

**S. 3. 4. RE-EXAMINING TRADE FLOWS AND MECHANISMS BETWEEN EUROPE
AND NORTH AMERICA IN EARLY MODERN PERIOD (17TH-18TH CENTURIES)**

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Panel Abstract

This session aims to reassess commercial flows between seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and institutional mechanisms of control related to that trade, especially from the point of view of what's still missing in historiographic production. After so much recent development in economic history, in particular how restrictive and effective empire's colonial policies were, we look up to know more about the initiatives or expedients utilized by merchants, captains and businessmen to circumvent regulations and barriers. Moreover, we seek to dialogue with new works that bring insights related to potential unseen commodity chains: were there global commodity chains hidden from posterity? Did smuggling create more modern looking commodity chains? How could different techniques of measurement, currencies, levels of credit access and higher taxation represent effective barriers to trade development, productivity and economic growth? Despite the notorious development of interdisciplinary research done in this area, as observed in the works of Daudin, O'Rourke and Prados de la Escosura (2008), Dobado-González, García-Hiernaux and Guerrero (2012), de Zwart and van Zanden (2018), and the volume recently edited by Baten (2016) about Global Economy, we also seek to deepen the idea of an effective interconnection between trade flows with other economic activities related to shipbuilding industry, maritime insurances or credit offer, as an instrument to enable new commercial relations and access new circuits. Is there a point of contact between them? Moreover, what could be the levels of interaction? How States and Empires responded to those legal/illegal interactions? Based on this open dossier, our panel wants to put some light on these questions. This session interacts with session "Re-examining Trade Flows and Mechanisms between Europe and North America in Modern-Contemporary Period (19th-20th centuries)", as part of the same large group, broke in two different session slots.

Keywords

Trade, Commodity flows, Shipping, Early Modern Period, Shipbuilding

Shipbuilding and Ship Trade during 18th and 19th centuries

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RODRIGO DOMINGUEZ (University of Minho)

Abstract

What was the role played by shipbuilding industry and trade with new and used ships in the early modern Economy? In the Finnish case, for example, previous studies suggest that e.g. during the 18th Century in certain years new-built ships were the most important export items from Finland (Alanen 1957; 1964). In Iberia, Portuguese shipbuilding industry was limited by the economic strangulation of the Restoration Wars, which brought Portugal and Spain to a similar path, designing unique multi-purpose vessels for trade and defense, under a very specific craft tradition (Rahn Phillips 1992; Henderson and Fraga 2004; Unger 2018). Though these assumptions have overemphasized the role of shipbuilding (Toivanen 1983; Kaukiainen 1990;1993; Ojala 1997), this particular industry was, nevertheless, important especially during the latter part of the 18th century. This paper will discuss the shipbuilding and trade with ships in early modern context. We will especially focus on trade between North (mainly Finland and Sweden) and “South” (Mediterranean area) and on the sale of mainly used ships from North to South. An important aspect in this trade are the different methods to measure new and used ships.

Biography

Jari Ojala is a Professor of comparative business history. He specializes in economic, business and maritime history. Recent publications include “Maritime information networks between Northern and Southern Europe during the Eighteenth Century” (Istituto Datini-FUP 2019).

Jari Eloranta is a Professor of Economic and Social History. His research includes trade, shipping and economic growth in the long-run (16th-20th centuries). Recent publications include *Small and Medium Powers in Global History: Trade, Conflicts, and Neutrality from the 18th to the 20th Centuries* (Routledge 2019).

Rodrigo Dominguez is a Junior Research Associate at the Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Sciences. His research includes trade, shipping and fiscal/financial institutional policies in the long-run (15th-19th centuries). Recent publications include “Fiscal policy in Early Modern Europe: Portugal in Comparative Context” (Routledge 2019).

The German Empire and Trade with the Caribbean in the 18th century. The Business Ventures of Friedrich Romberg (1727-1819)

MAGNUS RESSEL (Frankfurt University)

Abstract

In the last years, an intensified research could unearth the manifold layers of involvement of German actors in the colonial trades across the Atlantic and especially the dense links of the economic fabric of the Holy Roman Empire to the plantation economies of the New World. After some substantial research, we now see much clearer the many connections and interdependencies between the Caribbean economies and large areas of Central and Eastern Europe as important factors of the profitability and functionality of the entire Atlantic system of the 18th century. Yet, apart from a now rather good overview, we still lack detailed studies that give us profound insights at a microscopic scale.

At the IMHA-conference in Porto, I intend to give new insights into the colonial enterprises of Friedrich Romberg (1727-1819). He was most likely the richest man on the European continent around 1785 because of his intensive involvement in the Belgian textile industries, in banking, in maritime insurance, in the Atlantic colonial and slave trade and in freight forwarding from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. My central hypothesis is that Romberg's success was due to the combined utilization of several sectors in the global economic system of the late 18th century. Operating under strong imperial protection in Brussels, Romberg vertically monopolized in his various firms sections and aspects of the exchange and refinement of continental European products and colonial goods and continuously reinvested all his winnings in new machines for his textile factories in Belgium. Romberg's activities are on the threshold of the historical change of the traditional merchant-banker towards the owner of an institutionalized and bureaucratized company. An analysis of Romberg's business ventures brings thus to the fore the functional interdependencies and dynamics of trade between Central Europe and the Caribbean in the 18th century.

Keywords

Caribbean, German Empire, 18th Century, Colonial Trades, Transatlantic Slave Trade

Biography

Magnus Ressel is a research fellow of the Gerda Henkel Foundation at the Chair of Early Modern Times at the University of Frankfurt am Main. His PhD on the relations of the North African regencies to Northern Europe in the Early Modern age was defended in 2011 at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum and the University Paris I. In 2012 he was a fellow of the Alexander

von Humboldt Foundation in Padua. He recently completed his second book on the German merchant community in Venice in the 18th century. For this, he received fellowships at the German Historical Institute in Rome and at the Institute of Advances Study in Munich and won the Max Weber Award of the Max Weber Center (Erfurt). Indicative publications are: *Sklavenkassen and Turkish Passports: Northern Europe and the Barbary Corsairs in the Early Modern Age*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter 2012 [German]; *A privileged mercantile network at the lagoon: The 'Nazione Alemana' in Venice and the German-Italian trade from 1648-1806* [German].

Quantifying the Invisible: New Estimates for Trans-Imperial Trade of British America before Independence

JEREMY LAND (Georgia State University)

Abstract

This paper takes the first steps towards quantifying and measuring the flow of goods, commodities, and ships between Britain's North American colonies and non-British destinations, including Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands. One of the more difficult aspects of measuring early modern commerce is quantifying smuggling and other commerce that was not counted by imperial customs services. Utilizing a methodology that triangulates data from multiple destinations to estimate what is missing from the British imperial records (which dominates the historiography of the period). From there, I will add details from invoices and bills of lading that can be identified as possible smuggling to add greater depth to the contemporary data compilations by state apparatuses. What has already become clear is that trans-imperial trade was far more important to some regions of British America than direct trade with the British Isles, indicating at minimum an Atlantic economic orientation.

Biography

Jeremy Land has a Ph.D. in Economic History from Georgia State University (2019) and was conference manager of the XVIII World Economic History Congress, Boston (2018). His research includes trans-imperial trade and commodity flows between 17th and 19th centuries. Recent publications include "Trade and the new republic: American trade during the Napoleonic Wars, 1783–1830" (Routledge 2019).