

## PRESENTATION

### Building empires in the modern age: business, politics, family and global relations (17th and 18th centuries)

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In the past few years, with the approaches brought by Global History, the studies of networks have had their importance renewed, especially as a method for understanding the complex relationships between individuals, groups and states, as stated by Fernand Braudel.

In the field of History, this analysis served as a methodology to understand the subjects within the networks that were established from family, religious, clientele, political or economic ties, but also from the control mechanisms, formal or informal, that allowed the development of these long-distance relationships, in different political, economic, social and cultural universes.

When we refer to agents, we are not referring only to merchants or royal officials (governors, magistrates, military, bishops, etc.), but all those who, in one way or another, were or could be part of a network, either it being political, economic, religious or family.

Within the scope of this dossier, historians were invited to think about the construction of empires in the modern era based on themes such as politics, family, networks and global relations. The thirteen texts that are now presented are the result of this proposal, with the addition of different analyses, which masterfully elevate the historiographical debate to colonial issues.

The opening text is by Diego Estevam Cavalcante Cavalcante, entitled “Quina (chinchona) and the Portuguese empire: explorations, transfers and acclimatizations”. With a very original theme that is not so known in Brazilian historiography, the author uses the history of the Quina plant (chinchona) as a starting point to analyze the connectivity between spaces. From the plant's circulation, the author establishes a dialogue with Brazilian historiography, based on the concept of ecological imperialism, a concept created by Alfred. W. Crosby, understanding that environmental issues are a fruitful subject for less national and more global discussions.

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Then we have the text “The reflections of English mercantilists on the Spanish imperial trajectory...” by Felipe Mesquita. From a reading of a set of texts originated in the Anglo-Saxon world on the failure of the Spanish empire, the author builds an analysis of the English economic discourse between the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, drawing attention to a set of ideas that would last until our days. Therefore, the author uses Global History as a method to argue that, even though the mercantilist authors wanted to enrich their nations, the concept of mercantilism was formulated from an international political and economic framework.

Like Mesquita, Sylvia Ramalho de Brito also used the Global History methodology in her text “The role of merchant networks during during the Hispanic Monarchy: the case of Captaincy of Paraíba”. By relating the process of conquering the captaincy of Paraíba with the formation of the Atlantic complex, through business networks that connected the interiorization in America with Lisbon, Madrid, Luanda and Cartagena, the author presents an innovative analysis of processes that sometimes are justified by historiography as problems internal to each Crown.

The time frame used by Brito is that of the Iberian union (1580-1640), a favorable period for analyzes that combine global issues with local problems. But like time, boundary spaces also have this characteristic. And that is exactly what is explored in Alana Basso's text. The author proposes to discuss issues about the smuggling of slaves in the Colonia do Sacramento region. According to her, illegal trafficking was the connection point between commercial relations precisely through the border zone between the two empires. Border regions are fertile spaces for observing issues that are not satisfied with endogenous analyses.

It was precisely in Rio da Prata that, in 1799, Lieutenant Joaquim Xavier went to carry out an espionage mission for the then Prince Regent D. João VI, object of the text “Diplomacy and espionage in times of neutrality”, by Tiago Bonhemberger. The mission sponsored by the Portuguese Crown is part of a period of strong instability in diplomatic relations between Portugal, Spain and England, as a result of the Napoleonic invasions in Europe.

Different from the previous themes, Fabrício de Santana's text focuses on Francisco de Vitória's thought based on the explanation of conceptions of natural magic. Thematically distinct, however, does not mean disjointed from the discussion. Empires were not built only by practical orders but with very important intellectual foundations. In this sense, as Santana's text demonstrates, Francisco de Vitória was an important Dominican theologian professor at the University of Salamanca whose reflections and works not only dialogued with currents of thought from various parts of the world, but also thought about and founded global problems of the period, having as themes the colonization in the Americas, the just war and the origin of the power of the kings.

If thinking about the construction of empires in the modern era under a bias that connects different parts, be they ideas, markets, trajectories or products, it makes us understand the complexity of the world we live in and realize that looking inside is also necessary.

It is in this sense that this dossier also presents three texts that go deeper into issues related to Brazilian colonial history, while offering new analyses. “The political-administrative order for the Serro Frio district”, written by Joelmir Cabral, demonstrates a well-established research on this important diamond region. The author, being more focused on the analysis of the internal issues of the region, referring to the administration and legislation of diamond mining, has in a way completed the work done to date on the mining and business of diamonds.

As well as the mercantile ones, the construction of family networks makes it possible to analyze the insertion of subjects in political, economic and religious control mechanisms, over long or short distances. This is what Ana Lunara Morais' text is about, as it pursues the trajectory of eight important heirs of Pernambuco families in the 17th and 18th centuries. The author observed a model of social reproduction. According to her conclusions, the mechanisms of reproduction through marriages or exercising administrative and military offices ensured patrimonial continuity, perpetuating the status quo of nobility in the land of this important captaincy. Morais highlights the role of women in this mechanism through marriage, which allowed connections with men from other families, who occupied important administrative functions, such as positions of legal officialdom.

The attributions in justice were commonly granted to captains and ombudsmen of captaincies. The Portuguese Crown sought to modify this organization at the beginning of the 18th century, with the creation of the *Juntas de Justiça*. It is about this process that Bárbara Benevides' text deals with, from the first authorization for its creation in 1723 and its importance in the judicial reorganization and domain of the peoples implanted by the Portuguese Crown from the seventeenth century.

This dossier also has a transcription of a handwritten source made by Jaime Rodrigues, with data referring to the voyages of two ships that made the maritime route that linked Lisbon to Goa. The document is present in the Historical Archive of the Navy in Lisbon. Its publication not only opens up possibilities for research on various topics, but also values the work of transcription - inherent to the historian's profession - and disseminates archives and documentary series that are sometimes unknown to the Brazilian public, as they are located in distant archives.

As well as the transcription, the careful analysis of the sources is equally essential. The texts by Pedro Henrique Lima and Isis Macedo Tejo are examples of this task. The first, dealing with a manuscript of the Vila Rica revolt in 1720, analyzes how the 18th-century author constructed the text in terms of form and content. The second deals with a “successful

relationship” about the fall of Salvador into Dutch hands in 1624, analyzing how written culture and the dissemination of news were also important elements for the maintenance of the Empire.

Finally, we interviewed Professor Francesca Trivelatto. A historian and professor of modern history in the United States at the Institute for Advanced Studies and with a book recently translated to Portuguese, Trivellato generously answered a set of questions ranging from her discovery of history, through her academic path, to her vision on some current political issues.

We wish you all a great read!