

***American Globalization, 1492–1850:
Trans-Cultural Consumption in Spanish Latin America***

Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, Ilaria Berti, Omar Svriz-Wucherer, eds
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This book, edited by Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, Ilaria Berti, and Omar Svriz-Wucherer, seeks to analyse almost four centuries of consumerism in the American continent. It tries to counter a historiographical trend that has placed great emphasis on the flow of products and merchandise from the American continent to the rest of the world, and in particular to Europe. This book rather seeks to put on the table the impact that the insertion of an entire continent had on global networks and markets during the Modern Age. This collective work, which foregrounds a multifaceted perspective based on material history, economic history, environmental history, and the history of violence, runs through a series of thirteen chapters, and is divided into three complementary parts. These range respectively from the institutional perspective to food products and non-consumable goods and are organically surrounded by the introduction and final reflections written by Professor Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla of the Pablo de Olavide University of Seville.

The political economy of the Iberian empires in the New World is the subject of the first part, which, in four chapters, seeks to analyse the introduction of Eurasian products into the emerging markets of the New World. Starting with a strong editorial position, Alejandro García-Montón (‘Trans-Imperial, Transnational and Decentralized. The Traffic of African Slaves to Spanish America and Across the Isthmus of Panama, 1508–1651’) deals with enslaved people—one of the main commodities that left the Old World for America, a commodity that would radically affect the history of the New World in all its aspects, from the economic production of its resources to the contemporary cultural and demographic configuration of the continent. The trafficking of enslaved people radically transformed the early modern world by being one of the first regulated commercial practices at a trans-imperial and transnational level, representing in its Iberian approach a projection of the political economy itself of the entire Spanish Empire, but above all by generating a fundamental economic and cultural impact that can be seen throughout the continent and specifically in the author’s case study, which is the isthmus of Panama.

Subsequently, José Manuel Díaz Blanco (‘“The Reader’s Information” and Norte de la Contratación: The Translation and Circulation of Commercial Information Between

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Seville and London Around 1700') presents one of the most elegant chapters of the entire volume, with an interesting approach to the circuits of circulation of commercial information between enemy colonial powers; it focuses on the translation of a Spanish text that dealt with the Seville-based Casa de Contratación, written by José de Veitia in 1672 and translated as *The Spanish Rule of Trade to the West Indies* by John Stevens circa 1700. With a quick pace and supported by a series of images that allow us to better visualise his plot (being the only chapter of the entire work that includes more than three images or maps, in a volume with such a clearly descriptive character), the author leads us to reflect on information networks in early modernity and, likewise, to recognise the processes of adaptation and training in the commercial and institutional structures that merchants had to undergo to trade with their foreign counterparts.

The globalisation of American consumer markets has not been without paradoxes. Manuel Díaz-Ordóñez ('European Imperialism, War, Strategic Commodities and Ecological Limits. The Diffusion of Hemp in Spanish South America and Its Ghost Fibers') tells us that an essential component of the first globalisation was the availability of the materials to sustain the maritime infrastructure that enabled transatlantic travel. In this order of ideas, the consumption, processing, and, above all, production of hemp was one of the main objectives of the various European empires in the New World. But as the author notes, cultivating this plant ran counter to the mercantilist theses established between Europe and America. The Spanish Empire was determined to find a way to set up these plantations, but it could only secure an effective supply of raw material for the ships of the Pacific Ocean, supplied from Chile, while those of the Atlantic, such as the Havana shipyard, depended exclusively on the production of the Iberian Peninsula or even on imports from Russia. The author also highlights the ecological conditions that had to be overcome to maintain the flow of production of this raw material in the American continent.

At the end of the first part, Amelia Almorza Hidalgo ('Spanish Women as Agents for a New Material Culture in Colonial Spanish America') presents a section on Spanish women who travelled to the New World during the period of conquest and colonisation and became agents of change by adopting a new material culture. The author's work essentially seeks to connect the flow of people with the flow of objects during the first globalisation and the establishment of a colonial society in the New World, detaching itself somewhat from the general topics that have been discussed about the conquest and then exploitation of the American lands of the Spanish Empire. Instead, Almorza Hidalgo exposes how this globalisation began to be transformed through the establishment of markets and consumers of manufactured products on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In this space the role of Spanish women who travelled to the New World and their consumption patterns allow to demonstrate the fundamental impact on the economy and on colonial society of this transit of objects, especially fine fabrics, and that the movement of people was directly connected to the movement of goods.

Gregorio Saldarriaga ('The Introduction of Poultry Farming to the Indigenous People of the New Kingdom of Granada, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries') opens the second part of this volume by discussing the introduction and diffusion of poultry for human consumption in the Kingdom of New Granada, with a focus on indigenous settlements during the first colonial stage until the mid-seventeenth century. From extensive archival documentation, the importance of this agricultural product imported from the Old World becomes evident. Unlike other livestock such as cows, sheep, or pigs, was transversal to all castes and ethnic groups in America due to its capacity for reproduction and maintenance in small spaces. The author also explains how the absence of taxation in poultry breeding and trade enabled indigenous communities to integrate this economic practice and benefit from it in a significant way, as observed throughout the territory of New Granada, with certain regional differences in demographic terms. This is an example of a complex economic network that emerged from the introduction of a transatlantic product.

Early exchanges between Europeans and Native Americans were not peaceful; to speak of barter or ransom is, according to Luis Miguel Córdoba Ochoa, an elegant way of describing the brutal phases of exchange during the first part of the conquest of the American continent. In this chapter ('Gifts, Imitation, Violence and Social Change. The Introduction of European Products in the First Decades of the American Conquest'), addressing how these practices contributed to the social changes brought about by the colonial order, he takes us through various primary sources to different spaces and moments of the early conquest. From the Caribbean through the Darién to Peru, Córdoba Ochoa discusses the social conditions that were violently imposed through indoctrination campaigns by the Church, and through the population's submission to the new social order of the Spanish colonial administration. He shows the slow but sustained transformation of the use of violence into forms of consumption and commerce that were functional to a new social hierarchy.

The next chapter, written by Bethany Aram and Manel García-Falcón ('Rice Revisited From Colonial Panama. Its Cultivation and Exportation'), focuses on what is today one of the essential products of Latin American agriculture and gastronomy: rice. In the specific case studied in this chapter, rice reached the Isthmus of Panama through the cultural influence of the enslaved people of West Africa, who turned their production and consumption into a perennial and crucial effect of early globalisation in this region of Central America, while highlighting the decisive role of African blacks and Creoles in the consolidation of the first urban and agricultural centres of the isthmus. The authors add that, due to the beneficial geographical location of this region, this product expanded and thrived in other spaces of Hispanic America, taking into account the various species of the plant, its form of trade, and its final recipients.

Ilaria Berti, on the other hand ('In the Kitchen. Slave Agency and African Cuisine in the West Indies'), presents an analysis of the Caribbean colonies, whether Spanish or British, where through the cooks and kitchens it is possible to trace the agency that the enslaved people imprinted on the gastronomy of the region as a testimony of their

African heritage. When they mixed with new products and raw materials it resulted in dishes that are generally seen as traditional or typical of a region but in reality, they are the outcome of a network of trade and economic and cultural exchange based on a system of colonial domination. These dishes, then, cease to be considered typical and rather become a global culinary amalgam as is the case of ‘ajiaco’ in Cuban cuisine.

Closing this second part on empire food is the chapter by Rebecca Earle (‘Food, Colonialism and the Quantum of Happiness’), which traces various strategies from the European colonial metropolis for introducing diverse food products originating in America or Oceania into the diet of their subjects. From failed attempts such as arrowroot to plants that are still in vogue such as quinoa, Earle focuses on two star products—the breadfruit from Oceania and the potato from the Andes—whose nutritional qualities were almost immediately clear to Europeans. The chapter narrates in a very informative way the processes of transplantation, with all the logistics that it required, of both crops to other continents, with the aim of sustaining the population with a resistant, nutritious, and cheap product. Again, from a colonialist logic, the physical wellbeing of the primary labour force was fundamental for the extraction of resources, as Earle shows, which in the terms of the Enlightenment, following authors such as the Marquis de Chastellux and Malthus, would be considered the foundation of public happiness.

Beginning the last part of this volume is the chapter written by José L. Gasch-Tomás (‘Elites, Women and Chinese Porcelain in New Spain and in Andalusia, circa 1600’) who, based on an important documentary collection, seeks to refute the generalised conception about the transit and consumption of Chinese porcelain in European markets. Despite being considered a luxury product acquired only by the elites, and despite its entry into the European economy through the commercial companies of the northern European empires, Gasch underscores that it was actually through the route of the Manila galleon—connecting the Philippines to New Spain and from there to Seville—that, since the beginning of the seventeenth century, this commodity flooded the European markets. The author also compares the patterns of consumption of porcelain both in the Old and in the New World, demonstrating that this product was much more popular among various strata of the population in Mexico than in Seville. This result also sheds light on the demand and the importance of the trade route that sustained the Chinese porcelain trade.

The next chapter (‘“That in the Reducciones Had Been Noise of Weapons ...” The Introduction of Firearms in the Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Missions of Paraguay’) examines how some of the most elaborate European manufactures spread into the most remote regions of the American continent. Omar Svriz-Wucherer discusses the arrival of firearms at the missions and the reductions that the Jesuits established in Paraguay, especially during the beginning of the seventeenth century. In an interesting digression, the author proposes the possible legal or illegal trade routes where perhaps one of the most advanced technological products in Europe came into the hands of some of the most isolated indigenous communities on the continent, thus generating

a disruption in the social fabric of these communities and in the ways in which the war developed throughout the continent. Fernando Quiles closes this part of the book with a chapter on the annual Portobello fair ("Transatlantic Markets and the Consumption of Sevillian Art in the Viceroyalty of Peru. The Portobello Fairs in Tierra Firme (Seventeenth Century)") and its implications for regional trade in the Caribbean, continental, transatlantic, with its connection with Seville, and ultimately, global. The witnesses of this event, which took place once a year in the city on the Isthmus of Panama, tell us that no monarch had in his domains a fair as powerful as the one of Portobello, and that it was the envy of all nations: here sometimes twenty, thirty, or forty million pesos in gold and silver could be seen, as well as an endless number of agricultural products of all the corners of Hispanic America (269). In addition to its recognised economic value, the author, by focusing on the consumption of Sevillian art in the viceroyalty of Peru, emphasises the importance of the development of the arts and the exchange of works and styles that occurred at the fair throughout the seventeenth century, which served as a space for both economic and cultural exchange.

In conclusion, this volume represents a new necessary benchmark on the interplay between the Americas and consumption during the early modern globalisation. The three parts of this volume, along with the contributions of each author, fulfil their mission by allowing us to rethink in a more balanced way the main conceptions about the integration of American markets and products into a global economy, and by observing this process from the perspective of the insertion and consumption of products and manufactures from the Old World in the new continent. Although the volume could have benefited from the inclusion of graphic and visual elements that would have made its historical analysis clearer and more effective, it collectively achieves its objective of reconsidering these commodity exchanges.

However, as we are reminded by the last chapter, authored by the general editor Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla ('From Goods to Commodities in Spanish America. Structural Changes and Ecological Globalization from the Perspective of the European History of Consumption'), this volume tacitly raises questions about the present in which it is written as well as about the past to which it refers—like any serious history book. As such, it allows us to rethink and understand the scope of contemporary economic dynamics through the study of consumerism in the United States. Transoceanic trade, the shift in trade poles, and the need to analyse demand and consumption variables are indeed questions that can and should be applied to the economy of the first centuries of early globalisation, as well as to our present.