



**Ángel Alloza Aparicio, Francisco Fernández Izquierdo e Elena M. García Guerra,
Instituto de Historia, Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, CSIC, Madrid**

Título da Comunicação: *The inexorable recurrence of fortune and failure: some reflections on Pedro de Valencia's writings, 1555-1620*

Resumo: There is and there was intellectual thinking in times of prosperity and in times of scarcity. When things go well, there exists a tendency to ignore writers who warn against excesses. On the contrary, it seems to be that financial difficulties give way to reflection. Hard present and uncertain future induces melancholy of a perfect past, wish of a better time.

According to Pedro de Valencia, at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century Castile was a “broken boat in tempestuous times”, sick of a serious economic crisis and prisoner of a slow political decline. It was then a time to think about what had happened. It was a time to search for the hole in the bottom of the ship in order to repair it. There certainly were excellent carpenters, but the sea was so swollen that it was impossible to mend the boat. No time to go back to dock any more.

For some of the most eminent brains of early 17th century Spain, the only thing to do about the slow and dying decline was to study the wreckage of the ship. It probably would help to avoid mistakes committed in the recent past. Nevertheless, these writers warned that the most serious problems did not come up from the hole apprehended under the ship, but from the swollen sea it was crossing.

In our paper we would like to introduce some reflections concerning the rise and fall of the Spanish Monarchy during the Sixteenth and early Seventeenth centuries extracted from a text written by Pedro de Valencia (1555-1620), royal chronicler and projector (*arbitrista*) who published extensively -and with great recognition- within the fields of Philosophy, Economy and Society. The text, untitled “Considerations about the disease and health of the kingdom”, and framed at the beginning of the 17th Century, sets out the very monarchy (considered as an empire) and the wealth in bullion flowing from America as mirages of fortune and happiness, because in reality those achievements – Valencia states- carried in their most profound interior the virus of failure, inactivity and poverty.

The author firmly declares the impossibility of solving these serious problems caused by that virus, arguing that it was the very economic and political model what had gone

under the sea. He felt able, however, to prioritize those things that should be rescued, throwing away the rest of them. As example, in such an extreme circumstances, it should be necessary to remove all of the superfluous (empire, reputation, army) and to pay attention to the most immediate (vassals, kingdom, domestic economy).