

**S. 4. 3. POLITICS, SCIENCE, RELIGION: NEW HISTORICAL INSIGHTS ON THE
MAKING OF EARLY MODERN THALASSOCRACIES**

Chair: Fabiano Bracht
(FLUP-CITCEM)

Panel Abstract

The panel will provide papers dealing with cutting edge pieces of research on the rise of early modern oceanic powers. The speakers will face different aspect relating to the building of European thalassocracies which so far have been neglected by historiography. Among these the importance the importance of Portugal as a reservoir of technical and scientific knowledge for navigation, and its consequent centrality for espionage by emerging maritime powers, such as France, England, and the Netherlands. Another feature dealt with in this panel will be the role of religious missionary orders in the making of Early Modern oceanic expansion. Recent historiographical trends and the so called 'Jesuitomania', in fact, have shadowed the role played by Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians and other congregations. Last but not least, the panel will analyze how nautical rutters became tools for the technical and scientific domination and rationalization of oceanic spaces. These instruments, in fact, were real scientific cutting edge products, and soon became fundamental political objects on which depended the supremacy on the seas of the rising colonial powers.

Keywords

Diplomacy; Religious Orders; Rutters; Thalassocracy; Science

Spying on the Global Sea: French maritime and cosmographical espionage in Portugal (1557-1561)

NUNO VILA-SANTA (Universidade de Lisboa)

Abstract

The fifteenth-century Portuguese and Spanish maritime expansion gave rise to an unprecedented run within Europe about global Oceanic knowledge. Influential maritime players, such as Tudor England and Valois France immediately revealed their interest in accompanying details of Iberian expansion. This often meant a work of collecting useful information on maritime routes, cartography and geographical knowledge, prompting espionage missions, entrusted to classical spies, merchants or even to official ambassadors' secret activities. Michel de Seure and Jean Nicot, the French ambassadors to Portugal between 1557 and 1561, provide clear examples of this activities. Sent to Lisbon in challenging times for French-Portuguese relations, both engaged in maritime and scientific espionage activities. In this communication, I will attempt to show the connection between the maritime espionage that both undertook from Lisbon (i. e. sending details on important Iberian fleets departing and arriving from the Americas or Asia) and the scientific espionage (the acquisition of nautical rutters and important cosmographical books). I will also debate the impacts of this active gathering of "secret" Sea knowledge, as it was perceived by the Portuguese Crown, in the Valois's maritime plans and in the broader French-Portuguese maritime rivalry. Finally, I will also compare this French espionage in Portugal to its Spanish counterpart, in order to discuss the importance of the circulation of maritime knowledge between open maritime rivals. Do Seure and Nicot's espionage in Portugal relate to a sixteenth-century globalization process on Sea knowledge? Had this maritime knowledge become a sort of Global knowledge all along the sixteenth century? Why did Valois France, after all its previous maritime experience during Francis I reign, need to resort to Seure and Nicot's strategies to acquire Iberian cosmographical knowledge? These will be some of the questions I will attempt to answer.

Biography

Nuno Vila-Santa is a researcher from CIUHCT (Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon) and a post-doctoral fellow from the RUTTER project founded by the European Research Council. He holds a BA, MA and PhD from Nova University of Lisbon, in Early Modern History and History of the Portuguese Expansion. His studies core at Asia in the second half of the sixteenth century in the political, religious, military, social, economic and cultural fields. He won the Lusitania Prize from the Portuguese History Academy in 2015 with the book on D. Luís de Ataíde, viceroy of India (1568-1571; 1578-1581). His more recent works include a 2021 book on Francisco Barreto, governor of India and Mutapa (1555-1558; 1569-1573) and studies on the circulation of Portuguese cosmographical knowledge to sixteenth century Europe, including reviewing proposals on Jan Huygen van Linschoten's Itinerario, Jean Nicot and João Pereira Dantas embassies during the 1550s and 1560s.

A life-or-death matter: When a rutter becomes an ‘instruction’

JOSÉ MARIA MORENO MADRID (Universidade de Lisboa)

Abstract

Transoceanic routes were the backbone of the Early Modern maritime empires. The long distances they covered, as well as the enormous amount of people and goods that circulated through them regularly, soon posed multiple problems that were difficult to solve. Imperial institutions developed and tested different mechanisms aimed at controlling them. Regarding the route itself, the instructions for captains and pilots were the most interesting. They usually included a rutter, penned by a recognized cosmographer or pilot, which was then imbued with legal power. From this it follows that the indicated route had to be faithfully observed, or infringers could risk severe punishment. How did these documents, different in essence from the “regular rutter”, work? How was the process from the time they were “conceived” until they were used on the high seas? And finally, were they really effective as a control mechanism for long-distance voyages? These are the questions on which this presentation aims to shed some light.

Biography

José María Moreno Madrid is a doctoral candidate in History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Lisbon, within the framework of the ERC Project “RUTTER: Making the Earth Global” (grant agreement No. 833438). Among his recent publications are: *Atravessando a Porta do Pacífico. Roteiros e Relatos da Travessia do Estreito de Magalhães, 1520-1620* (Lisbon: ByTheBook, 2020) and *Desenhando a Porta do Pacífico. Mapas, Cartas e Outras Representações Visuais do Estreito de Magalhães/Drawing the Gateway to the Pacific. Maps, Charts and Other Visual Representations, 1520-1671* (Lisbon: ByTheBook, 2021), both written in co-authorship with Henrique Leitão.

Brothers of the World: Notes for a Comparative Reassessment of Missionary Orders in Early Modern European Oceanic Expansion

DAVID SALOMONI (Universidade de Lisboa)

Abstract

The historiographical tendency of recent decades also known as ‘Jesuitomania’ has partially obscured the historical role of other religious orders. In particular, this primacy has been important in the history of early globalization and the role of the Jesuits in navigation, exploration, and the so-called Age of Encounters. However, recent historiography feels the need to use the tools developed for Jesuit history in the comparative evaluation of the role of other religious orders. This paper wants to outline some methodological reflections on the historical experience of other religious orders: Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Theatines, in the process of the first globalization. I will focus in particular on a little studied aspect, namely the travel and navigation experiences of the missionary fathers who left for the East or West Indies.

Biography

While studying for Bachelor’s Degree in Early Modern History at the University of Parma, I attended a year (2008-2009) at Sorbonne-Paris 4 University focusing on Early Modern Political European History. In 2013 I received a Master’s Degree in Social and Political Late Medieval History. In 2017, I was awarded a PhD both at Roma 3 University (Italy), in “Cultura, Educazione, Comunicazione”, and at Université d’Avignon et des Pays de Vaucluse (France), in Medieval history. In the same year I received my first post-doctoral position at Roma 3 University, with a project focusing on the history of the schools belonging to early modern religious orders, while in 2019 I was awarded an A. Mellon Fellowship in History of Science, at the University of Oklahoma History of Science Collections to deepen the teaching of science in 17th century Florentine piarist schools. At present I am post-doc researcher in History of Science at the University of Lisbon.