in the islands, in particular Santiago—which functioned as a slave *entrepôt* between West Africa and Europe during this period—by merchants with vessels fitted out in Portugal, Spain or the Canaries (Chapters 1 and 6), whilst another set was paid by merchants based in Cape Verde who operated circuits connecting the islands to West Africa (Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5). The last chapter of the book offers the reader a partial English edition of the log-book of the *Santiago*, as an example of a slave-trading voyage in the early 1500s. The annotated translation of the two documents is complemented by several maps, a list of Portuguese weights and measures, a glossary and an index.

The Portuguese documents edited and translated here tell us much about the international and regional routes of the early Atlantic slave trade, its organization and the main actors involved (both as perpetrators and victims). This edition is, therefore, a valuable tool for teaching purposes at various educational levels. There is, however, in my opinion, a weak point in this source edition. The editor of this volume does not provide an updated bibliography, as most of the secondary literature cited throughout the book and in the bibliography predates the 1990s. In addition, neither in the Introduction nor elsewhere in the volume does Hall engage with the most recent research and publications of scholars working on similar documents from the same period. These include, for instance, the works of António de Almeida Mendes, Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão, Jorge Fonseca, Toby Green and Arlindo Caldeira, to mention just a few. Their studies not only use similar sources, but also provide detailed information on topics directly related to this source edition, in particular the early slave trade to Iberia, the Atlantic Islands and the Spanish Caribbean, the presence of Africans in Portugal, and the settlement and trading activities of Portuguese and their descendants in the West African mainland.

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