Presentation of the Research Project. Cross-Cultural Exchanges during European Expansion[1]

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Approaching and Dividing Cultures: New Goods between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, 1492-1824

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[1] Text in progress. Please ask for permission to quote it. I decided to present this paper with a minimum of footnotes in the understanding that this is a provisional draft. They will be added in the final version for publication.

A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1.a.- Objectives

In its first proposal, made one year ago, the research team, "Europe, the Mediterranean World and its Atlantic diffusion" proposed centering its work during the next years on the study of products coming to Europe form the other side of the Atlantic and their reception and impact on Andalusian and European societies in general during the early modern period. Attention would be devoted to a wide range of goods and plants, some of them nearly forgotten today. At the same time, certain plants that followed completely different paths, like cacao, tobacco and coca, would be examined with particular interest. The aim was to inquire into the process of distribution from America and its impact on very specific aspects of collective mentalities, medicine, consumption, economy, war and finances, sociability and the formation of collective identities; all as a form of improving our knowledge of the peninsular societies of the time and as a way of understanding the formation of notions of alterity between Europe and other civilizations like those at the heart of the Old World.

This study will be undertaken by considering a series of questions that in themselves respond to multi-disciplinary criteria rooted in economic and fiscal history as well as political history and the history of international relations, the history of consumption and sociability, socio-cultural history and the history of science, taking trans-"national" history and comparative history on a global scale as its points of departure.

Framed within new currents and ways of seeing Atlantic History, this study, far from considering only the colonizing influence of the Old World upon America, seeks to elucidate America's impact on Europe at different levels. This study, moreover, will highlight the exceptional role of Andalusia in this decisive phase of the process of globalization, which also had important ecological implications. At the same time, it attempts to insert Atlantic history into a more global process of the circulation of goods on a planetary scale, in which the Atlantic played an essential role. This last point is crucial, for if, on the one hand, current historiography revindicates the Atlantic and particularly the Southern Atlantic as essential spaces in the process of globalization, it is no less certain that a very elevated proportion of the recent production in the field of global history pays particular attention to the connections (and comparisons) between Asia and Europe, as well as the networks woven between areas situated in the northern hemisphere of the globe, thus marginalizing a very rich historiography on the former Portuguese and Spanish Empires and, even more essentially, about Latin America.

The intention here is, on the one hand, to propose the methodological premises and perspectives that I find adequate for our work. At the same time, I would like to establish a general historical framework within which I believe we should situate many of our reflections. The point of departure is very clear: although we limit ourselves to the Atlantic world and the circulation of products between America and Europe (especially, in this meeting, from America to Europe), it is obvious that these exchanges should be understood within a more global context and from an angle of cross-cultural exchanges

that they, in fact, entailed. The goal here is to connect with the history of globalization and with some of its most tangible problems and concerns today. Even at the risk of extending this text, I will conclude with a series of proposals on problems and perspectives for development that have a basic, instrumental value for our work in the upcoming years.

1.b.- Methods and approaches: Global, Trans-national and Comparative History in interdisciplinary perspective.

A proposal like this one is based on methods and approaches inherent in what we could call the "new" global history, trans-"national" history and comparative history. Even if only to coordinate future contributions, I would like to make a series of comments on these three concepts.

The first area, global history, has undergone frankly extraordinary development during the last years. As P. O'Brien attempted to formalize the concept in a nearly programmatic article, global history today encompasses history that pertains to contact between diverse civilizations rather than necessarily affecting the whole globe.[2] Even Herodotus, by writing the history of the Greeks in relation to other peoples, was doing something that heralded, or entailed, global history. On the other hand, it appears obvious, that when historians speak about global history, we do not refer to the old "World History" that considered the history of different civilizations as super-imposed and, at times, even independent; the history of the world as the sum and superposition of that of the peoples that comprised it, along the lines, for example, of the classic *Columbia History of the World*,[3] or the well-worn and no less pernicious "Historia Universal" of the classic Spanish curricular plans that, in this last case, nearly became the old history of old Europe.

Global history today is more the history of the relations between different peoples on the planet. In this sense, global history examines, above all, the interferences among these peoples, and the effects of these interferences upon each people, more than the history of each of them. One of the most emblematic and influential examples of this type of history is the book by C. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914. Global Connections and Comparisons,*[4] whose title appears significant in itself. As is well known, in this volume, the author attempts to explain the great historical developments of the nineteenth century, such as the formation of modern states, the great revolutions of the late eighteenth century, and the bourgeois revolution, etc., highlighting either the

[2] P. O'Brien, "Historiographical traditions and modern imperatives for the restoration of global history" in *The Journal of Global History*, no. 1 (2005) Vol. 1, pp. 3-40.

[3] J. Garraty and P. Gay (eds.), *Columbia History of the World* (Harper and Row, New York, Evanston, San Francisco and London, 1972).

[4] C. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914. Global Connections and Comparisons*. Oxford, Blackwell, 2004.

connections between them, the international component of the forces that provoked them, or communications between diverse regions of the planet. In other words, this perspective attempts to relate local (or national, in some cases) developments and forces to those of a more trans-national nature. In this way, moreover, the author surpasses the traditional concept of the history of international relations, normally linked to the diplomatic history of international relations among diverse nation-states, to emphasize the contacts among peoples and social groups situated within different national concepts or emerging nation-states.

Far from a minor point, especially in the context of this workshop, these trends in global history connect fully with the idea of trans-"national" history[5], a concept itself very influenced by ideas related to the so-called *entangled history* o *connected history*, and the theory of networks and mediation, and that I find fundamental in order to understand the direction that the history of consumption and that of the circulation of new goods is taking today. This concept refers, above all, to the study of the interactions among different social or cultural groups or peoples of the planet. It has been developed especially by S. Subrahmanyan some years ago and is concerned with the study of social networks, in his case the Portuguese commercial networks in Southwest Asia, which projected themselves upon diverse cultural and socio-political spaces and brought individuals pertaining to them into contact with each other.[6] As a result of an application of network theory, the concept of linked histories situates itself especially on the level of social interactions. These interactions, considered as possessing very strong cultural and economic components, offer a divergence from the old political history, if not an alternative to it, and, consequently, to traditional international and diplomatic history. Also situated in this field, the concept of trans-"national" history obviously and more explicitly emphasizes the character of the imagined communities – in the broadest reading, not necessarily "nations" in the modern sense of the term – in which the interacting networks can be located.

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[5] Among many other works, as the concept has become stylish, see C. A. Bayly, S. Beckert, M. Conne, I. Hofmeyr, W. Kozol and P. Seed, "AHR Conversation: on Transnational History", in *The American Historical Review,* no 5 (December 2006) Vol III, p. 2, and also B. Yun Casalilla, "Estados, naciones y regiones en perspectiva europea. Propuestas para una historia comparada y transnacional" in *Alcores* no. 2 (2006), pp. 13-35.

[6] See, among others, *Explorations in connected history. Mughals and Franks.* Oxford, 2005. Referido al caso español, "Holding the World in Balance: The Connected Histories of the Iberian Overseas Empires, 1500–1640" en *The American Historical Review*, núm. 5 (Diciembre 2007), 1359-85, and S. Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde. Histoire d'une mondialisation,* Paris, 2004 and « Les mondes mêlés de la monarchie catholique et autres « connected histories » » en *Annales HSC*, núm. 1 (enero- febrero 2001), 85-117.

The key to this analytical perspective lies not only, or not mainly, in the study of these relations. Hence the importance of network theory, which examines the mediators and agents who interact in different societies. From this perspective, the merchants who constitute these networks (and, at times, diasporas), the vehicles of this mediation, being persons or objects, travellers in general, who displace themselves from one society to another, diplomats, systems of communication (from the press to the circulation of books), institutions of trans-"national" character (from religious orders to NGOs), acquire unusual importance. Yet as or more important, appear the effects of these contacts. In other words, the way in which diverse societies are transformed by contact with others, and the way in which this contact makes them conscious of these others and of themselves. Thus the point of interest lies in how different imagined communities receive, reject, adapt and even recycle the influences of other societies. This perspective, which connects fully with the history of "cultural transfers", emphasizes, moreover and in distinction to the history of "cultural transfers", reciprocity between the communities that interact, even in the case of asymmetrical relations of power, influence, and reciprocal transformative capacity between them. For this reason, *entangled history* has often also been considered a form of *histoire croisée*.

The other logical development has been comparative history. In fact, this advance could not be otherwise for two reasons: A global history needs to examine the singularity of the evolution of each of the societies it studies. For this reason, a comparison is imposed, leading to the discovery of similarities and differences. One of the most emblematic examples of this type of problem may be the excellent book by K. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, in which the author finds himself obliged to compare areas of Europe and Asia, especially China, in order to explain the exceptional economic development of the West beginning with industrialization.[7] Yet the same book also exemplifies the second reason reinforcing the development of comparative history: in the moment that global history is a connected history concerned with the connections between civilizations and with the effects of these connections, the comparison of these effects is more than immediate. Moreover, it is even obligatory in order to explain the divergent or convergent course of different societies. The book by Pomeranz, is a study of the way in which East and West have reacted and evolved through mutual contacts and the political, economic, and even ecological, contexts of available resources existing between them.

From the standpoint of the social sciences and the analysis of the sources, we propose to undertake multi-disciplinary research. On the one hand, we will approach the products that circulated in the Atlantic toward Europe between c. 1500 and c. 1800 through the formation of diverse working hypotheses and, therefore, applying the assumptions of the different social sciences. Hence it interests us – as will be seen in the following lines – to consider the perspective developed by anthropologists such as Appadurai who have seen the circulation of goods and contacts that different societies

[7] K. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

used to establish themselves as a derivation of the "social life of things"; or, under the consideration that objects are cultural products and constitute bridges of cultural interference between far-away societies when circulating among them. This perspective, although subject to important criticisms, has important heuristic possibilities for our work.

At the same time, from the viewpoint of the cultural history of science, it is of vital importance to be able to interpret the reactions and the debates inspired by the circulation of knowledge, medicine and religion among different societies. The history of the economy and particularly the political economy also offers a priceless conceptual framework. It does so because these products not only had (well-known) commercial importance in many cases, but also because they were often keys to the process of the formation of fiscal states; especially beginning in the eighteenth century in Europe. In this way, neither their circulation, nor their consumption, nor their use, nor the way they acted in diverse societies could be understood without consideration of the political economies and institutional systems of the countries and empires in whose geo-political spaces they were immersed. Finally, it is evident that a project like this one should draw upon international history in its many dimensions. The products to which we have referred, precisely for their economic value and because they became the backbone of the different political economies and the reason for the existence of its institution in many cases, caused wars, international tensions and negotiations that historians often explain by invoking excessively general arguments about international rivalries.

CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGES DURING EUROPEAN EXPANSION

Do cultures dialogue only through oral and written words or also through the exchange of material goods? Anthropologists and historians completely agree on this matter: cross-cultural exchanges of objects and goods are also a means of intercultural dialogue. Societies interact by transferring pieces of their material cultures, by exchanging values, social habits and practices or political representations, all of them frequently inherent to those objects. By rejecting those exchanges, societies also reject each other. Very often this cross-cultural relationship involves violence and hate, as well as war and conflict. Such an exchange has been so intense in the long run that it is impossible to encapsulate it in a few pages. Yet some examples can be suggestive of the ways in which cultural intertwining has effected and will continue to affect the lives of human beings. To such an end the dramatic change in the history of humanity that took place after 1492 is taken here as a starting point for a general and necessarily incomplete reflection.

The aim of the following section is precisely to reveal how a good amount of products circulated on a global scale during the first centuries of European expansion. As indicated, the goal is to establish a general historical framework for our research, but also to connect with a series of assumptions about the process of globalization, often presented from the present as a desirable, linear development toward the convergence of the societies of the globe.

2.a.- Borders and cross-cultural networks during European Expansion.

Around 1492, Europe still lived in the expansive wave that had drawn it out of the crises of the fourteenth century and the terrors of the black plague. This expansion was clear in the Iberian kingdoms and in their Atlantic projection. Even to the east, where the advance of the Turk challenged this process in the Mediterranean, the Slavs were able to unify different territories with their capital in Moscow under the authority of the Tsars. Acting as a contention wall against the Turkish and the Mongolians from Central Asia, by 1500 they were ready to initiate their advance from Russia to the Pacific, beyond the river Volga and the Urals.

But Christian European civilization was not the only one in expansion. Islamic civilization was particularly unrestrained. The Ottomans conquered Anatolia up to Constantinople (1453) and also Egypt and parts of North-Africa. From Egypt and from Morocco the diffusion of Islam continued towards South and Central Africa as well as towards the East, sometimes based on conquest, other times on religious expansion facilitated through merchant networks. Islam also lengthened its frontiers towards South-East Asia and Indonesia. China had to resist the attacks of Tamerlane from Central Asia but in the fifteenth century was able to expand and to create tributary links within Tibet and its southern neighbors.

Rather than relaxing the tension on those borders among peoples and civilizations, the discovery and conquest of America enhanced European expansion and brought to light more frontiers among human beings. America appeared to the eyes of people like the Pizarros, Cortés or Valdivia as a conflictual and religious frontier to break by any means, including violence and destruction. After Vasco da Gama's voyage to India circumventing Africa (1497), the presence of the Portuguese in Asia led to the clash between Christians and Muslims in the East, as well as the collision of Europeans and Chinese. In the central and western Mediterranean, the opposition between Christianity and Islam increased and, though defeated in Lepanto (1571), the Ottomans were able to reach the walls of Vienna in 1529 and again in 1683. During this epoch tensions between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia also increased. The Shah Abbas I of Persia fought the Uzbecks and the Kurds and dislodged the Portuguese from Bahrain (1602) and, with British help, from Hormuz (1622). The competition for America's raw materials and for Asian products enhanced the opposition and led to war between the Iberian empires, the English and the Dutch, particularly after the religious division and the Dutch revolt. Since the end of the sixteenth century new mercantilist ideas were formulated, which stressed the need to create, defend and fight for external markets as a way to develop domestic economies. The advance of the Russians to the East materialized in the destruction of the Tartar *Khanates* between 1552 and 1598. Within Europe the divisions between Protestants and Catholics created other frontiers many times even more important than national (proto-national, one should say) boundaries.

The Chinese and Japanese empires had adopted a "defensive and isolationist attitude", which opened the field of commerce to Europeans. But even there the Manchu's expansive political system led them to attack Ming China which ended with its conquest by 1640 and the rise of the Qing dynasty. The Islamic empires maintained their pressures on South-East Asia thus clashing with the Portuguese. The Mughal Empire "stretched from Afganistan … until [it] encompassed practically all of India at the end of the seventeenth century" (Céspedes del Castillo).

Thus, sixteenth century world history was shaped by clashes and conflicts between different civilizations. The so-called European expansion is obviously one, and only one, of the main forces; though it is possible to think that it was also a reason for increasing long-distance tensions and war. These long-distance tensions led step by step, however, to increasing cross-cultural exchanges, based on different communication networks.

The emergence and consolidation of the Portuguese and Spanish Empires permitted the creation, or the enhancement in other cases, of global (or proto-global) networks of officials, soldiers and travelers who covered unprecedented distances. The fact appears especially clear in the Spanish projection over America, which mobilized a network of university graduates and soldiers – most of them with previous experience in Flanders and European wars in general. Articulated around viceroyalties, audiences, cities, ports, defensive enclaves, etc., these networks would be the key to power and to administering the empire. Although much weaker in numerical terms, at least until the eighteenth century, this process was duplicated by the expansion of the Portuguese, Dutch and English in America and in Asia. All of these groups developed empires based on their capacity to create spaces for institutional and personal communication.

Though P. Burke stated that it is excessive to talk of an "information monopoly" of the medieval church in Europe, there is no doubt that the Catholic Church maintained a very relevant position in the creation and functioning of cross-cultural global exchanges. Dominicans and Franciscans were the pioneers in this process, the outcome being a network of ecclesiastical institutions whose members were in constant contact. The Jesuits, nevertheless, composed the densest socially-active network. Their presence in America and Asia dates from the year of the *Societatis Ihesus'* foundation. In 1541, Francis Xavier reached Goa, from where the *Compañía* expanded to China, where it would be very active. It was already in Brazil in the 1560s. One should think of these religious orders not only in terms of the transmission of beliefs, but also in terms of a dense network of communication and of contact with local societies. Franciscans and Jesuits, for example, were extremely active in the production of grammars and dictionaries of local languages, from Quechua to Nahuatl and from Vietnamese to Japanese. All created human networks essential for the transfer of information. The *Jesuits' Letters*, for example, are excellent proof of how a web of correspondence among members spread all over the world could be used as a tool for the communication of news and knowledge within a truly multilateral system.

All this came in the company of great migratory movements. From 1500 till 1650 about 500.000 Spaniards crossed (legally) the Atlantic towards America. Though a small country, Portugal's emigration to Asia, Africa and America was also important in cultural terms, as was the movement of English, Irish and Dutch to the New World. The slave traffic from Africa to America (and also to Europe) was crucial too. By the 1550s the Spanish chronicler G. Fernández de Oviedo called Hispaniola "New Guinea" in allusion to the presence of African cultures and African peoples on the island, and by 1650 "Africans were the majority of new settlers in the new Atlantic world" (J. Thornton). Great numbers of Arabs immigrated to India and the Asian Southeast. The Russian communities increased in Central Asia due to the above-mentioned reasons. Jewish immigration from Europe to America is a very well-known phenomenon, but Jews also spread to certain areas of Asia and the Ottoman Empire.

The consequence of these networks was the rise of many superposed sets of connections, some of them very modern. Thus, the outcome of displacement was always the blend of cultures and cultural exchanges. According to J. Thornton, in an assertion referring to the Atlantic but *mutatis mutandis* containing a more global significance- "dis-enclavement […] not only increased communication" but contributed to "the reshaping of whole societies and to the creation of a 'New World'". Though historians today tend to diminish the importance of the so-called "printing revolution", books and printed pamphlets had a great impact on international contacts. Print permitted the massive production of the same ideas and images (thanks to engravings) with the highest degree of precision and accuracy with respect to the original, which is crucial for the transmission of ideas in fields such as religion, natural history, botany, the description of animals and landscapes, warships, etc. Particular printers and publishers such as *Plantinus* in Antwerp were very important in book traffic from Seville to the New World. International postal services, though very precarious compared with today's, also developed in this epoch. The *Tassis* family created in Spain the first official postal service of Europe and also expanded it to Italy and America. Traders involved in international commerce created and developed their own networks of correspondence and the practice of traders acting as mediators in others' correspondence increased, as letters between Spain and America testify. The large mercantile networks created by the Dutch around the GWIC (*Geoctroyeerde Westindische Compagnie*) and the VOC (*Vereenidge Oostindische Compagnie*) had the same effect on the circulation of gazettes and correspondence among private people.

Something emerges out of all of this that needs to be emphasized. Not only in Europe, but also on other continents and among all of them, networks of traders competed with religious networks and other social nets as the underpinnings of information webs and cross-cultural exchanges. From the sixteenth century onwards, long distances enhanced the protagonism of traders as the base for intercontinental communication. Furthermore, the study of commerce as an economic phenomenon has sometimes hid the role of merchants as social agents crossing national boundaries. The fact that religion traveled in the Islamic world and between it and the Far East through trade networks is very meaningful in this sense. Contact between European and Chinese traders, or among traders from one area and the inhabitants of another, was important not only because they exchanged commodities, but because their very simple contact led to the commoditization of the different products they used in their day-to-day lives. The expansion of tobacco as a habit of seamen and traders operating in the Caribbean that "infected" their partners in Seville and Amsterdam is an excellent example. Then, in a second step, tobacco became a commodity, traders became merchants and the enormous power of international trade as a machinery for cultural exchange operated. The key point for our argument is thus the enormous expansion of contacts among traders all around the world, among the Portuguese and Spanish and Dutch, and the English and Italians, among the Indians and Indonesians, Chinese and Japanese, or among all of them and the Philippines and, through the Pacific, the subjects of the Spanish king in New Spain.

Something crucial, an unprecedented phenomenon, cooperated with and superseded this: the enormous circulation of silver across the world that the Spanish exploitation of American mines produced. According to W. Barret, and this point is also crucial for our research, America may have produced 80% of the world's silver during

the seventeenth century. But more importantly, from America to Asia, through the Pacific, or to Europe and then to Africa and Asia, a global belt of silver enhanced merchant networks, thus contributing to the commoditization of goods, or catapulting to a world level commodities previously only locally traded.

2.b.- Sharing the World from the South. "New" Goods from China to Mexico and from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Though still small in relative terms, the exchanges among different cultures were evident at different levels.

Many years ago Nikolai I. Vavilov established that of 640 of the most important cultivated plants, 100 were contributed by the New World. This does not seem like much and even corroborates the idea of the superior influence of Eurasia and Africa. But it should be said that this estimate reflected the result of only some centuries of exchanges with the New World in comparisons with millennia of intense contacts within the Old World. New discoveries created, however, webs of diffusion for plants beyond political, religious or societal borders in many different directions, which included the four continents and not only Europe, as an excessively Eurocentric perspective has underlined for decades. The American origins and the diffusion of sweet potatoes, cacao, tobacco, maize, tomatoes, pineapples, papaya, cochineal, vanilla, squash, chilies, pumpkins, and other plants is well known. But these products did not come directly to Europe and did not remain here. Before 1550 maize of American origin had been introduced into the Cape Verde islands and West Africa and by the seventeenth century was cultivated in Sudan, Congo and Angola. By that time it was known also in Zanzibar and East Africa. Peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea*) were already cultivated in Senegambia in the 1560s and after some decades they were also known in India and China. There were crops of "American origin –maize, manioc, sweet potatoes, peanuts, pumpkins, squashes, and chilies- in India, Indonesia and China as early as the sixteenth century" (A.J.R. Russell-Wood). Tobacco was known in Deccan in the sixteenth century too. And these are only some examples.

Alternatively, the Portuguese, Spaniards and then English and Dutch, brought sugar cane (of Arabic origins) to America. Coffee, also originally from Yemen, was spread on the "new" continent. Cloves, nutmeg and mace were imported by the Portuguese from Asia to Brazil, as well as bananas, red pepper or yams from Africa. Many Eurasian weeds were introduced in the New World. Already in 1555 the Aztecs had a name for the European clover: *Castilian ocoxichitli*. A number of new species of animals, horses, pigs, mules, cows and others populated huge areas of the new continent. The vine, the olive-tree, some species of wheat, the fig-tree and other crops of European origin were soon part of American landscapes.

Fifteenth and sixteenth-century Europeans were especially open to the idea of experimenting new cures and this made plants and herbs particularly interesting. In part because of these medical reasons, in part because of the logical curiosity that the appearance of new plants and animals from the different areas of the world awakened, treatises on this phenomenon proliferated in all of Europe. There were also more official and political forces. The Portuguese and Spanish crowns sporadically participated in this spirit of curiosity. Charles V tried to encourage and control the discovery and

introduction of new "*drogas y bálsamos*" from America. His son, Philip II, appointed a general cosmographer-chronicler to describe America's resources and ordered the "Geographical Reports" (*Relaciones Generales*) to collect information about any aspect interesting for the Crown, including, for example, tobacco or chocolate, on which he commissioned a whole treaty from Francisco Hernández in order "to discover and understand their properties and experiment with their varieties" (M. Norton). Apart from these official initiatives, some more private agents, such as the Jesuits, propagated the knowledge of plants, animals and the whole natural history of different continents and civilizations.

By 1600 a convergence process in patterns of consumption in which these goods were present was evident. First Lisbon and then Amsterdam had become huge markets in which Europeans could find the same type of spices that Chinese or Indians consumed. Pepper, cloves and other products had become common in many European recipes. The former was also used for food conservation. European elites liked to dress in Chinese silks. The deep and refulgent red, black and blue colors of their costumes, visible in many paintings of the epoch, were obtained by using big quantities of cochineal from Mexico, brazil-wood and indigo. These three colorants had displaced the weaker medieval dyes to obtain colors that were considered a symbol of distinction among European aristocrats and kings precisely because of their very high cost. Imports from America of some of these commodities skyrocketed since the last decades of the sixteenth century, which explain that their prices, cochineal being a good example, remained stable in spite of the increasing demand. In the last decade of the sixteenth century, merchants from Seville had accepted the consumption of chocolate from Mexico and this product attracted Philip IV's courtesans as well as the king himself, who seems to have considered it a good aphrodisiac. By then, links between the courts in Madrid and Vienna had facilitated the spread of chocolate also in Austria and Central Europe. It was the zenith of the Spanish fashion. Since 1600 a new product, so far restricted to the consumption of seamen and traders with America, tobacco, was becoming familiar for many Europeans, taverns and squares becoming the places of sociability that facilitated such a process. The possibilities of adapting the ways of consumption and the quality of the product -the two main factors affecting the price- to the acquisitive power of different social strata proved key to its expansion. A bit later, tea, mainly from Asia and later from America, would become the drink of the Dutch and English elites. Current studies by J. L. Gasch on the city of Mexico in New Spain are showing that Chinese silk was profusely consumed by that city's social elites, who used it in larger quantities than their counterparts in Seville or Madrid. The same could be said for Chinese furniture and other domestic products. Though many of these commodities came directly to Europe, it is also evident that America –the process is also visible in Peru and more in particular among Lima's elites- was playing a crucial role in their globalization. In this sense the process of globalization of some Asian goods was not Eurocentric at all.

The previous examples have been chosen intentionally. They reveal that a very important impetus for the first globalization and the impact of the Atlantic in a global world came from the South.

2.c..- Diffusion, adoption, "cultural translation", rejection and violence.

From a European perspective, all of this contained a good deal of exoticism, as well as the gusto for collecting, a hobby on which European elites were very keen. But such interests also reveal that an increasing sense of cosmopolitanism was arising among the cultivated elites in Europe, America and Asia as a consequence of more regular contact with other civilizations. J. Brotton has shown that this already happened in the fifteenth century. The rich collections of Chinese and Japanese art that the Medici gathered in Florence provide excellent proof of how this trend continued during the following centuries. Contacts multiplied the feeling of living together with other civilizations. In a description of Mexico of this epoch written in Nahuatl, the author claimed as a goal the possibility of finding any type of commodity there from any part of the world. This case is only one among many.

As always in history, cross-cultural exchanges and intercultural dialogue were, however, very complex. The very same networks that we have described had their problems. Trade was very often interrupted by war, as was the case of Atlantic trade. Warfare, together with piracy, was also a problem not only in the Atlantic, but also in many other areas of the world, such as the China Sea, where Japanese and Chinese corsairs created many problems in trade with the Spanish and Portuguese. Distance was a real problem in this period and distance, combined with climate, could have a decisive impact, as in the case of voyages from Europe to America or in the Indian Ocean, where seasonal monsoons made travel impossible. The very same process that we have described had its social limits. Societies do not communicate or trade automatically, nor do the goods of each of them pass to the other without cultural, political or economic filters.

Some years ago, J. H. Elliott called attention to the fact that for decades Europe and more in particular Spanish societies were quite indifferent or very scarcely interested in American societies. Later on, when the interest became a fashion, Europeans tried to fit the new reality into their own intellectual schemes. It was then that references to classical antiquity were used to try to decipher a society that was not comprehensible from their own perspective. Like the Chinese when they expanded to the Asian Southeast, the Spaniards saw in America just what they wanted to see. The image of an intelligent observer, like Fernández de Oviedo, trying to describe a rare tree by alluding to the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci or Andrea Mantegna is perhaps one of the most telling stories that can be quoted in this respect. But there were thousands of people like him. The engravings produced by Jean Léry or Teodor De Bry are also very meaningful in the complexity of an intercultural dialogue whose initial and crucial problem was the impossibility of adapting a new reality to old stereotypes and the difficulty of understanding it in itself without getting lost in intellectual "translation". It is known that a crucial process in the history of humanity, like the Las Casas debate on human nature or the Indians, was affected by economic and political interests, but it is obvious that there was an initial dilemma of "classification" within the Aristotelian schemes, which did not foresee the existence of Amerindians.

Power and the need to preserve one's own ideas were crucial in many cases. S. Harrit has pointed out that in spite of contact and exchanges, Europeans failed to export to China "the very things deemed central to the West's scientific revolution". This was in part because of the slow circulation –in comparison with objects and practices- of "conceptual structures or social institutions" for learning. Some historians, Harrit also

admits, have explained the difficulties that the Jesuits had in introducing the Copernican revolution in China because of "the Catholic Church's injunction against heliocentric astronomy", and the Jesuits faced well-known problems because of Rome's restrictions on their "experiment of promoting Christianity in Chinese dress". In Japan there was a strong and cruel reaction against Jesuits at the end of the sixteenth century and a closing to the exterior, including forbidding travel abroad. This was the outcome of reticence provoked by increasing contacts with the Portuguese.

These barriers and clashes always had an impact on the transference of goods whose social meaning was abominable for one of the two or more societies in contact. But many examples can also be taken from the history of consumption or material culture. For many decades the Spanish prosecuted the consumption of chocolate in America due to its pagan connotations, according to which this consumption was a way to intercede with Aztec divinities. A historical irony –if it were not for its violent implications- for a people that would make the use of chocolate a symbol of Spanishness in the eighteenth century. One obstacle for the acceptance of chocolate and tobacco by Spanish natural scientists and apothecaries was the introduction of Renaissance medical practices and the fact that these products were completely absent from Hippocrates' and Galen's systems of knowledge. Economic historians have assumed that America provided an incommensurable market for European goods from the time of its conquest. From there, the image of lost opportunity to which they have accustomed us. Descriptions of early encounters, like those of Ginés Sepúlveda, belie such a vision. Vast cultural distances make it difficult to imagine broad coincidences in the material cultures of the Spaniards and the native Americans. Therefore, the possibilities of trade between the two sides of the Atlantic were more restrictive than usually thought. The Spaniards sought gold and markets for their textiles, while the natives went naked and desired trinkets with little impact on the Castilian economy.

Indifference and negative reactions are always more difficult to explain for historians, whose job consists of constructing explanations of what happened but who are normally less interested in what did not happen. But there are also examples that could be easily expanded if we tried to look at the past from this perspective. The *yerba mate,* whose very-developed market in the pampas is quite well-known, was never successfully introduced in Europe. Coca, which was brought to Spain when cacao was and which provoked similar medical reactions, was never accepted for reasons that are still unclear.

These are only two out of many examples showing that intercultural dialogue and cross-cultural exchanges of new goods was not easy or simple. Reluctance has always been present and the condition for success has often been adaptation and cultural translation. In this process, mediators seem to have been crucial. Franciscans and Jesuits, sometimes considered as contaminated by their original societies and always permissive in the areas where they operated as a way of understanding local cultures, are good examples. And it is likely that the first steps to justify chocolate's consumption were taken by Spaniards immersed –some times in spite of themselves- in Indian communities or by creoles, whose condition as borderline people made them very open in this sense. According to M. Norton, there was a Creole identification with chocolate. Historians of consumption have sometimes spoken of a trickle-down process: the consumption of new goods always starts from the elites and then spreads to the base of society. This was not always the case. Chocolate was introduced in Spain by merchants trading with America

after having taken it from creoles and pioneers in contact with the original societies. Only after that did nobles and courtesans start to consume it. And only when they transmitted it to nobles in other countries and it was accepted by their elites, did the product experience something similar to the 'trickle down' effect. The case of tobacco is even clearer. Seamen and traders introduced it in Seville and from them it spread to the elites. Furthermore, it was the lack of other sources of profit in particular areas of the Caribbean that led English and Dutch merchants to try to take advantage of the local production by offering this good in their countries. It is in this way that a good became a commodity in the international arena. In all these cases –and in almost all the known cases- the outcome was a completely different meaning. In fact, different cultures transform the meaning of a social practice to turn it into a fashion. Offering chocolate as a way of welcoming people of high status, which was so common among Aztecs, may have remained in Madrid or Vienna when the aristocrats served it to their guests. But it is very dubious that they knew the original rationale of this practice. Furthermore, the function of invoking gods had disappeared and the association between this practice and welcoming –invoking deities to the benefit of the people received- was completely unknown and would have even seemed a sort of monstrosity to Europeans. They considered the simple scarcity and the exotic character of the product more important, as the basis for considering it a symbol of distinction for which exceptionality was the only reason.

Even so, the need to adapt chocolate's flavor to the tastes of European elites seems to have been crucial according to Irene Fattacciu's analysis. This is particularly meaningful for the way the adoption of new products worked out. Cross-cultural exchanges are always linked to some sort of syncretism: things and even social gestures change in the process of transmission. This is especially clear in the case of religions and beliefs. Years ago anthropologist Nancy Farris showed that the Maya's conversion to Catholicism -that is, from a polytheist to a monotheist faith- was grounded in the possibility of considering Catholic saints as pseudo-gods to which the Mayas could pray for small miracles, which, on the other hand, is understandable and logical if we consider the saints' similar role in the popular Catholicism of the epoch. Such transformations are always the case with the transmission of goods and cultural values.

One should never forget that the cross-cultural and global exchanges of this period were frequently embedded in violent relationships and often had very disruptive consequences.

When speaking of the adoption of European patterns of consumption in Latin America, one should never forget that this was a consequence of violence. Rather than intercultural dialogue we should speak of intercultural violence. The case of many Indians adopting hybrid diets during their seasonal work in mines and of thousands of African consuming American products are excellent examples. The same could be said about religion and conversion in which persuasion was blended with pressure in many areas of the world (i. e. in the attendance of Catholic rituals and religious ceremonies). The European identification of civility with dress, very clear in writers such as Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, and the habit of forcing Indians to cover their bodies fostered a new demand for clothes and dresses in the Spanish style (or a mixture of styles).

The examples could be extended. But this idea is not the most important. The key message is the need to understand social and physical violence and the mix of the

complex duality of persuasion/imposition when studying the diffusion of patterns of consumption, which is something usually neglected by specialists who confine themselves to intra-European examples.

As far as cultural exchanges were associated with truly traumatic historical experiences, their effects were also disruptive in many ways. European "ecological imperialism", to use the term of W. Crosby, provides the key to the deterioration of American ecosystems and, consequently, a reason for the demographic cataclysm that America experienced after the conquest. The reasons were not only the new diseases, but also the fact that the weeds, the new animals, like the thousands of horses and pigs that proliferated in just a few decades, attacked very delicate links of the previous ecosystems provoking problems for the agrarian economies of the Indians. The expansion of mining was the reason (or the pretext?) for the development of a sector that led to a systematic and cruel exploitation of men by men. The development of the plantation economies *â la* Avatar, devoted to products like sugar, cacao, tea or tobacco, caused the growth of slavery in all of the Americas. The outcome was that societies that were progressively closer were also increasingly different and divergent. The evolution of European societies towards freedom and citizenship rested upon an expansion of slavery in the areas of the world to which they were most connected. Globalization thus joined together different peoples but also paved the way for increasing distances among the different localities composing the web that linked them.

2.4.- Final Remarks on Globalization and De-Globalization: Convergence and Diversity

Twenty-first century Europeans tend to conceive of intercultural dialogue and cross-cultural exchanges as a part of globalization, seen as a process leading to more homogeneous societies. Many times they express alarm that globalization may impose homogeneity. They also tend to think of globalization as something very recent.

Global history shows that globalizing processes have been present for centuries in the history of humanity. Furthermore, we can conceive of a single history of humanity because of these processes. The period between 1492 and c. 1650 was not an exception and the cross-cultural exchange of "new" products played a crucial role. The so-called European expansion and other expansive forces in other civilizations paved the way for more intense contacts among the different regions of the globe. Those contacts forced dense intercultural dialogue and cross-border exchanges over long distances. The outcome, however, was not a more homogeneous world. The experience of sharing was inherent to the experience of self-assertion, assimilation, adaptation and even rejection by the different imagined communities. They were what they were because they had more intense relationships. They were aware of what they were also because of their contact. At the same time they were building a common legacy, the legacy of humanity. They were constructing a common history by sharing ideas and goods but also by being different. Cross-cultural exchanges were not symmetric or lacking in violence. The history of globalization and exchanges was –and still is- the history of contact and also of tensions and divergence. To keep this in mind is perhaps the main lesson that the historian can leave to societies today as a way to combat the negative and disruptive collateral effects of cross-cultural relationships and to remind us of the complexity and violence of a process of convergence and diversity.

QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE. A RESEARCH AGENDA

The questions that emerge from this panorama may be situated in different historiographical fields. In turn, the intertwining of diverse points of view that are possible from an interdisciplinary perspective may help enrich each of them. After providing certain examples, I will proceed to propose a series of areas for research.

The history of consumption, today in vogue, has rarely been seen from the perspective of the political economy of empires. S. Mintz, C. Smith and many others have made substantial contributions in this sense, although historians of consumption in general have too frequently been carried in the direction established by N. Mckendrick and his followers, toward studies centered on demand. In this way, social and cultural changes that created new forms of consumption have been considered preeminent. When a global perspective is adopted, nevertheless, empires' political economies, hoe they channeled their fiscal and military resources, and how they identified with certain products (i.e. Spaniards with chocolate and the English with tea), may prove central to explaining how supply and demand met each other and how institutions regulated this encounter. It may also explain the complex of interests articulated around these institutions and behind the increase in the consumption of determined products. In this sense, the dissertation in progress by Irene Fattacciu is contributing very interesting perspectives that I prefer not to summarize here.

In this way, moreover, the Southern Atlantic may be crucial to the comprehension of the process of globalization. The Atlantic, and particularly Carribbean of the Southern Atlantic, played an essential role not only in the activation of world-wide commercial networks, but also to the measure that it provided the scenario for the development of the two most extensive empires in the world system until well into the eighteenth century. Their development and importance in this sense remains to be adequately emphasized, in spite of the enormous historiographical production on the subject from the nineteenth century until the present day. To provide only one example, today we know that corn was vital for the Chinese economy. If we distance ourselves from the conventions that oblige us to understand agrarian development in the terms of the "agricultural revolution" that took place in nineteenth-century England, products like the potato take on fundamental significance in Europe. These products, and the potato in particular, were crucial for encouraging the agrarian and demographic growth of many areas of Europe from as early as the seventeenth century. Historians like K. Pomeranz, have constructed a plausible explanation for modern economic development on a world scale, emphasizing the possibilities offered by America and particularly North America since the eighteenth century in comparison with China. Yet it remains for us to reflect upon whether or not we should also include Latin America and its role in creating a launching pad for the development that was entirely absent from Asia, for example, in terms of the enormous challenge to the fiscal systems of the countries of western Europe derived from the growing tension generated by the discoveries of 1492 and the need to control the Atlantic, as well as the products that circulated within it.

The sum of these perspectives may be articulated as collected fields of study that not only can teach us about other cultures, but above all about the history of Europe and, in our case, the history of the role of Andalusia in this communication network.

Clearly, intellectual history and the history of medicine should be very present in our analysis. Aspects like the reactions and prejudices of intellectuals and writers (some of them theologians and moralists) to different plants and new products, the debates that they inspired and the way in which they contributed to changing mental constructs at the time of their reception warrant scrutiny during the modern period. This would not only teach us a great deal about the history of science and medical practices, but also about their importance for the history of consumption, where such considerations are not always found. We are also interested in how these reactions mixed with popular cultures, with sometimes very superstitious components, which will be fundamental for understanding the cultural inertias – especially comparing the cases of cacao, tobacco and coca – regarding their acceptance.

As derives from the previous examples, it is very important to study the way in which these products were first diffused through social networks – personal contacts at the heart of aristocratic elites, religious orders, among which the Jesuits stood out, or networks of merchants or emigrants, etc. – in order to subsequently become large-scale commercial merchandise. This inquiry places the historian in contact with one of the great problems of economics today: the study of how objects became merchandise and the social and political (or sometimes politically economic) mechanisms behind such processes.

It is also important to consider the way in which the demand for plants and products from overseas broadened, alongside the social components of the process and obstacles to it. In a society with very established habits of consumption regulated by custom and even by law, these completely unknown products may have been -- and would need to be proven – more likely to be consumed with no obstacle beyond the capacity to obtain them. The result would be that, if initially symbols of distinction, their "democtratization" may have known no barrier other than purchasing capacity. Testing this hypothesis, which runs, for example, through the study of the eighteenth-century polemic around luxury might provide interesting counterpoints to such theses as those of W. Mackendrick (*The birth of a consumer society*…) or D. Roche (*La culture des aparences*...) or certain contemporary sociological economists like Veblen. But it also would entail problematizing the degree of flexibility of the society of the period and oblige us to approach the process of the erosion of a society of orders and how it understood social transgressions through consumption, which clearly would allow us to formulate more interesting comparisons among social structures. For example, English society, said to be dynamic, would not seem to have been more receptive to tea than Spanish society, assumed to be rigid, has been toward chocolate.

An unstudied aspect of these products is their possible importance in what Jan de Vries (*The Industrious revolution*…) has called the "industrious revolution", a key

development in the formation of the modern world in which consumers attempted to increase their production for the market as a form of regularly being able to obtain the products that it offered. To what extent were overseas products important in this sense? Did such a process take place in Andalusia, in Spain, and in Europe overall? If not, why not? If so, what were the singularities and the effects of the process? If so, why did products like tea or coffee produce these effects faster in northern Europe than cacao did in Spain?

The history of taxation itself could be questioned in the same way. What has been the real importance of the definition of fiscal systems and political alliances operationing around them in different states? To what extent have their specific characteristics determined their greater or lesser fiscal profitability and their ability to replace previous forms of taxation? What have been their implications for foreign policy and what have been their effects in comparative terms?

The relation of these products to processes of the creation of gender and national identities appears clearer today in studies of chocolate, tea and coffee. How did these situations ensue? Which social groups collaborated in these efforts and why? It is equally well-known that the consumption of these products – tobacco offers an excellent example but not the only one – reveal gendered attitudes whose underpinnings we would like to study from the point of view of the mechanisms and the reasons for transgressive practices and the repression associated with them.

Finally, I would like to present an idea that was not in the initial proposal. These contributions may be more interesting if we also study the impact of processes of transfers from the other side of the Atlantic or in the Atlantic as a whole. In this sense, the impact of these products in the formation of reciprocal images between America (the development of the idea of “American”, if that term can be accepted) and Europe (the formation of the idea of “European”, if likewise admissible) appear particularly interesting. The question, nevertheless, needs to mature.

These proposals are not intended to exhaust the possibilities for research but, rather, to the contrary, to open a debate that will enable us to surpass and broaden them.