

Political Axioms Regarding America

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Part 1 – Those relating to the current state of America and the causes which brought it about.

Part 2 – Those concerning the means for reforming it and putting it in good order.¹

Erranti, passimque oculos per cuncta ferenti.²

Travel mindfully, looking all around.
Wandering about, I cast my eyes over things.

Introduction

Reducing to a few political principles the Spanish system of finance, tied as it should be to the welfare of the nation, has always seemed to me a subject worthy of study to the extent that it was veiled in deep obscurity, and that a great number have steered clear of the task. To speak truthfully, I have been able to achieve neither the patient deliberation required for such an important matter nor the breadth of comparative consideration that is so necessary when one who seeks the truth discovers little or nothing in the way of public information or [perspicuous] economic order. While it is true that every science is made up of a theoretical or abstract component and a practical component, and that the complete knowledge of both is rarely combined, the following notes will be useful even though they address only the first component. The unadorned truth will be subjected to thorough examination, and once a firm foundation is established it will afterwards be easy for any citizen who wishes to take up so worthy an object to draw methodical connections between one subject and the other, and thus to contribute to the great edifice of national power and wellbeing.

As I understand it there are two approaches which make it well-nigh impossible to arrive at a thorough and precise analysis of the interests of the Monarchy. The first is to base one's reasoning on the Monarchy not as it is, but as it should be. The second is to aim in the practice of the most difficult things at a perfection that can hardly be achieved even in the imagination, no matter how great an effort is made.

Thus it frequently happens that people appear who propose to Spain (in truth with more love than thought) the adoption of the better laws of other jurisdictions, the cultivation of the products of other countries, and the imitation and further development of their manufactures. They think only of what is bad in their nation, and of all that is good in others. The comparison is not just; so their conclusions are quite erroneous.

The principles below will be very far distant, therefore, from those beautiful truths which, while they represent clearly the grand ideas of their authors, serve only as an all-too-true mirror to horrify one at the sight of one's own face and to make one despair totally of the possibility of improving it. Their only true value is simplicity. In the most complicated machines even normal operation depends on the most imperceptible causes; as a rule, as soon as one comes to believe them important one finds it impossible to identify them, even if the scrutiny one applies is as thorough as it is unrelenting.

I will divide these principles, which perhaps with undue conceit I have called "axioms", into two parts or classes: first, those relating to the current state of America and those dealing with the causes that have produced it; second, those concerning the means for reforming it and putting it in good order. Love for the truth, sincere gratitude to a nation that has made me fortunate indeed, and my resulting detachment from self-love and self-interest, inspire me to hope, with no hint of obsequy, that my current efforts will not be entirely worthless in relation to the welfare of the nation.

Part 1

Axioms Relating to the Current State of America

I

The political situation of the Spanish Monarchy can in no way be compared with that of any other country in Europe: its analysis, therefore, must be undertaken from a theoretical perspective, with direct reference to the national welfare.

To demonstrate this truth we shall restrict ourselves to a comparison [of Spain] with the three [other] powers which have significant establishments overseas: England, France and Holland. (Portugal suffers almost the same disadvantages as Spain: hence comparison with it would serve only to increase the stock of futile reasoning.) It was the product of chance rather than of political decision that the Spanish were less cautious and prudent than other Europeans who have established overseas possessions. The former had too much room for action and found it only too easy to act on their greed and audacity; the latter faced more limited opportunities, and so the second became farmers or merchants, the first conquerors.

This single distinguishing fact would be enough to vouch for the great difference between Spain and the other powers and the impossibility of any real comparison. The conqueror, on the one hand, aspires to dominate, and to establish, with the arrogance born of vanity, his own laws and customs; the other adapts to the country he lives in, seeks only the essential advantages of the land, of commerce and of his own security, and, in short, enjoys all the benefits of the [existing] society, whereas he who conquers contributes instead to its destruction.

History shows at every turn how Man has been ever the same. The same circumstances have always led to the same results. Advantage makes him daring, haughty and incautious; disadvantage, envious and malign. All previous conquerors have destroyed first the country they have conquered, then themselves, and finally the country from which they came.

Lords of immense lands that we can neither exploit nor defend, the only thing we judge impossible is refraining from seeking new conquests. We are at continual war with the Indians not under our sway, and we spend enormous amounts of blood and silver to maintain our power over the rest. Meanwhile, the English in North America and Hindustan, the French when they had control of Canada and the Dutch in the Moluccas, having established several colonies and become masters of the seas, of trade and of the most arable and fertile land, not only allowed the original inhabitants to live at their own pleasure, but also – through diplomacy and gifts, whether lasting or short-lived – confirmed their seeming independence and won them over to all the benefits of trade. [Against the legitimacy of this contrast] one cannot cite our diplomacy towards our indigenous neighbours in the Kingdom of Chile, or the almost constant warfare between the English and French possessions. The former causes our system severe trouble and fails to open the doors to commerce: the latter are consequences [merely] of the political condition of Europe.

The English colonies of North America have flourished, and their mode of government, comparable with ours in regard to the rights of citizens, has put them at odds with the Mother Country. It was their own strength and prosperity which made them bold. They sought equal rights, equal responsibilities and an equal part in civil government. A bloody war, decided in favour of those who fought for their freedom, has deprived us of the least point of relevance to our system (an important lesson indeed!). How can one weigh in the same balance circumstances which differ so entirely? The merchant and the farmer own, improve and defend; the conqueror steals, destroys and abandons. The first direct all their efforts towards the prosperity of the nation as a whole, consider themselves merely temporary stewards, make a modest fortune, and either give back or contribute afresh what is needed to defend it; the second, always impatient with the constraints of justice, avails himself of military power. Force of arms is the only expression of his strength, and,

having exchanged a state of superiority for one of inferiority, he can now resort, in the place of daring and military might, only to subterfuge, cunning and intimidation.

In this situation it would be imprudent to weigh [what conduces to] our welfare by those principles that define it for other Europeans; even more so if one considers that, among the latter, complete liberty in customs and religion, to the extent that it is combined with good order, appeals in the first instance to people with few scruples, supremely self-confident and attracted to property and wealth; among us the opposite is necessary, in financial administration as much as in custom and religion, namely a rigid order from which even the strictest European governments have desisted.

I understand by a “nation” any number of people who follow the same laws, customs and religion, who co-operate for their prosperity and defence, and for whom the same land and local situation are the principal causes of their immutable confederation.

As much as it was natural for the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon and the Cantabrian provinces to unite in a single nation (as it happens a Monarchy), by the same lights the union of America with Spain must appear impossible. The sea (often dangerous) that divides them, the customs, the soil, the climate, the entirely different relationships with neighbouring peoples, the natural antagonism between conquered and conqueror: all these conspire to demonstrate that such a union would be severely defective, if not indeed purely fantastical.

Despite this, the law requires the mandatory introduction of the Castilian language, the profession of the Catholic religion, the same system of government, the same manner of social life, and finally the same ways of managing wealth. Is this not a violation of nature and society, and, as one attempts to brave the fearsome labyrinth of national prosperity, a setting-out from an untenable position, whence, it follows, a step in any direction at all would result only in the continued multiplication of error?

II

The preservation of America is better effected through the religious than through the military and political system.

For this axiom to be granted it is enough to cast a quick glance at the unique and salutary method, introduced shortly after the conquest, of extending our possessions through the use of missions. Thus, every peaceful people yielded to their attraction and entered our dominion; the more warlike peoples, on the other hand, have never been conquered. Evangelistic preaching flattered the new believers with the attributes of passion and sweetness in terms of which they already saw themselves, and also with the gifts by which it was indispensably accompanied. The latter can be highly influential in the formation of a society, and in rescuing from a wandering life a people by nature rather materialistic and not the least animated by those sublime ideas which alone make religion to us both necessary and agreeable.

Yet whenever, once these small societies have been formed, the government has subjected them to the force of its military and political arms, these have contributed nothing to their improvement or preservation; on the contrary, they conspire to destroy the good effects of the religious system. The governors, magistrates and mayors, looking solely to augment the Royal Exchequer and to take advantage of a form of enterprise that has already proven lucrative, can neither apply the law firmly nor avoid infuriating peoples whose needs and aspirations are extremely limited.^a Indeed, most of the villages have no other interpreter of the sovereign will than the local priest. Perhaps he alone has sufficient knowledge of the language to make himself understood among them; he alone can watch over their conduct and anticipate or at least guard against a revolt. How far from correct is

^a It is the parish priest who is left to take stock of their deeds, persuading them through religion to accept suffering; he dominates their will, makes them pay taxes, and, in short, renders their idea of the Monarchy less disagreeable.

the judgment of those foreigners who mock our religious system, as well as of the many compatriots who believe that this form of control is useless, to the extent that they tolerate any abuse of authority in others while requiring unrealistic perfection from ecclesiastics, is revealed by two particular reflections which I will briefly lay out. Ecclesiastical authority is the same in a lone priest as when he is accompanied by others; therefore, it much surpasses military power, whose strength depends on number. Second, the priest, having to look only to himself, habituated to the constant lack of most comforts, and used to regarding his possessions as undeserved, worries about nothing else than his immediate welfare and lives happily with very little, whereas officials of the other two kinds look not only to their own interests and those of their families, but also to the enhancement of both.

This is why, then, the authority of our dominion depends truly on the influence of religion more than on any other cause, and is placed neither in the hands of the bishops and clerical hierarchy, which would rob the Monarchy of much wealth, nor in the numerous [religious] communities which predominate in the cities, but rather in the parish priests to whom is entrusted the care of the Indian people and likewise the interpretation of the royal will.

The same reasoning adds further support to the first axiom expounded, that our constitution cannot be compared with those of other Europeans established in both the Indies, and will serve as the foundation of those which will indicate later the means useful for reforming the Monarchy.

III

The great Spanish Monarchy is composed of three classes whose interests are entirely opposed: the Spanish inhabitants of the continent of Europe, the Spaniards who live in America, and the Indians. All three are in constant conflict one with another, causing through their continual action and reaction the serious degradation of the whole.

The law not being satisfied with its attempt to assimilate the entirely opposed interests of the Spaniards and the Indians, it managed to create a new class opposed to both, namely the expatriate Spanish Creoles. Before the conquest, the peaceful Indian knew nothing of the value of silver and gold, nor was painstaking and arduous labour required for a comfortable existence. Need alone makes one work. The Indian, owing either to the climate in which he lives, or to his excessively heavy perspiration (the origin of a certain dull listlessness during his adult life), or to the habit learned since the conquest of not taking true advantage of the fruit of his labour, or, finally, because the land, throughout the entire year, supplies fresh produce sufficient for his survival, has no needs. This is common to all the inhabitants of the torrid zone, since in all such places the stock of animals and fish provides an easy source of food. The temperature makes nakedness not only agreeable but almost necessary; and excessive perspiration induces a state tantamount to stupor. For these reasons, since they are without either real or artificial needs, why should they not prefer an idle life, almost free of care, to the laborious life of a well organised society?

Completely opposed to theirs are the interests of Spain: for America to contribute to the enrichment of Spain the Indian must be put to work to exploit the mines and to cultivate produce that has value in Europe; for the well-being of its manufactures, as for its naval commerce, the Indian must also consume a fair amount of luxury goods; finally, in order to maintain the pleasant indolence that the European naturally seeks in the milder

climes of the torrid zone, the Indian must work for the European's sustenance, his leisure and his whim. This being so, the only notion of happiness available to the Indian, the only situation comparable to what he sees all around him, would be to live in the same idleness of which the European has deprived him in order to make it his own. Our laws can and ought to be directed as much as possible at the happiness of others. If instead they seek to alter the basic structure of a society, they act contrary to nature, since their sole object should be to limit abuses within societies which are already formed and in most cases heavily populated.

Creatures though we are of whim and artificial need, we nevertheless abandon the clamour of the city for the enjoyment of country solitude. We envy the shepherd and farmer their rustic cottages and the exclusive company of their families, and still we believe that the Indians cannot be happy unless they are gathered together in towns. The nomadic and nonetheless civilised Patagonians and the nations adjacent to the American colonies and Canada, whose speech, thoughts and customs indicate their civilised origins; the Araucans of Chile; the Hottentots who inhabit the lands around the Cape of Good Hope—none among these native peoples of countries whose climate is closer to that of Europe than to the immense region of the torrid zone has ever been tempted to adopt our social organisation, even though they are exposed only to its agreeable outward appearance, which conceals how much our inner wellbeing is disturbed by excessive inequalities in rank and wealth, by harmful ideas of comfort and ease, by all the discord arising from these causes, and by finding ourselves caught up in all the wars of Europe. In spite of this, legislation decreed by the Spaniard has taken the stance that it can be applied also to the welfare of the Indian, so that when the interests of one and the other are combined a new nation can be formed from the two, allowing us to call those recently conquered and baptised, instead of Indians, "New Spaniards."

Given the immense disparity of their respective interests, the religious system is the only one that has contributed to bringing the one and the other together (Axiom II). Except for drink, taxes and the costs of pressing legal complaints, the only spending the Indian engages in, and this very favourable to our commerce, is what is devoted to ecclesiastical rites: weddings, baptisms, funerals, celebrations of patron saints, special services, visits of the bishops, provincials, etc., are the only reasons for great expense, in which the

vestments, victuals and ceremonial materials tend to excite envy, emulation, and further expenditure.

Since the rubric under which we should examine the Indian relative to the Monarchy as a whole is only what concerns agriculture, or more generally (to include the exploitation of the mines) deriving a living from the products of the land, it is evident that his interests are in constant opposition to ours if we require him to work in order to benefit us, and to provide for his own needs and desires, while in fact he has no need at all to work and moreover abhors it.

No fewer incompatibilities are presented by a comparison of the interests of the American and European Spaniards. In general, as in the case of reciprocal defence (the true basis of any great alliance), it is clear that on account of such impossibilities one cannot even conceive of the interests of the two as coinciding, with the result that the only things that connect them are trade and commerce.

That they are vassals of the same monarch has no power to alter this connection, just as it had none to change the fact that when the Italians and Flemish were under Spanish dominion they had not the least relation one with the other.

To proceed, we may reduce this commerce and trade to two kinds of commodity: necessities and luxuries. The first include clothing, iron and mechanical implements. The second include all other commodities. To the misfortune of all, an utterly erroneous conception of silver has brought everybody (but especially the Spanish) to consider it alone as constituting wealth. And here lies a great stumbling-block to reconciling the two interests. The American Spaniard prefers to preserve his silver, which prevents it being used for the acquisition of commodities. The European Spaniard, on the contrary, would rather extract it all for consignment to Spain, and to accomplish this makes use of two means: tax increases and restrictive control of the trade in necessities. The first means, though in actuality applied to both groups, is never implemented so equitably that there is no surcharge on one as compared to the other. And since the European Spaniard sees America as so many colonies sought and won for his benefit, whereas the American Spaniard believes he deserves not only the rights of the citizen, but also the great concessions that the law provides to those who reside in America, it is clear that the system of reciprocal taxation³ will always be disputed, revealing as it does this disparity in

interests, and indeed so much so that each side believes it contributes only to the advantage and security of the other.

Regarding the retention of silver by the American [Spaniard] and of necessities by the [European] Spaniard, both are in truth uneconomic, and indeed constitute a new cause of contrariety in interest. The American has no manufactures; nor, for either the Spaniard or the Indian, is silver sufficient incentive to undertake them: the latter because of his indolence, the former because of his disdain, and both, more importantly, because silver without exchange is of no value. The European, on the other hand, since he is no more than a receiver and transporter of such goods, sees himself as exposed to competition from illegal commerce; that is, if he does not ship and sell the goods, foreigners will do so in his place. A reconciliation of interests, then, would eventually bring the parties together, and trade would become balanced, as in Europe, by the mechanism of supply and demand, without the government having to interfere in the matter. But if it happens that one or the other is too greedy, both possessing land and therefore keen patriots for their territories, both authorised by the laws to see themselves as preferred, or even as uniquely privileged, and that [as a result] they undermine both government and the very acceptance of law and established rule, it is evident (by Axiom I) that the confederation [of Spain and its colonies] will not survive, nor can means be found to make it survive.

In the meantime, the ruling powers waste a vast amount of resources in an effort to reconcile [the opposing interests]; not only do they fail to achieve this result, but the very men in charge of the effort, once they have arrived in America, adopt the interests of America, just as before they espoused those of Spain. They are not like those in other nations or in our own sugar colonies, temporary immigrants whose commercial activities guarantee them a sure profit if only they endure the inevitable labour and risk, and the benefits of whose acquired wealth can be easily realised through trade with Europe. They do not confine themselves to a few truly useful products or to a manageable extent of land. Owing to their (very frequent) marriages, their profits from land, change in their customs and indeed the effects of their system of law, they are truly Americans, whose only interests (though misunderstood) are free commerce with the European and controlled commerce with the Indian, a very high price for their own products and a very low one for those of Europe.

Let us examine, although briefly, all the advice given to the Monarch from the time of the conquest itself until today: while Spanish political writings do not dare to mention anything but the restraint of trade, the acquisition and absurd hoarding of all silver, and even depriving the Americans of absolutely everything that our Spain cannot produce or manufacture, military governors and lawmakers in America are content to boast of their own achievement in proposing, and contributing to bringing it about, that the land produces and art fashions everything needed by the province or kingdom, thus detracting from the only relationship with Spain that could be of some benefit to America.

The usual result of this terrible conflict [of interests] is that, according to whether it preponderates in government, one side or the other shifts the balance entirely in its favour; and meanwhile the Monarchy continues to falter. Leaving aside how much the normal finances of the Exchequer are affected by tearing down one kind of administration and constructing another, how much change of this kind breathes new life into otherwise isolated foreign incursions, and how much, finally, it causes those who pursue entirely different goals to be viewed with envy and rancour, I will simply argue in support of the truths that very few individuals return with their fortunes to Spain; and that the customs, dress and dialect of the American Spanish demonstrate clearly that they constitute another nation, which [nevertheless], in climates as demanding as those of the rest of the European colonies (in particular the English and French), slavishly emulates the mother country and its system of Monarchy. The diagonal resultant of the two conflicting forces strengthens the two great counter-threats to our [national] welfare: the fomenting of idleness and oppression, the weakening of our nation and the increase of foreign strength. The following axioms will contribute further support to the preceding, although it is established as incontestable truth by what we have already expounded.

IV

The system of commerce between Spain and America, poorly founded, works to their mutual detriment: it cannot be established correctly without knowing the true interests of each.

Until the beginning of this century the only intrinsic goal of Spanish commerce in America was the acquisition of silver. The Indian was forced to work the mines, and the product of these went directly to the monarch by his territorial right and to the mine-owner as profit from his capital investment, or else was given into the hands of the Indian as wages for his work, soon however being passed on to the other two in exchange for the necessities of life; in this way, the monarch through customs duties, and the mine-owner through increasing his economic activity, absorbed this third dividend.

As agreeable as this trade in the terrible thirst for silver may seem, it nevertheless came later to suffer from two grave drawbacks. First, the Indian found himself enslaved and working without need or benefit; second, the sole form of profit the mines provided was a very limited and unreliable product to send back to the nation when compared with all the earlier promise held, in the view of the wisest, by the discovery of America.

In this predicament, it seemed a natural and prudent response to make the Indian subject to a system of royal and ecclesiastical rights, so that he was obliged to work for their fulfilment; thus [the use of] farm-implements, the increase in the number of needs to which the existing society became addicted, and indeed the introduction of taxes, doubly enlarged the Exchequer and to all appearances enriched the nation through trade and tribute. Grants of Crown land were made in order to expand agriculture.⁴ The soldier, worn out by fatigue and vice, endowed the land with real value by setting up wherever he found himself and, at the cost of a callous exploitation of the Indian, found himself in charge of a great quantity of goods producing true wealth and wellbeing.

Cities were built to make the most of this land and of the proximity of the mines, and it seemed a sublime act of legislation to match the needs of the one with the surplus of the other, and thus to imprint a grand and awe-inspiring idea of the immense growth of the Monarchy. The sailors being as intrepid as the soldiers, from that time on there was no other limit to their conquests than the circumference of the globe itself. Every year saw the acquisition of new kingdoms and the arrival of new treasures. The sovereign sought to retain control of the new conquests through effective legislation, and the vassal, while appearing submissive, relied on the distance and size of the conquests to allow him to subvert the order which, without suspicion of rebellion, he could not oppose directly.

Government, then, was introduced to co-ordinate the creation of a system of commerce incorporating the following conditions: first, the introduction of the Catholic religion, through the gentle means demanded by its teachings and the inalienable right of conquest; second, the exploitation of the mines and land without oppression of the Indian; third, the legalisation of [territorial] possession without forced seizure; fourth, the creation of cities and landholdings dependent on the mother country and directed only to its benefit; fifth, and finally, a system of management whose effectiveness, amidst great disparity of interest, could maintain itself without requiring vigilance or forcible intervention from a government weakened through its own [independent] exertions. Incursions, wars, and latterly, in this century, growth in common needs, have brought it about that, along with mining and food, America produces many other luxuries, principally cocoa, dyes, leather and medicinal simples. Therefore the following are fundamental to [a true understanding of] our system of trade with America: first, the additional burden on governmental or monarchical power required to maintain law and order in such an immense territory; second, the military defence of this territory, the former as expensive as the latter is weak; third, the difficulty of collecting revenue, whether land taxes or customs duties; fourth, the exaggerated value assigned to silver; fifth, the great number of men employed in this form of government; sixth, the misconception that agriculture and industry are compatible with an excessive abundance of silver; seventh, finally, the subjection to long-term regulation of the infinite complexities of trade, as variable as are the desires of men, the flow of capital and the welfare of each country.

From this variety of harmful causes and misconceptions about the conditions of our wellbeing there follows immediately the fragile structure of our edifice of commerce, aimed at pillaging from America the greatest possible amount of silver and other goods, so that there is held in Spain not only all the silver currency, but also the value of those goods which could otherwise develop agriculture and industry in both continents and bring it about that this rich and great society could, as by a miracle, combine within itself the need for work with an easy abundance of what it produces.

The ultimate consequence of this system is mutual destruction: let us remind ourselves that the object of joining together in society is our welfare and defence. In so far as Spain tries to combine its defence with that of America, it cannot succeed in either, when by itself it would have forces to spare. America, notwithstanding the fact that it contributes much to its own defence, has been and will be plundered by pirates: thus no one is attached to any other property than what is easy to remove and hide, and the acquisition of silver is in both continents the only motive which fires enterprise.

V

Silver is a marketable commodity in America; it is no longer such in Spain.

This distinction must be seen as one of the fundamental principles of our political economy. Since the interests of Spain and America are divided, it is pointless to force ourselves to consider them one: this idea would lead us to conclusions which are quite disastrous, the more so since, authorised as they are, and not rejected as they should be, by almost all politicians who have written on the subject up to now, these would then acquire greater strength.

Within a short time of the conquest, and even more since the middle of the last century, their unquenchable thirst for silver, the greater the farther away it was from them, brought the European Spanish to institute markets for the swift sale of their possessions and their ensuing acquisition of silver. In this exchange, then, silver was always acquired at a cost, namely of the European capital previously invested in the goods which constituted the exchange. In as much as the profits of the Europeans increased, redeeming the capital beforehand, even at a premium, was never able to surpass the competing rate of return. And since at the same time Spain found itself suffering a decline in industry and agriculture as well as the [continuing] need to supply America, there was no other choice but to rely on foreigners, albeit under such a form of regulation that they took plenty of opportunity to engage in illicit trade, and flattered Spain that, without agriculture and industry, it could nonetheless, by the sole means of restrictions [on trade] and the right of possession, attract the desired metal. The very painful history of what has happened since that time leaves no doubt about the truth of this axiom or the last. Huge quantities of silver and gold were taken from America, while in Spain monetary law was altered and the Monarchy mortgaged all its rents. Despite raids by English, French and Dutch pirates, the American cities flourished, while in Spain ancient and noble houses met with nothing but destruction

and ruin. Moreover, were it not for the War of Succession there would not even exist the national fund derived [ultimately] from the costs [of the war] to the Germans and French⁵ and afterwards invested in aid of our factories and agriculture, thus enabling us to release the workers and peasants from serfdom.

It is clear, then, that if Spain, though remaining the proprietor of America, had never acquired more silver through trade than could be generated by its own means, it would have had no greater part in this acquisition than the other nations if the latter had used their wealth in the same way, as much later and in similar circumstances they would come to do. And since silver itself is not a marketable commodity until it is extracted from the entrails of the earth, it is evident that the American is the only true vendor of this metal; once in other hands it is merely a symbol of exchange.

The only portions which in Spain should be regarded as marketable are those extracted by the monarch under his territorial rights or shipped hither by one of the mine-owners: both amounts, since they belong still to their first owner, represent nothing other than the labour and capital employed to obtain them. However, regarding the portion accruing to the sovereign, reinvestment in American enterprises accounts for almost all of it, and even what little arrives [in Spain] does not usually find its way into the national coffers; the remainder, from the mine-owners, has so far been well-nigh imaginary, given that sooner or later in such a risky enterprise almost all the profit is absorbed by the lands adjoining those that produced it.

From these considerations there follows without more ado the refutation of the idea that in Spain silver is a marketable commodity: neither the king nor the mine-owner imports a significant amount, and whatever does arrive through trade has been acquired with our own capital and consequently cannot be called a *surplus*, one of the essential properties of a marketable commodity.

Finally, notwithstanding [the findings of] the most industrious political studies, it will always be true that Spain will receive no more silver than it can earn through its own products or manufactures, and that all the rest produced annually by America will of necessity leak away to those dominions from which, either directly or through us as intermediaries, they have received other raw products or manufactures.

Here then lies the great importance of this distinction. America is advantaged by any increase in the value of silver, that is to say, its coming to represent a greater quantity of commodities.^b Fortune will not smile on Spain until it recognises that *its* true advantage lies in silver having a low value, in other words, its representing a [smaller⁶] quantity of commodities.^c

^b This will always be the object of those who control those interests.

^c A truth that cannot even be inferred from most political writers.

VI

The products and manufactures of Spain are insufficient to supply America; therefore part of the supply must be provided by foreigners.

This axiom needs no clarification, yet it is important to consider it in order to lend structure to a series of ideas which would lead us to legislation grounded in what is both achievable and sustainable. If in supplying America we would join forces with foreigners in legal trade, as opposed to competing aggressively in an abortive effort to maintain a monopoly, then laws could be enacted to bring the prices of our products to the same level as those of the foreigners, making ours cheaper rather than theirs dearer, thus restricting any competitive advantage to what can be attained through control [of territory] and shipping, the only means whereby Spain, without resort to violence, can assert its pre-eminence over other nations. With very fertile soil, an ample population, a most advantageous geographical situation, silver of the same value as that of other nations, and a balanced and just system of taxes, why would we not be able to provide raw products and manufactures at prices equal to or better than those of other countries? If it only calculated carefully the excessive costs of refusing to admit this truth, Spain would see how much it is losing through an illusory monopoly. Customs houses, border guards and coastguards, and the administrative apparatus of the royal officials themselves, are all financial burdens resulting from the same cause. Our blockades encourage smuggling, and by not adhering to the limits which Nature herself has placed on us for the enjoyment of trade with America, we lose not only what we wrongfully wish was ours, but also what in circumstances of balanced equilibrium nobody could begrudge us.

VII

Our trade with America, no matter how much legislation tries to protect it with barriers and similar measures, can never be expanded beyond the following three limits: what is allowed by the capital invested in raw and manufactured products; second, what can be generated through shipping; third, what is acquired in the individual fortunes of those employed in America who return with their earnings to Spain.

This axiom could perhaps stand surety for the truth that the political system of Spain could indeed be built on solid foundations, and could one day, since [understanding] it is within everyone's grasp, motivate the citizen both to follow the right path to his own happiness and to cooperate in true patriotic love for the public good.

The American witnesses the arrival of a governor who promises only useful reforms and proposes (more often than not) making his country happier and more prosperous than Spain itself. He smiles to himself, expects it to come to nothing, then gets this very result. The governor, on his part, comes after a time to perceive the tenuous character of the measures he has taken, the impossibility of their full implementation, and the same conflicts of interest among provinces, among individuals, and among the various branches of the government itself. The monarch, finally, on whom falls the main responsibility for public welfare, hears the loud objections of the one even before the proposals of the other. And since individuals, moved only by their own interests, prefer to undermine any beneficial government action if its provisions are opposed to their aspirations, and on the other hand take no action if they see them as tending to their favour, it follows as a natural consequence that the legislative power, according to the noise of the objections, their eloquence, expediency and the mood of the times, whether peaceful or belligerent, spends huge sums to erect today what tomorrow it will cost even more to tear down.

This then explains not only why our considerations regarding Spain ought to be reduced to a few clear principles which can be grasped by everyone, but also why these must of necessity be related to trade. In this case our capital should be given prime consideration, since we intend to prove that among the three factors bearing on the profitable relation of America to Spain this must always play the crucial role.

When in the past century, and even in the present one until after the War of Succession, we employed in trade with America neither our capital nor our labour (the former because it no longer existed, the latter because much of it had been conscripted into the military and the rest reduced by depopulation), it is very evident that for the monarchy America was nothing but a source of misadventure, and that it brought benefits only to our enemies and competitors. In the various peace treaties we ceded the rights to Campeche logwood,⁷ the colony of Sacramento,⁸ the English ship of registry,⁹ French shipping to and from Perú, and various contracts for the trade in Negro slaves¹⁰: all these the fixed aims of our antagonists, and the objects of our justified resentment. Meanwhile, our possessions in America had almost the same extent then that they have today. They were ruled by the same laws as now; they profited from the mines, and for foreigners, on account of their covetousness, our fleet galleons were the very mirror of our decadence. The subsequent exertion by foreigners of claimed rights of access to the vast dominions they envied us, defended by rivers of blood, and to us of such obvious importance, are enough to show that the discovery of America had no happier consequence for Europe than creating new openings for their raw products and manufactures, and for their industry. To our disgrace this trade resulted from the urgency of our dual objectives of increasing the needs of America and then satisfying them with shipments from Europe; thus, misconceiving our interests brought us to look only to the first while leaving the second to foreigners. We supplied a great number of men for the conquest; many more arrived for the missions, government and military establishment. The Indian was obliged to live in society, to work, to pay taxes, and to buy. The mixing of races was legalised. Finally, the ease of making a prosperous yet wrongful living, the fanatical desire for silver, a natural love of idleness in a nation which believed it could acquire wealth without work, the devotion to military and civil occupations in some who could only manage them with difficulty in Spain: all contributed to a continual emigration which confirmed the calculations of foreigners

regarding the supply of goods and refuted ours concerning industry and agriculture. The fields abandoned, the cities deserted, the looms broken, the inevitable consequences were idleness and mendacity. All believed they had the right and means to go where the grass was always greener, and where there was no need for work, and they badly confused one province with another, assuming that the weather, the soil and the customs were identical across the whole immense territory subject to Spanish rule.

How, then, should the kingdom have augmented its capital if it neither improved agriculture nor promoted new industry? The national wealth consists of no more than the *surplus* or excess of what serves its needs, these, taken as a whole and in accordance with right policy, being brought level with the general standard of life in the other countries of Europe. Thus it is of no real import whether this excess is embodied in goods which have been bought and can be sold, or in the money that represents one or the other, and it is not surprising that convenience, security and legality make us prefer the latter, which yet would have no value at all unless there were something to buy or sell in order that it may be put to use. For this reason it is reckless to confuse wealth with money. The latter follows upon affluence and represents it, but in all likelihood affluence will detach itself from and abandon anyone who puts his preference in money.

As long as there are no capital funds covering all the needs of those who live in this continent, indeed while the amount of raw and manufactured products is less than equivalent to the sum of these needs, our commerce will be defective, we shall be unable to invest our capital with advantage in trade with America and, as a result, we shall be nothing more than agents in the exchange of foreign products and manufactures for silver and other products of America.

Without doubt, a considerable part of the profit in trade, and much more in the trade between Europe and America, depends on transportation, in other words shipping. This is an extremely important factor linked closely to [the use of] capital, since in order to secure the greatest benefit the latter must employ our own nationals, and both must contribute to the true affluence and strength of the nation.

Until now the Spanish have believed that in this regard it could [and should] employ any means whatever to exclude foreign shipping and to promote ours. In this way, occupied only in the question of whether ships should be large or small, whether tonnage should be

limited or unlimited, they have failed to notice that the main result of the levelling [of needs mentioned above] is [reflected in] the state of foreign shipping. And this last consideration is the more crucial to the extent that, the value of the fleet being necessarily bound up in the value of the goods already placed on the market in America, this has to be a part of what promotes or deters illicit trade.

In fact, since part of the national capital, on whose size depends the rate of interest on money, is itself invested in shipping, it follows that competition is not in fact disadvantageous; however, there are three further things to consider, and these are the abundance and low price of naval provisions, an economical market in hired hands, and the science of navigation. The first of these three revolves necessarily around the many taxes on agriculture, the state of the manufacture of naval supplies and the import duties for those acquired from foreign parts. The market in hired hands now seems very economical indeed as far as shipping is concerned, except for that part of it devoted to the South Sea,¹¹ in which there remains much room for reform; but the general system of pay for military service is a major source of difficulty that only the government can remedy easily, by relying instead on the law dealing with the squadrons of His Majesty's ships assigned to coastguard duty. Much more important is the science of navigation, which in the merchant marine is still utterly primitive. Its benefits are very considerable, in terms of making crossings short and safe as well as of [deciding] when to set sail and when to allow the weather to rule one's course, rather than over that unpredictable element [, the sea].

Having weighed carefully these different points which determine whether our national shipping is more or less profitable, I would say that today it finds itself much improved, but still not in a strong enough position to compete with foreigners, all this resulting in advantages not to be ignored for illicit trade, and in an undue stunting of the growth of seamanship.

Those who are qualified have no desire to leave home, and those without a home have rarely found a settled occupation by which they can live, so that very often mariners who have practised another trade for a long time and who eventually find themselves without the means to continue in one or another occupation, even in a manner as irregular as the very element they ply, cross over to America as stowaways, remain in those

countries as either guards or vagabonds, and so end with a vicious death a series of crimes as long as their very lives.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that the system of government could favour the increase of our capital and of our population by this means more than by any other. The ports of Perú and Rio de la Plata, connected in various ways and more distant from foreign colonies, would continue to be ours exclusively, and likewise New Spain, having almost no other access than the port of Veracruz, would of necessity preserve our monopoly, if communication with the Antilles and free trade did not favour foreign shipping.

That our maritime trade with America should still not be conducted with attention to all the factors indicated above demonstrates far better than any other reason the points that in the commercial world of Cádiz being a *ship-owner* is by no means a mark of distinction, that trade to and from Cataluña also shows signs of being in dire straits, and that from all the remaining parts of the kingdom there are very few sailings to America. Furthermore, this is what brings it about that much shipping from Europe cannot be escorted by the vessels of our Navy, so that it is commonplace today that many mercantile voyages are left without protection simply because trade with America is not profitable enough to cover the expense, and at the same time our merchant marine can undertake no trade at all between Spain and the Mediterranean and Baltic seas. There is a third means by which significant wealth could accrue to Spain, and this is the acquisition of personal fortunes by those returning from America. However, since it seems that very few do return, for the biggest fortunes are acquired through marriages and Spain holds no attractions for those accustomed to the [American] climate and way of life, it is clear that this source of wealth is merely an illusion, whereas in England, France and Holland it is very real. In other countries those who return home with a fortune buy land and cultivate it, with a natural love of property and the quiet life, or else invest the money in manufactures and other commercial goods. In Spain, by contrast, it is either dissipated in maintaining a life of luxury in the capital, or converted into [promissory] notes, in which form it loses all utility, profiting only the Monarchy at the expense of the farmer and artisan.

Consequently, this third branch of national revenue, when analysed carefully, can be considered as of negligible effect, and the profit gained from America reduced to the two remaining points, namely what is produced by our capital and by the shipping of goods in

trade. This is in no way belied by a consideration of the Spanish wealth accruing in Cádiz, in various ways, from goods imported from America. In so far as it is not generating profit through investment in agriculture and industry it cannot be considered any kind of gain to the nation, and a comparison of this rich city with Jerez and its district will leave no doubt that Cádiz must be considered not so much a national city as a general depository for trade between America and Europe, belonging equally to all Europeans.

It is clear that what is retained by the Exchequer cannot be considered an increase in the wealth of the nation. Instead, it must be understood as covering the nation's costs relating to America, such as the large salaries paid there, the fortifications built, the continual expeditions etc., as well as those incurred in Europe for the various tribunals, councils and ministries dealing with the Indies, and even in considerable part the Navy, the need for which is related solely to America. Even the wars occasioned by these costly possessions must be included on [one side of] the balance, and then, when the other side is filled with rents from Crown land, taxes and customs duties, the result is still highly unfavourable to the Monarchy, all of which speaks against those who think that the national welfare of Spain depends specifically on the material wealth of America.

Nor could political intervention affect these straightforward facts. Money must of necessity be transferred to the factory or land whence the marketable goods came, and since the former is the second component of the exchange, that is to say the equivalent of the latter, any value it is able to accrue in itself will of necessity be imaginary, and its worth will increase or decrease according to how the goods are afterwards bought and sold, that is to say, when it comes to the final payment made for the goods, their value will include not only all the financial costs of conveying them from the factory to America, but also those of conveying the payment from America to the factory.

I have already said that the national capital should also be compared with the capital funds of the other nations to determine the amount that might be invested in external trade with America, and from this point can be derived an additional examination of the state of our manufactures and of the political faults they inevitably produce.

We shall establish this truth in the following axiom: there are very evident proofs sufficient to place it on a firm foundation. First, that Spain gained nothing by its possession of and trade with America when it did not employ there its own capital, that is to say, the

product of its own land and labour. Second, that Bordeaux (not to mention the other ports of France, and those of England and Holland) employs in its trade with a few islands a greater number of vessels than Spain does with the whole of America; therefore, that this matter of shipping is a factor which very directly affects national prosperity. Third, that the finances of the Exchequer relating to imports to and exports from America probably show a deficit. Fourth, and finally, that the greater part of individual fortunes derived from America could have an influence on national welfare if invested in agriculture and industry, but are of no use at all when they are either saved or spent on luxury goods, almost all of which are produced by foreigners.

VIII

Manufactures, if they are forced, do not promote the national welfare but rather act to its detriment.

It has been and will be a political question very vexed and difficult to settle whether agriculture should take precedence over industry in the development of a nation, or whether the latter should be preferred. Since the needs of the Exchequer are very closely bound up with the ebb and flow of politics, it has seemed necessary to lean towards the second, because it is capable of producing greater revenue and flourishes in the cities where investment is more easily secured; in the end, in so far as the consumer is someone else entirely, it seems that society receives nothing but benefit regardless of the price of the goods manufactured.

For the time being I will omit consideration of [the other side of] the question whether the prosperity of the kingdom has to be based on the development of agriculture, or (to put it more generally) whether the Spanish nation, in terms of its soil, population and location, has to be regarded as agricultural rather than industrial.

It is clear, nevertheless, that the only object of our factories in these past years has been to supply America and accumulate money: with this goal in mind it has seemed that monopoly or preferential rights would eventually decide the issue in our favour and that not only would the American contribute much silver to our industrial enterprises, but also that the corresponding increase of taxes on equivalent foreign goods would produce a new source of riches for the Exchequer.

In accordance with this principle, the establishment of every factory has been decided not so much by the value of its products on the general market as by the approval of the government, whose only criterion has been the attribute of being owned by the nation.

In these cases I call the manufactures “forced.” The government has paid and continues to pay exorbitant stipends to good foreign artisans, as if manufacturing were their exclusive preserve and no artisans could participate except those from abroad, who count only on the protection of the law and the scarcity of their trade, and as if this did not require from the Exchequer sacrifices which all recoil on the nation.

The machinery required for each manufacture is another obstacle to participation, since a factory which does not prosper or makes an inauspicious start, that is to say, one which relies on the fickle attentions of the government, cannot attract significant investment, and can even less buy machinery whose value will be nil as soon as the factory collapses and dies.

By contrast, in countries where industry develops naturally, manufactured goods provide not only for the maintenance and development of the appropriate machinery, but also for the abstract sciences which various professors are continually applying to the [industrial] arts through inventions as useful in themselves as they are for the artisan.

The manufactures of Spain suffer from the following two great disadvantages. Subsidies by the Exchequer (of the same kind as the Bounty^d paid on the export of wheat from England) bring it about that on the American market our manufactured goods are valued at less than they actually cost to make, and the scarcity of machinery, supposing that equal efficiency in the work is otherwise attainable, always rules out an increase in returns from manufacturing, which is directly detrimental to the national balance-sheet.

Given that the prohibition of or excessive duties on foreign products equivalent to those manufactured in Spain applies equally to supplying the needs of our continent and those of the continent of America, it follows that when as explained above the greater value is assigned to manufacturing and the citizenry is minded to support this, it increases the prices not only of luxuries but also of necessities, and ultimately the costs incurred in the important sphere of agriculture.

Thus the artisan relies for his work more on the protectionism of the government than on his ability or diligence: the [industrial] arts are not perfected, and what is worse, the apprentice, who has to make a living from his work, experiences too rapid progress

^d A subsidy granted to exporters of this product.

through the ranks of his art to want to take up agriculture, and this same lack of moderation in the arts comes in the end to promote that love of a comfortable living which, frequently frustrated in his own country, eventually makes him go to seek it in America.

It would be a worthy object for the patriotic societies¹² to analyze and write the history of all the factories established in the last twenty years, considering together in a single philosophical point of view the expenses incurred by the government, the resulting cost to the country, the path from birth to useful life to demise of each factory and, finally, what has emerged from them to foster the increase of the three fundamentals: national wealth, cultivation and population.

It is thus evident that what has resulted from the establishment of national factories overly protected by the government is an unwarranted increase in the price of all our products: an increase which has also migrated to America, promoting illicit trade in spite of the immense costs to the Monarchy of trying to prevent it.

In this way there is no paradox in saying both that without industry a nation is poor and almost defenceless, and that one of the things that makes Spain poor and almost defenceless is the current state of its industry – simply because it is of the forced variety.

A convincing proof that it is not possible to look with the same eyes at the advantages of the American and the European (Axiom III) emerges inevitably from our current trade regimen, which disallows the transportation of any other than national products whatever their value or quality. This provision, just though it may be in itself, discriminates directly against the American, who is not only charged at whatever price is desired, but also prevented from satisfying his desires for all luxuries and some necessities.

Abandon the idea which has led astray so many otherwise most erudite students of politics, namely that Spain can supply America with its manufactures under the protectionist policy of a beneficent government. Separate the interests of one and the other; examine the limitations of industry and, finally, reveal the well-established truth that our manufactures have to be directed first to supplying the peninsula, and only then extended to an overseas trade as peripheral as that with America.

IX

The great number of hands required by the present administration of America is the true source of idleness [among the Spanish population], and of emigration from Spain. Employment or marriage in America guarantees the fortune of any Spaniard, with no need, therefore, for an education or a life of hard work.

In support of this truth it suffices to point out that the desire to settle in America is very common among those who falter in their careers or do not enter one during their younger years, and who will accept any employment whatever, military or civil, at home or in another kingdom. Nor is the only or the most important reason for emigration the actual acceptance of such employment, since the mere desire turns the thoughts of at least the same number as spend almost their whole lives in Madrid away from their own country and from occupations that are simple and useful. In the final analysis, most of those who make the passage each year are relatives of the employees, or else servants or stowaways, all of them counting not on the practice of the mechanical arts, but solely on the pursuit of employment, to which hope not a little has been contributed in recent years by increases in taxes and duties.

Emigration of this kind could very well amount to 1500 able men a year without being able to supply the number of hands needed by our administration, and so, far from prosecuting desertion, our officials find themselves more or less forced to tolerate it in order to strengthen themselves against the growing hostility of the Americans, whose interests are always opposed to those of Spain. For the same reason, the wages for manual labour are kept very high, and even then it is difficult to find anyone who is not too proud to do it. Meanwhile, taverns, shops and even the life of a vagabond are seen as appealing, indeed as objects of envy. Who would believe that in Buenos Aires and Lima, where food of

all kinds is infinitely cheaper than in the cheapest region of Spain, and where the weather is equally mild and fine, a day-labourer with mechanical skills can earn as much as three-and-a-half pieces-of-eight?¹³

This serious problem has three causes: first, the difficulty of living in Spain with some degree of comfort; second, the ease of subsisting in America, since, aside from the exceedingly low cost of food, many means of gaining a living illegally are tolerated there among the Spanish; third, the mixing of races, which is tolerated and even given the official stamp of approval by the granting of military and civil positions to people who do not truly deserve to be called Spanish.

It is no surprise, then, that in such circumstances crimes may be committed with so much impunity that it is very difficult to deter those who give themselves over – and incite others – to vice, so as to encourage them to build their fortunes on the basis of moral principle or to abandon an errant and intemperate life in order to return to their own country for a quiet old age. I venture to suggest, in fact, that their maxims have been carried over to the peninsula in such a way that – the thirst for luxury, comfort and coveting one's neighbour's goods having grown so widespread – people have no thought of achieving them through education or hard work, but rather turn their eyes to America and hope it will provide a speedy recovery for the Monarchy.

Here it is not relevant to mention the last census of Spain, which revealed a considerable increase in population. Foreigners in growing numbers, and in particular the Genovese, are daily replacing the losses due to Spanish emigration to America. The public initiatives of the current reign have increased the number of families; the number employed by the king, particularly in the Treasury and Navy, has grown considerably; the merchant marine, although still somewhat disorganised, has made rapid progress; the paternal care and affection of His Majesty have supported many foreign families of farmers and artisans who came to establish themselves in Spain; the number of unmarried people has diminished; the major contributions to this increase have come from the kingdoms of Cataluña and Valencia, through commerce and agriculture, and the Montañas, the Principality of Asturias and Vizcaya through the hardworking, thrifty and patriotic temperament of their inhabitants.

X

The difficulties of rounding Cape Horn having been surmounted, and several foreign establishments having been founded in California and New Holland, our colonies in the Pacific Ocean are in evident jeopardy of being attacked.

As navigational and geographical knowledge has grown this truth has come to be grounded on deeper foundations. Long experience of our navigation to Lima leaves us in no doubt that Cape Horn is no longer to be feared. It can easily be rounded without losing a man or a sail, and it is even in doubt whether rounding it during the winter might not be safer than doing so in summer.

Now that this obstacle has been set aside, what benefits would not accrue to the European motivated at the same time by glory, greed and the desperate situation of the Spanish, who are divided into two classes, always on the defensive, lovers of property and already imbued with that indolence arising from the warm climate and a settled life?

Nor is survival difficult for an enemy squadron in the Pacific Ocean, and even less so for lone pirates, whose raids have been so damaging to our coasts in this past century. Furthermore, who could fail to feel trepidation about the establishment of Botany Bay, where – since it could provide supplies, and the climate is very suitable for the farming of European crops and animals – a mariner sailing from India would find a secure base from which, after a crossing devoid of worry and risk of three or four months, to come within sight of our colonies, terrorise and sack them? Could we, with the number of ships we presently have, maintain our defences across the whole of this immense region? And even supposing that we could hold our own against the enemy forces, would the costs of maintaining their squadrons, which can trade a few nails for food and provide wages through the hope of a rich haul of booty, be as great as those of our forces, set up in such a

way that they require enormous expenditures of money, which in any case serve only to weaken them?

The deceptive lure of silver and the thirst for conquest will tempt the Russians also to commence hostilities against us. On encountering milder climates and rich conquests, within reach, what's more, of the mines which would make them as unhappy as they made us, what efforts would they not mount to possess them, and what resistance could we offer to stop them?

Nevertheless, if I do not deceive myself, these reflections could lead us to solid principles for organising this immense Monarchy and to removing from the envious and greedy gaze of the other powers all opportunity to disturb our possessions without fear of danger or punishment.

Endnotes

¹ Part II appears to be missing, though this fact has gone unremarked by previous commentators. One might surmise that it did not survive Malaspina's trial and incarceration, but there is no evidence for this or any other speculation.

² John Kendrick (*Portrait* 106) identifies this quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid* (Book II, l. 570). In English it reads: "Wandering, and casting my eyes around, over the whole scene." The two Spanish lines which follow it, which we have translated, may be Malaspina's translation of the Latin, or perhaps, since there is overlap in meaning between the two lines, two alternative translations. Then again, they may be an attempt to amplify the meaning of the quotation and render it applicable to Malaspina's rôle in surveying the Spanish colonies during his voyage. As Kendrick points out (106, n. 21), "*entorno*" appears to be an Hispanicisation of the Italian word "*intorno*."

³ Malaspina is apparently referring to the system whereby trade and commerce within (and perhaps between) the colonies was taxed by the mother country. This system was not reciprocal in any meaningful sense!

⁴ The system of "*encomiendas*" provided not only land, but also "an allocation of Indian labour" (Kendrick 114).

⁵ It is not clear to what precisely Malaspina is here referring; it may be to the profits from Spanish investment in and exports to Holland and France after the War had left both of the latter in dire financial straits. It would not be unusual for someone writing in Spanish in the 18th-century to refer to the Dutch as German.

⁶ The text repeats "*mayor*" – "greater" – as in the previous sentence, but the sense seems to demand its antonym.

⁷ Campeche, on the Yucatan peninsula, was a source of precious logwood (*Haematoxylon campechianum*) for the European market.

⁸ In Uruguay, on the River Plate, and ceded to Portugal by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713).

⁹ In the Treaty of Utrecht, Spain gave England the right to trade with its Atlantic colonies by way of an annual "ship of permission" carrying up to 500 tons. A similar agreement in 1735 extended the privilege, by way of the "ship of registry," to the Pacific colonies. Kendrick (116) suggests tentatively that Malaspina is referring to the first of these concessions.

¹⁰ The so-called "*Asiento*."

¹¹ The Pacific Ocean.

¹² Kendrick (120) conjectures that Malaspina has the *Amigos del País* in mind here.

¹³ In Spanish, "*pesos fuertes*." These silver coins, worth eight *reales* and known alternatively in English as "Spanish dollars," became widespread legal tender at the height of the Spanish Empire.

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