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Introduction: Special Issue on Iberia in Entangled and Transnational Contexts

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Introduction Special Issue on Iberia in Entangled and Transnational Contexts

Andrea Davis and Scott Eastman

In the late twentieth-century, historians began to emphasize global trends and connectivity over an older interpretive model based upon civilizational nodes—virtually isolated and insular units that developed at a remove from one another.¹ As scholars began to ask new questions and draw on different sources, groups like the World History Association emerged to promote the new sub-discipline. The historiographical transition that followed built upon Marxism, the structuralism of the Annales School, and critiques embedded within world-systems analysis. Just as the growing importance of Latin American history had led to the establishment of *The Hispanic American Historical Review* in 1918, the founding of *The Journal of World History* in 1990 spoke to the rise of a new field.² In the introduction to the journal's first issue, "A New Forum for Global History," Jerry Bentley wrote of a "perspective that transcends national frontiers," perhaps hinting at the term transnational history.³

In the early years of the field, world historians shifted away from comparative methods towards linkages and networks, following the movement of commodities and key goods that precipitated Old World encounters and New World connections.⁴ This tendency to focus on economics and trade allowed for meticulous documentation and quantification, but left little room for qualitative and "imaginative" approaches.⁵ In the mid-2000s, new and closely related sub-fields

¹ Patrick Manning, "Asia and Europe in the World Economy: Introduction," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (April 2002): 420. Many works likewise note the emergence of "world history" and "global history" at the end of the twentieth century, including C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), xix; Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present and Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 2. See also Scott Eastman, "Spain in World History," in *The History of Modern Spain: Chronologies, Themes, Individuals*, ed. José Álvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 356.

² Charles E. Chapman, "The Founding of the Review," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (1918): 8-23. Textbooks included Robert Tignor, et al., *Worlds Together Worlds Apart: A History of the Modern World from the Mongol Empire to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002).

³ Jerry H. Bentley, "A New Forum for Global History," *Journal of World History* 1, no. 1 (1990): iv.

⁴ Jerry H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁵ Even Kenneth Pomeranz allows for assumption in "Political Economy and Ecology on the Eve of Industrialization: Europe, China, and the Global Conjuncture," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (April 2002): 432. On imaginative history, see, for example, Annette Gordon-Reed, *The*

surfaced to diversify world historical scholarship. Global history, for example, emerged to provide “processes of globalization” with more thorough “historical treatment,” while transnational history, in its North American iteration, explicitly embraced the cultural turn.⁶ For example, in a 2006 forum on the advent of transnational history in the flagship historical journal *The American Historical Review* (AHR), Isabel Hofmeyr elegantly stated:

The key claim of any transnational approach is its central concern with movements, flows, and circulation... Put another way, a concern with transnationalism would direct one’s attention to the ‘space of the flows,’ to borrow a term from [Arjun] Appadurai... The claim of transnational methods is not simply that historical processes are made in different places but that they are constructed in the movement between places, sites, and regions.⁷

The following year, *The AHR* published a forum on entangled history featuring articles by, among others, Eliga Gould and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra. Whereas the conversation in 2006 almost entirely bypassed the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking worlds, with the exception of a passing comment on Sephardic Jews by Patricia Seed, scholars describing “entangled empires” expressly looked to rectify the shortcomings of Atlantic history, which too often privileged the British imperial North Atlantic.⁸

Like global and transnational history, Atlantic history, as Alison Games explained in another dedicated forum of the AHR, is also “a slice of world history.”⁹ Coming of age at the turn of the twenty-first century, the field contributed to the decentering of national and imperial boundaries. Practitioners questioned the use of categories like the nation-state, which only came into existence in the late

Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 31; Donald R. Kelley, “Review: *The Return of Martin Guerre*, by Natalie Zemon Davis,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 254.

⁶ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, Kenneth Pomeranz, and Peer Vries, “Editorial,” *Journal of Global History* 1, no. 1 (2006): 1–2. doi:10.1017/S1740022806000015. In a more recent evaluation of the sub-discipline, Sebastian Conrad argues that global history is based upon a presumption, and explicit reflection, on some form of global integration. *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 9. On the roots of transnational history, see especially Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013).

⁷ Hofmeyr, “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” 1444.

⁸ “Introduction to AHR Forum: Entangled Empires in the Atlantic World,” *American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (June 2007): 710.

⁹ Alison Games, “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006): 748. Important benchmarks in the field include Harvard University’s Atlantic History seminars, sponsored by Bernard Bailyn, that have supported pathbreaking research, and the interdisciplinary journal *Atlantic Studies* founded in 2004.

eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries, to describe pre-modern and early modern state formations.¹⁰ Toward that end, J.H. Elliott encouraged historians of the Atlantic world to counter “the exceptionalism that bedevils the writing of national history.”¹¹ Building on the claims of R.R. Palmer in *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, originally published in 1959, Elliott insisted that Atlantic history, like world history, should connect the stories of the vast array of peoples that touch its waters rather than present an insular picture of a single state’s history.

Today, world history and its attendant sub-fields encapsulate diverse approaches with broad historiographical trajectories.¹² Judging by the establishment of institutes such as the Centre for Transnational History at University College London and the rise of dedicated journals such as *The Journal of Global History* and *The Yearbook of Transnational History*, these new approaches have made a significant impact. This Special Issue of the *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies* assesses the impact of some of these approaches within the field of Iberian historical studies, and reflects on the ways in which the study of the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking worlds contributes to transnational and entangled approaches.¹³

In the first article “Town and Country: Connecting Late Medieval Castilian Urban Experience with Sixteenth-Century Colonization of the Americas” María Asenjo-González, David Alonso García, and Sean T. Perrone examine urban development in the Spanish Atlantic world. Contributing to transnational approaches, the authors emphasize how urban models were constructed both between places *and* across time periods. Medieval colonization processes in Castile provided Spaniards with a model for establishing “urban settlements to conquer and control territory” in the Americas. Subsequently, in the sixteenth century, reciprocal influences shaped the development of cities on both sides of the Atlantic, where shared models of urban planning, design, and taxation yielded a navigable “empire of cities.” In the second article, “Worlds Within Worlds: The Institutional Locations of Global Connections in Early Modern Seville,” Julia McClure continues the discussion of sixteenth-century cities by examining how urban religious institutions facilitated the import and distribution of imperial revenue. Focusing on the case study of Seville, McClure demonstrates how the city’s Franciscan convent and confraternity provided hospitality to individuals going to

¹⁰ Bartolomé Yun Casalilla, “Transnational History. What Lies Behind the Label? Some Reflections from the Early Modernist’s Point of View,” *Culture & History Digital Journal* 3, no. 2 (2014): 1-7.

¹¹ J.H. Elliott, *Spain, Europe and the Wider World 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xvi.

¹² Job openings in “World/Global” history now rank third after positions in US and European history, according to Dylan Ruediger, “The 2019 AHA Jobs Report,” *Perspectives on History* (January 28, 2019).

¹³ Adrian Shubert, “Modern Spanish History in North America,” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 45, no. 2 (2015): 303-310.

and from the Americas, distributed wealth from the New World through charitable networks that shaped local socio-economic life, and sent money from the Americas to the Holy Lands as “a conduit between [Spain’s] Atlantic and Mediterranean connections.” Taken together these articles, with their complementary micro and macro-historical approaches, enhance our understanding of the connective role that early modern cities and urban institutions played in the Spanish Atlantic world.

In some ways, broadening the lens to portray a more inclusive Atlantic system was an easy fix for those who study an age in which the Spanish Habsburgs ascended to global power. Paul Kennedy’s approach to the origin story of western hegemony covered the rise of Spanish power in some depth.¹⁴ Even early edited volumes on the British Atlantic often included a chapter by a Spanish historian like Elliott.¹⁵ On the other hand, it is clear that many transnational and world historians who examine the “modern” post-Enlightenment world have yet to take up this call. It may not come as a surprise, then, that scholars continue to problematize Spain’s absence from influential works.¹⁶ Moreover, even though the idea of a single model or paradigm of modernization has been debunked, its logic remains built into many widely cited works.¹⁷ Bayly, for instance, argues that “the creation of yet stronger, more intrusive states...was the most potent legacy of the age of revolutions.” This truth claim allows him to downplay states in which “liberalism and a sharper sense of nationality...sank shallow roots.”¹⁸ According to this narrative, Iberian history appears in the background, almost as a cautionary tale.

The second set of articles, by Scott Eastman and Charles Nicholas Saenz, further undermine such logic by redressing Iberia’s absence from prevailing scholarly and public narratives. In “The Ruin of a State is Freedom of Conscience: Religion, (In)Tolerance, and Independence in the Spanish Monarchy,” Eastman examines a “heterodox form of Hispanic liberalism” that “blended revolutionary politics with religious partiality.” Tracing the written works of Spanish priests and officials, Eastman rejects the idea of an unenlightened Southern Europe by demonstrating how Spanish intellectuals participated in wide-ranging conversations in Europe and the Atlantic world about “the place of religion within

¹⁴ Paul Kennedy, in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987), dates the rise of Europe, in opposition to other civilizations, to the sixteenth century. Kenneth Pomeranz, on the other hand, states that fundamental economic advantages only emerged by the late eighteenth century in *The Great Divergence: Europe, China, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 13.

¹⁵ David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York: Macmillan, 2002).

¹⁶ Pol Dalmau and Jorge Luengo, “Writing Spanish History in the Global Age: Connections and Entanglements in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 3 (2018): 425-45.

¹⁷ Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 5.

¹⁸ Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914*, 88.

increasingly centralized and complex states.” Whereas Eastman carves out a space for eighteenth-century Spain in scholarly narratives of transnational ideologies and emergent public spheres, Saenz calls on Spanish historians in North America to contribute to public discussions about “the diverse world of the present” by contextualizing “Spanish history as U.S. history.” To these ends, Saenz reviews the borderlands literature and outlines how Spanish historians can employ the framework to develop public-facing scholarship on identity, empire, slavery, and migration as a corrective to national myths of American exceptionalism and ethnic purity.

For historians of the late nineteenth- and twentieth- centuries it has often been easier to focus on divergence and difference even though the Iberian Peninsula shares features that are common to Europe and broader global trajectories. As Pamela Radcliff has explained, there was little unique about Iberian experiences of liberal electoral politics falling to dictatorships and authoritarian regimes during the age of mass politics. What is more, with the 1970s democratic transitions “more thoroughly integrated into comparative scholarly analysis” than just about any other period, there is a pressing need to more fully integrate the Iberian Peninsula into global histories of the modern age.¹⁹

The final set of articles addresses this need. In “Madre y Matriz: The Politics of Town-Making in Cordoba, 1887-1905,” Patricia A. Schechter examines the case study of Pueblonuevo del Terrible, a Rothschild company town. Documenting intersecting foreign and domestic pressures at the local level, she argues that the town’s achievement of municipal status “counts as a success story among the efforts of working people to control their lives under transnational capitalist expansion in the late nineteenth century.” Transnational capitalist expansion also serves as the background for Pedro Lopes de Almeida’s study of early twentieth-century travel literature in Portugal and Angola, “Transnational Intimacies: Coloniality and the Environments of Travel Writing in Portugal and Angola, c. 1900-1930.” Focusing on scenes of encounter and intimacy, Lopes de Almeida traces how travel writing performed Otherness through fluid renditions of geographic and temporal relationalities, concluding that “the condition of periphery and/or sub periphery” was also “made through textual practices.” Jumping forward in time, our final article by Hamilton M. Stapell, “Bienvenido, Mickey Mouse!?: Hopes for a Magic Kingdom in Post-Franco Spain,” continues the discussion of Spain’s place in an increasingly globalized world through an examination of Americanization. Focusing on the country’s divergent postwar history, Stapell concludes that Spaniards more readily accepted American cultural products than their Western European peers because they signaled “economic development, international prestige, and a feeling of full European integration.”

¹⁹ Pamela Beth Radcliff, *Modern Spain 1808 to the Present* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 251.

Taken together, the articles that follow represent an initial attempt to understand Iberia's transnational connections and entanglements over the *longue durée*. Whether positioned at the center of an empire or at the semi-periphery of a globalized world, Iberian histories are constitutive of the world in which we live today and continue to influence the global north and the global south in profound ways.