

Considerations for the Research of Local Knowledge Circulation: The Interaction between Europe and the Americas in the Early Modern Era

Veranstalter: Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas Europeos (AHILA)

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Laura Dierksmeier (Tübingen) and Adolfo Polo y La Borda (Bogotá) chaired the symposium that was originally scheduled for August 2020 in Paris and was part of the XIX Congress of the Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas Europeos (AHILA) 2021. Knowledge and its circulation played a central role in early modern empires and this symposium focused primarily on the question of local knowledge in different contexts, with the presenters drawing on a variety of new archival material.

KAZUHISA TAKEDA (Tokyo) began with an analysis of kinship relations among Guaraní *cacicazgos* in Jesuit missions in Paraguay. The analysis of the *padrones* (census records) kept by the Jesuits, and the baptismal register from the mission of Santa Rosa, the only surviving one of its kind in that area, provide information about the family relationships, allowing one to conclude that the rank of *cacicazgo* was inherited through the male family line. Takeda presented two special cases in which the rank passed on to the son-in-law and later presumably to the grandson came through marriage. In one case, the grandson in question bore the surname of the grandfather; in the other case, the surname of the father and grandfather was compounded. The ensuing discussion raised the thesis that this custom could have originated in a mixture of pre-Hispanic and Hispanic traditions.

FABIAN FECHNER (Hagen) also based his presentation on a rare source, the *Libro de Consultas* from the province of Paraguay. This source is different from official decrees, reflecting local reality and knowledge. While many of the *consultas* were only oral or their record has been lost, this book provides in-

sight into the difficulties of solving everyday problems. As an example, Fechner used the questions of witchcraft and the carrying of firearms by indigenous people in the second half of the 16th century to show that the answers were not unanimous and sometimes no solution could be found. Still open is the question to what extent the recorded knowledge circulated between the different provinces. Currently, the *Libro de Consultas* is being prepared for editing by Fabian Fechner, Guillermo Wilde and Fabián R. Vega (both Buenos Aires).

ALEJANDRA ARANGO LONDOÑO (Granada) evaluated well-known sources with a new interpretation regarding the perception and representation of masculinity and femininity of indigenous people by Spaniards. Written by Spaniards in the 16th and 17th centuries, the chronicles by Gonzalo Fernández Oviedo, Juan de Castellanos and Fray Pedro Simón reveal classic role models in addition to the traditional division between good (Spaniards) and evil (indigenous people). The women act as supporters of men, although unlike Spanish women, indigenous women participated in the war effort by loading weapons and were used as messengers. The chronicles cast indigenous women as deceitful with the potential for seduction.

Based on the first ethnographic study of indigenous peoples in California, written by early 19th-century Franciscan missionary Fray Jerónimo Boscana, DAVID REX GALINDO (Santiago de Chile) addressed the question of access to and use of knowledge. Missionaries depended on indigenous people for access to local knowledge, but at the same time, they dominated the discourse about this knowledge. Boscana also appropriated indigenous knowledge – an issue that continues to have an impact today. Because of their abundance in comparison with indigenous accounts, missionary chronicles are often the focus of historiographical studies, while the indigenous people, the real holders of the knowledge described, fade into the background.

Another important factor for knowledge acquisition and transfer was underlined by ADOLFO POLO Y LA BORDA: Spanish as a

lingua franca not only within the empire, but also used by its opponents. Spanish had a status that only Arabic otherwise attained in the early modern period. Thanks to Spanish as a means of communication, the different parts of the empire were in close contact, not only on an administrative level, but also for contact between members of religious orders, informants, and even Spanish foes.

Using a *longue durée* approach, ESTHER PADILLA CALDERÓN (Hermosillo) explored the question of knowledge transfer and exchange using the example of agriculture in what is now the Mexican state of Sonora. With the arrival of the European conquistadors and settlers, both the nature of land ownership and the method of cultivation changed. For example, the Jesuits introduced wheat in their missions along with new vegetables, still typical of the region in the late 20th century. Nevertheless, it was never a complete replacement of the old system, but an innovative combination of elements.

In the presentation of her doctoral thesis, SOPHIA SPIELMANN (Berlin) dealt with the question of the exchange of knowledge in natural history. Spielmann plans to study the indigenous plant *ipecacuanha* and the conditions of its distribution within Latin America and to Europe, as well as to examine the herb as a unit of trade in the 17th to 19th centuries. In doing so, she hopes to trace the role of knowledge as a resource and to look in depth at the concepts of authorship and value.

All of the presentations revealed the influence of other disciplines, such as ethnography, which has been incorporated into the historiography of Latin American history over the recent years. They also represented the effort to use the concept of knowledge as a specific analytical tool, not as a ubiquitous umbrella term. In addition to the value of innovative sources and looking at the holders of pre-conquest knowledge in Latin America – indigenous people – the panel's discussions revolved around the concept of knowledge per se. The high value of knowledge is undeniable; it can be concealed or used, depending on the objective. Indigenous knowledge can be examined on the micro level for its meaning to local actors, on a macro level as a resource for the Spanish Empire, and on a

meso level where the interaction between the two takes place; three perspectives one should consider when analyzing archival material.

Conference overview:

Laura Dierksmeier (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen) and Adolfo Polo y La Borda (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá): Introduction and Moderation

Kazuhisa Takeda (University of Meiji, Tokio): Las relaciones de parentesco y cacicazgo guaraní en las misiones jesuitas de Paraguay: el producto híbrido de la colonización y evangelización española

Fabian Fechner (FernUniversität Hagen): Más allá del mando y la obediencia: la consulta como método dialógico de producción de conocimientos en el Virreinato del Perú (1560-1600)

Alejandra Arango Londoño (Universidad de Granada): Crónicas y discursos en la Nueva Granada, siglos XVI y XVII. La construcción y deconstrucción del otro a través del lenguaje discursivo

David Rex Galindo (Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, Santiago de Chile): Un científico ilustrado: Jerónimo Boscana, las Misiones Franciscanas y la antropología en California

Adolfo Polo y La Borda (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá): Interacciones globales en los márgenes

Esther Padilla Calderón (El Colegio de Sonora, México): Maíz, trigo y frijol en los pueblos del río Bavispe, Sonora. Una mirada de larga duración

Sophia Spielmann (Technische Universität Berlin / Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Berlin): Prácticas de intercambio de conocimiento sobre la planta medicinal *ipecacuanha* entre América del Sur y Europa entre los siglos XVII y XIX

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