

Connecting the Tropics: Religious erudition and cultural circulation in the early-modern Iberian empires – Lisbon (ICS/UCM), November 21-22, 2024.

This workshop aims to examine the role that clerics, missionaries and nuns played in the processes of cultural circulation that took place in the Early Modern Iberian empires. Specifically, it intends to explore how clerical and religious actors, through their trajectories, production and intellectual practices, contributed to 'connecting the tropics', linking -beyond any political and commercial ties- the different African, Asian and American territories where the Spanish and the Portuguese were present during the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.

The political, social and cultural significance of the clergy in the Iberian empires of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries is now undeniable. However, it is worth questioning the role they played in the circulation of writings, images, devotions, relics and many other objects and cultural forms between the various Iberian contexts, fostering unexpected dynamics and connections that made possible, for example, that a martyr from Japan, born in India, was venerated in Pernambuco, that a grammar of the Kimbundu language was elaborated in Bahia or that a manuscript treatise on natural history composed by a Franciscan from Goa ended up in the library of a convent in Lisbon.

In response to a historiography that, for both the Spanish and Portuguese worlds, has traditionally focused its analysis on the communication established from the European metropolitan centres to the colonial spaces, the workshop aims to privilege other logics of circulation. Taking a "decentralized" view of the phenomenon and considering the polycentric nature of the Iberian monarchies, our intention is to analyse the connections that, from a cultural and intellectual point of view, were established between the Indian and Atlantic contexts where the Iberian presence was felt, without neglecting also a sort of "inverse circulation" (from the colonial worlds to the metropolis and Rome). The conditions favouring such forms of circulation and the dynamics of cultural exchange they fostered will be at the centre of the discussions. To this end, three main axes will articulate the workshop:

1. Trajectories and scholarly practices

The aim is to analyse the life and intellectual trajectories of those clerics, missionaries and nuns who circulated in different areas of the Spanish and Portuguese empires (or even between the two empires), as well as those who, for various reasons, travelled from the colonial boundaries to the metropolitan centres (Lisbon, Madrid) and to Rome. The intention is to reconstruct the contexts that encouraged and surrounded these individuals' journeys (often carried out under the protection of their institutions) and to understand to what extent they acted as cultural intermediaries, nourishing the knowledge of other spaces and realities there where they went. It is of particular interest to examine how the travel experience and/or the direct knowledge of different parts of the empire (or other territories) ended up conditioning the scholarly practices of these individuals, fostering the exercise of writing, feeding a 'savant' communication at global level, favouring forms of transculturality and cosmopolitanism, and determining their own visions of the empire and its parts, but also of other empires and other realms outside the Portuguese and Spanish worlds.

2. Centres of Knowledge and circulation of Knowledge

The idea is to explore the role that certain centres located in the Iberian colonial spaces, such as Mexico, Goa, Lima, Cartagena, Bahia, Luanda or Macao, played as nodes that, benefiting from their political, economic and religious status, articulated much of the circulation of individuals

and, with them, of texts, images and other cultural registers between the various contexts of the Portuguese and Spanish empires. We should understand how this strategic position would have enabled the development of institutions and places of knowledge (convents, colleges and so on), the formation of significant libraries linked to the clergy, the development of multiple forms of scholar communication, thus allowing these centres to be configured as organizing poles of knowledge (even with the capacity to attract agents from other areas) where, together with a vast erudition on local realities, information referring to other geographical and cultural contexts was accumulated and elaborated.

3. Texts, images and artifacts on the move

The purpose is to examine the knowledge, devotions and other cultural elements that circulated in the form of writings (manuscripts and printings), images and objects between the various areas of the Iberian empires, trying to understand the channels through which they circulated, the contexts that fostered such circulation and the role played by certain global networks. It is necessary to understand the impact that this circulation had on the host societies or on certain groups within them, conditioning their perception of other realities within the Iberian empires and, in general, of the world. Thus, it is worth asking about the (new) knowledge that the texts, images and objects in circulation contributed to develop; but also about the (new) uses and meanings that were sometimes given to those materials, even serving as an instrument for the shaping of certain social identities.

PROGRAM

November, 21st

15.30-16.00h – Welcome and opening remarks

Ângela Barreto Xavier (Instituto de Ciências Sociais)

Federico Palomo (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

16.00-17.15h – Keynote

Jorge Flores (CIUHCT, Universidade de Lisboa)

Connective Religions: Objects, People, Visions

Break

17.30-19h – DEBATES CIRCULATING ON A GLOBAL SCALE

Chair:

Thomás A. S. Haddad (Universidade de São Paulo)

Connecting the Tropics Through the Skies: Towards a Global History of Comet Observations in the Iberian Empires, 1650-1700

Ângela Barreto Xavier (Instituto de Ciências Sociais)

Making an American Revolution in Goa. Circulation of idea(l)s between the Atlantic and India

November, 22nd

9.30-11.15h – CHARTING THE PRODUCTION OF NEWS AND KNOWLEDGE

Chair:

Ramón Ojeda Corzo (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

A triangular production of Africa and Portuguese India knowledge: Jerónimo Lobo's cultural mediation between Goa, Spanish America and Europe

Rômulo Ehalt (Max-Planck Institut for Legal History and Legal Theory)

Opinion, Discussion, Commentary: Japanese Slavery in the writings of Francisco Rodrigues SJ (c. 1515-1573), Gomes Vaz SJ (1542-1610), and Sebastião da Maya SJ (1599-1664)

Federico Palomo (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Decentered polemics: Macao, Manila and some Mexican printings on the glorious martyrdoms of Japan

Break

11.30-13.15h - NATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND MISSIONARY INTERACTIONS ON THE MOVE

Chair:

Zoltán Biedermann (University College London)

"Allende otros muchos que no nombro": Indigenous Informants in the Trópicos Conectados Corpus

Alexandra Curvelo (IHA-Universidade Nova de Lisboa)

A Space In-Between: the Painting Seminar in Japan in the early Modern Age

13.15-15.30 – Lunch

15.30-17.15h - RESIGNIFYING SACRED OBJECTS AND DEVOTIONS

Chair:

Lexie Cook (Durham University)

Relic, Fetish, Mandinga: Material translations of the Sacred

Nuno Senos (IHA-Universidade Nova de Lisboa)

'A saint of your colour': Gonçalo Garcia in India, the Philippines, Japan and Franciscan Brazil

17.15-18.30h – Concluding Remarks

Antonella Romano (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales)

Closure