

Portuguese Settlers in Santo Domingo in the Sixteenth Century (1492-1580)

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Already in 1534, as Vitorino Magalhães Godinho¹ and Robert Rowland² have noted, Garcia de Resende wrote in astonished tones about the Portuguese diaspora. In that period, a population made up of only 1,400,000 people was scattered about the Atlantic islands, Morocco, the Gulf of Guinea and East Africa, Ormuz, India, Malacca and Molucca, the Far East, Brazil and the most important centres of European trade. Yet this vast network of colonies and trade emporia were not sufficient to contain the enterprising spirit of Portuguese subjects. Increasingly in the seventeenth century we find them getting round the restrictions imposed by the Spanish authorities and settling clandestinely in the American territories conquered and ruled by the latter.

1. Foreigners in the Spanish American colonies and the peopling of Santo Domingo

It is well known that the Spanish sovereigns kept the benefits which came from the exploitation of the New World for themselves and for their subjects.³ Only the subjects of the kingdoms of Castile

¹ 'L'émigration portugaise (XV-XX siècles). Une constante structurale et les réponses aux changements du monde' *Revista de História Económica e Social*, n. 1, Janeiro-Junho de 1978, pp.5-32).

² 'Emigración, estructura y región en Portugal' Antonio Eiras Roel (ed.), *Emigración española y portuguesa a América (Actas del II Congreso de la Asociación de Demografía Histórica. Alicante, abril de 1990. Volumen 1)*, (Alicante 1991), pp.127-136.

³ Richard Konezke, 'Legislación sobre inmigración de extranjeros en América durante la época colonial' *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, Madrid, Vol XXXII, nn. 11-12 (1945), pp. 269-299; Magnus Moerner, 'La emigración española al Nuevo Mundo

and Léon, the countries which had borne the expense of the voyages of discovery, were allowed to emigrate and carry on trade, although given Ferdinand's presence in the government of the Indies, the subjects of the Aragon crown soon had access to the new territories. Jews, Muslims, heretics and recently-converted Christians were also forbidden to emigrate, that is to say all those who might contaminate the integrity of Spanish Catholicism in America. To prevent this, by order of the government the granting of emigration permits was subject to an investigation to prove the possession of the necessary pre-requisites (*limpieza de sangre*).

But even though foreigners were excluded in principle from emigration and trade with the Spanish colonies, there were very few petitioners. Firstly the sovereign could grant isolated permits as a reward for services received. Then, when Charles Hapsburg came to the Castilian throne, licenses for migrating to the Indies were granted to the emperor's non-Spanish subjects, especially Germans⁴. Moreover clandestine emigration continued⁵: some emigrants travelled without permission, obviously with the complicity of the captain; some embarked in the Canaries, at an intermediate stage of the crossing; others signed up as sailors on trans-Atlantic ships⁶, only to escape on reaching their destination. Thus there were many ways open to those who wished to migrate

antes de 1810. Un informe del estado de la investigación', *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, Vol XXXII, pp. 43-89; Auke Pieter Jacobs, *Los movimientos migratorios entre Castilla e Hispanoamérica durante el reinado de Felipe III, 1598-1621*, (Amsterdam-Atlanta, 1995).

⁴ Richard Konetzke, "La legislación sobre inmigración de extranjeros en América durante el reinado de Carlos V" in *Charles Quint et son temps*, (Paris 1959), pp.93-111.

⁵ Auke Pieter Jacobs, 'Pasajeros y polizones. Algunas observaciones sobre la emigración española a las Indias durante el siglo XVI' *Revista de Indias*, n. 172, (Julio-Dic. 1983), pp. 441-479; *Idem*, *Los movimientos migratorios*, cit., pp. 103-120.

⁶ The presence of Portuguese sailors on Spanish ships bound for the New World was constant throughout the period. Cf. Francesco D'Esposito, "Navigazione atlantica ed emigrazione: la provenienza dei marinai impegnati nella Carrera de Indias (1492-1506)", in AA.VV., *Navi e navigazione nei secoli XV e XVI. Atti del V Convegno Internazionale di Studi Colombiani*, (Genova 1990), pp. 323-349.

to the Spanish American territories but who did not have the right to, especially the Portuguese, given the geographical proximity of their country, the cultural affinity with the Spanish and the common urge to expand across the Atlantic that they shared with their Iberian neighbours.

The presence of Portuguese subjects in Española, the first piece of land colonised by Castile in the New World, emerges from the very beginning; we find them among the crews taking part in Columbus's expeditions, among artisans in the pay of the Genoese government and among free emigrants from 1502 onwards. Like all the other colonisers of the West Indies, they remained there as long as they were able to easily exploit the island's resources and abandoned it when new lands to conquer had been discovered. Thus we find many Portuguese among the conquerors of Mexico, men who had certainly been among the conquerors and colonisers of Española, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and Cuba⁷. But the Portuguese who had shown themselves to be good colonisers in the Atlantic islands - the Madeira archipelago, the Azores and even the Canaries, which also belonged to the Crown of Castile - began to move to Española again, around 1520, when agricultural development on the island got underway, this time with the consent of the authorities.

The main problem with Española at the end of the second decade of the sixteenth century was in fact the very small number of inhabitants. Once the early years of exploration and conquest under the Columbus brothers were over, in 1502 Ovando began the systematic exploitation of the island's resources using indigenous labour to extract gold. The mirage of gold had set in motion a process of population settlement which was quite exceptional for the period. 2,500 people arrived with the new governor and according to Bartolomé de Las Casas there must have been from between 10 to 12

⁷ Peter Boyd-Bowman, *Indice geobiografico de cuarentmil pobladores de América en el siglo XVI*, tomo I, 1493-1519, Instituto Caro y Cuervo, (Bogota 1964), pp.175-177.

thousand European inhabitants in Española around 1508-09⁸. The number is probably exaggerated but it testifies to a huge presence of Spaniards. The island was not to have seen such a large number of white settlers during the rest of the century. This was the time when the economy was thriving, when gold production reached its peak, thence to decline rapidly. In the second decade of the century the exodus from Española began. There were two reasons for this. Firstly the work of mining and washing the gold dust rested completely on the shoulders of the natives who, overcome by exhaustion and epidemics, became rapidly extinct. The mining industry thus lost its main *raison d'être*: the low cost of labour.

Contemporaneously new lands were conquered and colonised - Puerto Rico, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico and the coast of the South American Continent - and settlers left the island to seek out new fortunes. Española became depopulated and from the third decade of the sixteenth century and for the rest of the century, the white population never exceeded 4-5 thousand inhabitants. A new incentive to settlement afterwards came from the development of agriculture with the introduction of sugar cane, a product which was in great demand in European markets⁹. This brought to the island new settlers, especially peasants and experts specialised in sugar production as well as servile labour needed to work on the plantations. As we shall see, all these circumstances propitiated the arrival of Portuguese settlers in Santo Domingo.

Calls from the Santo Domingo authorities for a policy that favoured the immigration of settlers who knew how to work the land, often with specific reference to Portuguese subjects,

⁸ L. Arranz Marquez, "Emigración española a Indias. Poblamiento y despoblación antillanos", in *América y la España del siglo XVI*, C.S.I.C. Instituto Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, (Madrid 1983), Tomo II, pp. 63-91; Alin Milhou, 'Las Casas frente a las reivindicaciones de los colonos de la Isla Española (1554-1561)' *Historiografía y Bibliografía Americanistas*, 19-20 (1976), pp. 11-66, especially pp.19-25.

⁹ Mervyn Ratekin, 'The Early Sugar Industry in Espanola' *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 34.1 (1954), pp.1-19; Justo L. del Rio Moreno, *Los inicios de la agricultura europea en el Nuevo Mundo*, ASAJA, (Sevilla 1991), pp.303-321.

became more pressing at the end of the 1520s¹⁰. In many cases the crown itself financed the emigration of settlers to the island, making the *Casa de la Contratación* responsible for the expenses of the voyage and the Santo Domingo Treasury responsible for the payment of implements, seeds and animals belonging to the Royal herds in Española. Thus in 1520 the crown was asked to abolish the law forbidding foreigners to emigrate to the Spanish colonies and to sanction the immigration of Genoese, French and Portuguese subjects¹¹. In 1529 a powerful owner of land and sugar refineries in Española was authorised by the crown to bring 25 Spanish or Portuguese peasant families to the island to found a new village in the interior. In 1545, an inhabitant of Gran Canaria, Francisco de Mesa, agreed to repopulate the village of Montechristi in the northern part of the island, bringing 30 families from the Canaries at his own expense, and allowing for some of them to be Portuguese. After 1556, Baltasar Garcia, who represented the island's settlers at court, obtained other concessions for those who wished to emigrate to Santo Domingo. The concessions once again referred to the population of the Canaries and to Portuguese subjects, although these were not to exceed a third of the total of all immigrants. Everyone had the obligation to reside on the island for at least ten years, in villages that they were to found in areas a long way from the capital¹².

The main stream of emigrants to Española came from the Canary Islands, whose inhabitants were deemed to be excellent settlers.¹³ But after the conquest and annexation to Castile many

¹⁰ Alain Milhou, 'Los intentos de repoblación de la Isla Española por colonias de labradores (1518-1603) - Razones de un fracaso'. *EME FME. Estudios Dominicanos*, 6 n° 37 (1978), pp.3-13.

¹¹ *Ibid.* pp.4-5.

¹² Milhou, 'Las Casas frente a las reivindicaciones' *op. cit.*, pp.37-66.

¹³ Francisco Morales Padron, 'Colonos canarios en Indias' *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 8 (1951), pp. 399-441; Maria Lourdes Diaz-Trechuelo Spinola, "La despoblación de la Isla de Canaria" y la emigración ilegal a Indias (1621-1625)", in *Coloquio de Historia Canario-Americana* (1976), (Gran Canaria 1977), pp.295-314. In

Portuguese had settled in the African archipelago and it is certain that they formed the largest foreign community that resided there permanently, so much so that there were considered the true colonisers of Tenerife, the north western part of which was inhabited exclusively by them.¹⁴ The Portuguese were engaged in the most varied of occupations: as stone-quarry workers, priests, artisans in the city's handicraft industries, technical advisors in sugar refineries and above all small landowners, some of whom had climbed to such a position as to rouse envy and acrimony. They came from different parts of Portugal although most came from the north and from the Algarve. It is extremely interesting to note the presence of a small group of settlers from the Atlantic archipelagos colonised by the Portuguese, especially Madeira. One is struck by the vitality and restlessness of these people who after leaving the Continent, moved to Madeira, the Azores and the Canaries before arriving in the New World, taking advantage of the concessions granted to subjects from the Canaries who emigrated to America, and always in search of a better situation. Another small but politically significant group on the islands was made up of sailors and merchants, largely from the Algarve who traded with the islands but did not reside there permanently. Then, after 1540, the need to flee from the investigations of the Portuguese Inquisition surely had an influence on emigration from Portugal, at least for recently-converted Jews.¹⁵

A.P.Jacobs, *Movimientos migratorios, op. cit.*, pp. 104-105 doubt is cast on the importance of emigration from the Canaries to America which, if it had been as significant as the sources seem to suggest, would have led to the depopulation of the archipelago. It is clear that the Canaries saw a constant flow of emigrants whose only purpose was to set sail again for the New World without too many controls.

¹⁴ Felipe Fernandez Armesto, *The Canary Islands after the Conquest*, (Oxford 1982) pp.13-21; Eduardo Aznar Vallejo, *La integración de las Islas Canarias en la Corona de Castilla (1478-1526)*, Universidad de Sevilla- Universidad de La Laguna, (La Laguna, 1983), pp.158-160 and 194-195.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 194-195. Cf. *infra* and nn 19-22.

Most of the expeditions of settlers to Santo Domingo, especially those involving Spanish settlers from the peninsula, did not achieve their goal. Once they had arrived in the West Indies, and if they managed to survive in the tropical climate - from the beginning of the conquest, all emigrants to the New World faced this kind of problem - the peasants sought more lucrative and less laborious occupations than farming, or as soon as possible moved to areas which offered greater prospects, such as Mexico and Peru.

On the contrary the expeditions involving Portuguese peasants and peasants from the Canaries obtained more positive results. In 1535 the functionaries of the *Audiencia di Santo Domingo* - the supreme political and administrative body and court of appeal on the island - wrote to the *Consejo de Indias* that more than 200 Portuguese resided in Española, for the most part employed in sugar refineries as technical advisors¹⁶. In trying to explain the failure of attempts to populate the island with Castilian settlers and conversely the success of Canary Islands and Portuguese immigrants, contemporary sources always stressed the scarce propensity to manual labour as a primary reason, together with an aspiration to better one's social status which caused them to move as soon as possible to recently-conquered lands. Settlers from the Canary Islands and Portugal, on the other hand, were defined as being devoted to working the land and without any wish for adventure¹⁷. Above and beyond this kind of explanation, a more plausible answer may lie in the fact that settlers, be they from the Canaries, Portuguese or Castilians who came from the Atlantic islands, were more used to subtropical climates and agriculture while peasants from the arid interior of the Iberian peninsula frequently became ill on their arrival in Santo Domingo. Moreover they were unable to carry on traditional cereal and vine growing because despite repeated attempts they were unable to grow these crops in Española. Settlers from Portugal and the Canary Islands, on

¹⁶ Milhou, 'Los intentos de repoblación', *op. cit.* p.7.

¹⁷ *ibid.* pp.7-8.

the other hand, were already experienced in sugar-cane growing and sugar refining. The similarities in the organisation of the West Indies sugar industry and the Spanish and Portuguese sugar industries in the Atlantic islands made it easier for them to adapt. Slaves were essential on the plantations but some of the work was performed by free wage earners.¹⁸

Up until the 1560s, there were no protests about the presence of Portuguese settlers in Española, whom, as we have said, performed a fundamental role in the local economy. But in 1561 one of the *oydores* of the Santo Domingo *Audiencia*, the *licenciado* Echegoyan, began a violent campaign against them, asking the sovereign to forbid them access to the Indies, even if they had been naturalised. According to this judge, the number of Portuguese in Española had risen to such a level as to undermine Castilian sovereignty on the island, which had by now become "hera Portugal", that is to say, another Brazil, another possession of the Portuguese sovereign.¹⁹ This fear was shared by another high functionary, the *fiscal* Santiago del Riego who a few years later wrote to the sovereign: "Foreigners, especially Portuguese, have found an expedient for coming to these lands. Although they live in Portugal where they have their homes, families and property, they move to any town belonging to the Castilian Crown, ask to become citizens and once this has been achieved they migrate legally to the Spanish Indies."²⁰

The reasons for this attitude perhaps lie in the hostility these two functionaries felt towards the Jews who had been converted to Christianity and who must have been quite numerous among the Portuguese that settled in the New World. As we have already seen, not only foreigners but also non-Christians, converts from other

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Marcel Bataillon, "Santo Domingo 'era Portugal'" in *Historia y Sociedad en el mundo de habla española. Homenaje a José Miranda*, (El Colegio de México, Mexico 1970), pp.113-120.

²⁰ *Cartel del Fiscal Santiago del Riego al rey*, Santo Domingo 3 de enero de 1560, in AGI, Santo Domingo 71, r.2 f. 550v. Quoted by Bataillon, *op.cit.* p. 115.

religions and their children, and those who had received sanctions from the Inquisition and their descendants, were forbidden to settle in Spanish overseas territories. However, many of the Portuguese who settled clandestinely in Spanish America were newly-converted Christians from Judaism. In this way they sought to move away from a hostile environment, although we should not exclude economic motives in connection with this emigration, since emigrants were also attracted by opportunities offered by the New World economy.²¹

Many Portuguese converts from Judaism were of Spanish origin.²² In 1492 the Jews had been expelled from Spain and around 20,000 families had taken refuge in Portugal, where they were readily accepted since most of them were skilled workers. In 1496 all the Jews in Portugal had to be christened. At first this did not cause the Jewish population any serious harm since once converted to Christianity they could engage in any of the country's main economic occupations. The Jewish minority was very enterprising; they maintained contacts with family members who had stayed in Spain and, as we have seen they often moved from Spain to the Canaries in order to emigrate to America. The motive for these wanderings was firstly economic but after 1540 when the Inquisition was also set up in Portugal, motives dictated by religion and personal safety played a part in the *conversos'* decision to emigrate.

We do not know how many of the Portuguese in Santo Domingo were sincere converts to Christianity. But we have detailed information on two of them, Juan Méndez Nieto and Antonio de Ulloa, doctors who had been tried for illegal immigration and suspecting of practising Judaism.²³

²¹ Other than the already-quoted article by Marcel Bataillon, on the Portuguese *conversos* in Santo Domingo in the sixteenth century, by the same author see 'Riesgo y ventura del licenciado? Juan Méndez Nieto' *Hispanic Review*, 37 (1968), pp. 23-60.

²² Cecil Roth, *La storia dei marrani*, (Milan 1991), pp. 62-77 (original edition 1958); Julio Caro Baroja, *Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, (Madrid 1978), 3 vols, 1 vol., pp. 193-226; Jonathan I. Israel, *Gli Ebrei d'Europa nell'età moderna*, (Bologna 1991) (original edition 1985), pp. 34-42.

²³ The information on these two figures comes from the two articles by Marcel Bataillon quoted in notes 18 and 20.

Juan Méndez Nieto was a Portuguese doctor, perhaps from a family of *conversos*, who had studied at Salamanca and having married a lady from Seville considered himself to be a subject of the king of Castile. He arrived in Santo Domingo on 26 January 1562 with his wife and a maid-servant, on the ship *San Salvador* which had left the Canary Islands as part of the expedition of settlers organised by Baltassar Garcia, to which we have already referred. His Portuguese origins went unnoticed for many years but in 1567 he was accused of having migrated to the Indies unlawfully and was taken to court. He was acquitted at the first trial but two years later at the appeal hearing he was sentenced to be expelled from America and to have his property confiscated. Meanwhile he had moved to Cartagena de Indias where he was imprisoned in 1575. He was subsequently released from prison in return for having offered his services as a doctor and lived in Cartagena, where he wrote his *Discursos medicinales* until his death in 1611.

In the same period another Portuguese doctor was living in Santo Domingo, the *licenciado* Antonio de Ulloa, like Méndez probably of Jewish origin. Ulloa was taken to court for living in the Indies although he was a foreigner and was tried by the same *fiscal* as Méndez had been, Santiago del Riego. Apparently there was animosity between the two Portuguese *conversos*, perhaps on account of professional rivalry. Méndez described his colleague as “mal portugués” and “mal cristiano nuevo”, probably to allay suspicion about his own person. Moreover he accused him of having arrived on the island on a Portuguese ship which had made a false emergency landing and had sold goods at outrageously high prices. Nonetheless, de Ulloa had married the daughter of a rich settler from Santo Domingo, the owner of sugar plantations and mills for making sugar. He was later appointed doctor of the town of Santo Domingo. Unfortunately we do not have information about his court case, but given the need for settlers on the island and given his profession it is very likely that he, like Méndez, was pardoned.

2. Portuguese Merchants in San Domingo

Among the Portuguese settlers in Española in the sixteenth century, as we have said there were many merchants. Their numbers increased significantly when as a result of the decline in the native work-force, it was necessary to import African slaves to work on the sugar-cane plantations; the supply of these slaves was in the hands of the Portuguese. Operating from Guinea, San Tomé, and the Cape Verde islands, Portuguese merchants supplied Spanish merchants, providing slaves for the Spanish colonies in America. The Castilian crown had forbidden them to undertake direct trade and their role was to supply authorised merchants who would then transport the slaves to the Spanish colonies. However these restrictions were often side-stepped. We have information about big slave merchants who not only traded direct with Española but had representatives in Santo Domingo to take care of their business. The sources abound in records which testify to the illegal activity of these merchants who often acted behind the tacit consent of the island authorities; in this way the latter sought to obviate the scarcity in supplies caused by the monopolistic nature of trade between Spain and America. The Spanish crown sold the right to supply the American market with slaves to powerful Castilian and foreign merchants, who then secured a monopoly over such trade. The merchants could also resell this right but, in any case, they acted exclusively in self-interest and since they did not have to face legal competition they charged settlers whatever price they wanted to and did not bother to supply them with all the slaves they had requested. These circumstances inevitably gave rise to smuggling.²⁴

During the sixteenth century Portuguese merchants obtained only one major licence for the slave trade, the *asiento* to supply 2000 Africans which was granted to the firm of Manuel Caldeira

²⁴ For the legal and institutional aspects of this trade the work by Georges Scelle, *La Traite négrière aux Indes de Castile*, (Paris 1906), is still valid.

and Partners in 1558.²⁵ In the period under study, on the other hand, we find many Portuguese engaged in contraband. In 1557 Antonio Hernández paid the San Domingo authority 100 pesos for the right to import 4 slaves without a licence²⁶. The following year 40 slaves were confiscated from the Portuguese Antonio Gómez and were sold at an auction although the source hints at a previous agreement between the local authorities and the merchants regarding what was only on the surface a forced sale.²⁷ On 22 April 1562 a ship from Huelva arrived on the island loaded with Africans from Guinea²⁸. In this case, although the ship concerned was not declaredly Portuguese, we may suspect their influence and involvement since there were many Portuguese sailors in Huelva. Thus in 1562 the crown wrote to the *Audencia* that, contrary to orders, in Santo Domingo there were foreigners such as Ventura Duquez, a Portuguese subject and a representative of the aforementioned firm of Manuel Caldeira and Partners²⁹. It is not clear whether these agents of slave companies were in Santo Domingo to sell their slaves on the islands or whether the West Indie's capital was the centre of the distribution network in the Spanish Empire. In 1564 and 1565 3 slaves who had been confiscated from Alonso Tellez were sold; Tellez had transported them to Santo Domingo from Portuguese territory without a licence. 68 slaves were confiscated from Enrique Vandura³⁰. In 1565 a functionary from Santo Domingo describes one of the strategies adopted to import slaves clandestinely:

²⁵ Enrique Otte and Conchita Ruiz-Burruecos, 'Los portugueses en la trata de esclavos de la postrimerías del siglo XVI' *Moneda y Crédito*, núm. 85 (1963), pp. 3-40. The most important period for official Portuguese participation in the slave trade was the first half of the seventeenth century and has been reconstructed by Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica y el comercio de esclavos. Los asientos portugueses*, (Seville 1977).

²⁶ AGI Contaduría 1051, *Cuentas de Alonso de la Peña*, f.24.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 98 r-102 v.

²⁸ Bataillon, 'Santo Domingo era Portugal', *op. cit.*, p. 116.

²⁹ *Real Cédula para la Audiencia de Santo Domingo*, Madrid 21 de febrero de 1562, in AGI Santo Domingo 899, 1.1, ff 256-257. Cf. Fernando Serrano Mangas, *Las crisis de la Isla del Oro*, Universidad de Extremadura, (Badajoz, 1992), pp. 81-82.

³⁰ AGI Contaduría 1052, *Cuentas de Diego Ximénez de Peralta*, f. 11r.

several ships' captains, mostly Portuguese, disguised Africans they wanted to sell as sailors³¹.

The illegal trade carried on by the Portuguese in Santo Domingo was not confined to the trade in African slaves but included the importation of textiles and the exportation of local products. For contraband trade the Portuguese often took advantage of the special relations between the Canary Islands and America in order to get round the law forbidding them to enter Spanish colonies³². The African archipelago was one of the departure points for ships bound for the Caribbean. Indeed their geographical position made them an indispensable base where ships which sailed for the New World and Asia took on supplies. Ships from the kingdom of Portugal called at the Canaries for various reasons; firstly for the direct trade with the islands; then as an intermediate destination on their way to Asia; finally they stopped at the Canaries as part of the route used for the slave trade.³³ From the 1530s onwards Portuguese traders increasingly formed alliances with the inhabitants of the Canary Islands in order to take advantage of the licences that had been granted to the latter to trade with America. Despite Seville's trade monopoly, they were allowed to maintain trade links with America.

However, exploiting the privileges given to the inhabitants of the Canary Islands as a cover for their own trade was not the only expedient adopted by Portuguese sailors and merchants to carry on trade in the West Indies. Firstly there was smuggling through their trade with West Indian settlers which was carried on openly in places outside the control of the authorities. For example in 1540 the sovereign wrote to the *Audiencia* in Santo Domingo that he had been

³¹ Bataillon, 'Santo Domingo, 'era Portugal', *op. cit.*, p. 116.

³² Clarence H. Haring, *Comercio y navegación entre España y las Indias en la época de los Habsburgos*, (F.C.E., Mexico 1979), pp.21-23; Serrano Mangas, *Las crisis de la isla del Oro*, *op. cit.*, pp.79-89.

³³ In 1565 a shipment of cordovans and a shipment of cheese were confiscated from Pero Sánchez from Tenerife. AGI Contaduría 1052, *Cuentas de Diego Ximénes de Peralta*, f. 11r.

informed that Santo Domingo, Cuba and Puertorico had in the last few years been the arena for trade involving at least 25-30 Portuguese caravelles which had sailed from Cape Verde and Portugal with slaves and merchandise. The Portuguese went round the islands selling slaves and European goods and bought sugar and hides to take back to Europe. Moreover, on their return these ships transported gold and silver which was unloaded in the Azores or in Portugal, thereby contravening the most guarded prerogatives of the Castilian crown.³⁴ For contraband trade the ships usually entered Española at the northern ports of Puerto de Plata, Montechristi and Puerto Real. In this way they avoided the inspections by port authorities who were much more vigilant in the town of Santo Domingo.³⁵

There was still yet another means used by the Portuguese to carry on contraband: that of faking a forced landing. In 1563 the Crown wrote to the *Audiencia* in Santo Domingo that it had certain knowledge that ships loaded with goods for Española and for other parts of America sailed from Portugal and that they carried on their trade without any impediment. Ships' captains pretended they were bound for Brazil and that they had been forced onto Castilian territory by storms. Because of the continual scarcity of supplies, they nearly always obtained permission from the local authorities to sell their merchandise on the condition that they sent the profits from the sale in gold and silver to Portugal³⁶. Thus in 1565 a Portuguese ship, on its way from Cape Verde to Brazil, landed in Santo Domingo where its flour cargo was confiscated³⁷. The same thing could happen on the homeward journey, as occurred in 1565 when a ship sailing from Brazil to

³⁴ *Real Cédula para la Audiencia de Santo Domingo*, Madrid 7 de septiembre de 1540, in AGI Santo Domingo 868, 1.1, ff269v-270. Serrano Mangas, *Las crisis de la Isla del Oro*, *op. cit.*, pp.83-84.

³⁵ AGI Santo Domingo 71, R1, f.214. *Lettera del contador Alvaro Caballero e del factor Lope de Bardeci al Sovrano*, of 10 October 1563, reporting the confiscation of many goods.

³⁶ *Real Cédula para la Audiencia de Santo Domingo*, Aranjuez 25 de Mayo de 1563, in AGI Santo Domingo 899, 1.1, ff 301-302.

³⁷ *Ibid.* ff. 13 r-14v.

Portugal called at Santo Domingo. Its cargo of wood which was to have been delivered to the merchant Luca Girdali in Portugal was confiscated, subject to compensation.³⁸

3. Conclusion

Despite the fact that Philip II became king of Portugal in 1580, the Portuguese continued to be treated as foreigners in Castile and in the Spanish Indies. But at the same time the laxity towards Portuguese settlers and merchants who settled in America also continued. In Santo Domingo there were complaints and people still spoke of an invasion by Portuguese, an invasion carried out with pacific means but nonetheless relentlessly. In 1588 the town's *Cabildo* wrote to the king that the Portuguese "in this town are more numerous than the Spanish; they carry on trade in public and through it appropriate the country's wealth, taking it away from the inhabitants..." The writers added that the same thing happened on the Venezuelan coasts and nearby islands, as proof of Portuguese infiltration which continued throughout the century.³⁹

³⁸ *ibid.* Another method used by the Portuguese to carry on contraband was that of simulating the sale of ships to natives of Castile, *Real Cédula para la Audiencia de Santo Domingo*, Madrid 12 de Abril de 1562, in AGI Santo Domingo 899. 1.1, ff 261v-261v.; Serrano Mangas, *Las crisis de la Isla del Oro, op. cit.*, pp.84.

³⁹ *El Cabildo de Santo Domingo a SM.*, 2 de julio de 1588, in AGI Santo Domingo 73; Serrano Mangas, *Las crisis de la Isla del Oro, op. cit.*, pp.88-89.

