

# ATLANTIC HISTORY. HISTORY BETWEEN EUROPEAN HISTORY AND GLOBAL HISTORY\*

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Since the 1950's the concept of "Atlantic History" has experienced a slow and then an increasingly accelerated acceptance.<sup>1</sup> Especially after 1989 the term rapidly obtained an inflationary use, especially within the Anglo-Saxon language area. But meanwhile it also came into use in non-English speaking European and American countries. In recent years this led even to the establishment of special teaching programs at American and European universities. The subject area is even represented on the world-wide-web within the historical information network H-NET –known in Germany mostly as HSozKult– with a special division "H-Atlantic". But what is "Atlantic History" at first glance but the transfer of Fernand Braudel's "Méditerranée"-concept to a different maritime space? And can it be even that? In order to understand the development and current historical meaning of the term, a historiographical retrospective view is advisable. Following that the question of the academic potential for explanations will be analyzed against the background of current empirical knowledge. Finally, the methodical development and features of this newly established historical sub-discipline will be discussed at and an attempt will be made to identify possible central problems which are becoming already apparent.

It was in the 1950s. The "Cold War" and the "hot" Korean War were under way, the UNO had been founded the Charter of Human Rights had been proclaimed, in the "Western hemisphere", a key term for the North American approach to "Atlantic History", the OAS, the Organization of American States, had been established, NATO was organized and the German rearmament had been initiated. During these years, in 1950 and 1955, at the International Congresses of Historians the concept of an "Atlantic history" was discussed first by a greater number of professional historians. The Swiss historian Max Silberschmidt had given a lecture concerning the "Atlantic" in Paris in 1950 and in 1955 Jacques Godechot and Robert R. Palmer jointly presented an intensively discussed report in Rome, regarding the problem of an Atlantic history. In 1987 Karl Dietrich Erdmann, the long running German representative in the *Comité International des Sciences Historiques*, still described this debate as a purely politically motivated problem in his history of the International Historical Congresses. The topic was not of relevance for professional historical research, he argued.<sup>2</sup> One may agree that the empirical findings regarding the history of the Atlantic area in 1955 were still much scarcer than they are now. But at the time when his book was published, Erdmann should have been better informed, if he had concerned himself only slightly with the history of European expansion. At the time of the congress the term "European expansion", which was spreading in the Anglo-Saxon world since the 1930s, was, for example, admittedly not yet established in the Federal Republic of Germany. Historians were still talking of the age of "discovery and conquest" before the term "European expansion" started gaining acceptance in the 1960s. In the time after the Second World War "problems of perception", nowadays discussed so extensively within the field of history and literature, shaped the debates within the subject of history even between internationally orientated historians to a great extent. Therefore it is no surprise, that this first attempt to launch the topic of "Atlantic history", which at that same time was demanding to be filled with precise

historical meaning and empirical contents beyond contemporary politics, found then little response.<sup>3</sup> The term at the same time started making a career for itself in a purely geographical sense, as a maritime space not only to be bridged but also to be divided among maritime rival powers, especially in the Iberian history of expansion.<sup>4</sup>

In this context it may be useful to recall briefly the nowadays widely accepted chronological subdivision of this long spanning expansion process of this “first expansion” as it is called by specialists, reaching from the Late Middle Ages until about 1830.<sup>5</sup> From the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century until more or less the middle of the XV<sup>th</sup> century a first phase may be defined. It is characterized by the decisive advance of the Iberian Reconquest of the Islamic territories, the “Reconquista”, which led to the opening of the straits of Gibraltar for Christian shipping and the beginning of regular trading contacts between southern Italian-Iberian Europe and the Europe of the North Sea area. Until approximately the middle of the fifteenth century, the combination of the different seafaring and shipbuilding techniques created new types of sailing ships capable of confronting Atlantic conditions. By then the Portuguese ventures along the African coast became more and more shaped by the search for the sea route to India and less by the “Reconquista” attempts of the Portuguese in North Africa. A second phase is to be detected from about 1460 onwards to the uprising of the Netherlands against Spanish dominance and the union between Spain and Portugal around 1580. This period covers the time of the extensive maritime ventures by the Portuguese and the Castilians with the delimitation of mutual spheres of interest in the Atlantic by the treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. From there followed the establishment of colonial empires by both kingdoms and finally the personal union of the two Iberian empires in 1580. By then the term “Hispanic Sea”<sup>6</sup> for the Atlantic gained acceptance to a great extent. A third phase covers the years from about 1580 until 1702 or 1714, the beginning or the end of the War of Spanish Succession. From this point English, Dutch and French authorities, striving to inflict decisive military defeats on the all-powerful Habsburg Empire at the source of its wealth in precious metals, sugar etc. in America, dispatched corsairs and privateers<sup>7</sup> against the Iberian centers in Africa and America. Eventually they acquired their own colonies on both continents and promoted settlement there. This period came to an end when the personal union between Spain and Portugal ended. Thereafter recognition of the colonial possessions of the competing European powers by Spain during the following years could no longer be avoided. It was followed by measures of repression against pirates previously supported by European rivals of Spain and Portugal. By then the Atlantic territory became integrated in European international law and the treaties based on it. The fourth and last phase finally covers approximately the time from 1714 until 1830, during which the inner European military conflicts were increasingly extended to Africa and America in the struggle for economic advantages, trading rights and the acquisition or possession of colonial territories. At the same time particularly the American colonies of the European powers became more conscious of their own interests and identities, demanded greater political autonomy and finally for the most part won/secured their independence. This short chronological overview not only makes clear that the European powers played roles, which are to be differently evaluated at different times and phases of the expansion process, but also that they entered the process of expansion characterized by different historical developments in European history.

The evolution of historiography reflected this widely. Spanish and Portuguese historical writing focussed particularly on the first two periods of this process, during which both powers were dominant. Then the 17<sup>th</sup> century was disregarded for a long time, when their dominance declined, in order to turn directly to the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the loss of large parts of their colonial empires became more and more evident. The English, French and

Dutch, however, predominantly worked on the third and fourth phase of this process and have each from this point of view developed broader interpretations, i.e. starting from structurally differently shaped periods of European history, than the Iberians did. This is certainly an essential circumstance, which helps to explain the different development of historiography in the individual European states involved in the expansion process, and should not to be left out of consideration.

The “Atlantic” in the Iberian history of expansion was accepted very early and, incidentally, switched directly from a historiography marked by the concept of “discovery and conquest” to an “Atlantic phase” and if it at all took up the concepts linked to “expansion” only occasionally and late. This has probably three causes. First it seems important, that both powers had acquired and settled all the Atlantic archipelagos situated comparatively close to Europe and Africa very early: Spain, the Canary Islands –the only ones already populated– Portugal, Madeira with Porto Santo, the Azores and the Cape Verdes, groups of islands which all played an important role, which only gradually has been more clearly recognized. They became important intermediaries in the process of expansion and transatlantic shipping. Furthermore both powers for the first time agreed on a truly far-reaching geo-political determination in the treaty of Tordesillas 1494, when they agreed on a dividing line all across the Atlantic in North-South direction, in order to delimit their mutual interests –to which the Portuguese speaking Brazil owns its origins–, which is certainly essential for the integration of extended Atlantic areas in either Portuguese or Spanish historical thinking. The third circumstance which probably favored the adoption of the Atlantic approach has its origins in Charles V’s organization of Spain’s transatlantic seafaring into the quite regular paths of two fleets running annually between Seville, later Cadiz, and the central Caribbean harbors Havana, Porto Bello, Cartagena and Veracruz. One should recall that Charles V even had the Atlantic in his coat of arms: the columns of Hercules with the two words “plus ultra”. This measure restricted Spain’s Atlantic presence to a precisely outlined area of the Atlantic, on the one hand, but on the other it marked these areas by a very prominent military presence –and thereby made the search for sources easier for later historians. The “Atlantic” was consequently for Iberian historiography a self-evident maritime space of their own –Portuguese and Spanish– history, like the North Sea for example was and is for the history of Hamburg. Only during the era of Franco and Salazar in the XXth century did both countries try to “fill” the ocean, or at least parts of it, with ideological concepts like “Hispanidad” and “Lusitanidade” in order to promote ties of special relationship with their ancient colonies. Despite these shortcomings, Iberian historiography of expansion or “Atlantic historiography” has made fundamental contributions to our knowledge of seafaring and trade in the Atlantic as well as to the historical meaning of the Iberian archipelagos in the Atlantic in the decades since 1960.<sup>8</sup> If both countries can be widely ignored in the following discussion of the development of the modern concept of “Atlantic history”, it is because they always considered the Ocean as a part of their respective national history. In contrast to other “Atlantic” approaches, the Iberian historiography made only weak attempts to relate “Atlantic history” to broader concepts, that try to unify the three continents bordering the Ocean into a broader scheme of historical analysis. In the end Iberian historical research never overcame “national” perspectives of interpreting history. At most they stretched the early modern concept of an “empire” since the XVth century over the ocean to America and also hardly developed their own methodical features, following mostly methodological developments especially in France and in the Anglo-Saxon world. Until now for example we still are lacking basic knowledge of trade relations between Portugal and Spain, as both historiographies only began to collaborate in the 1990’s. Despite this one has to remind, as already has been said, its enormous contributions in recovering unknown source materials.

After the International Congress of Historians of 1955 the maritime dimension of early modern history of Western Europe was emphasized once more by Charles Boxer and John H. Parry in their books on “The Dutch Seaborne Empire”, “The Portuguese Seaborne Empire” and “The Spanish Seaborne Empire” respectively. More or less at the same time Pierre Chaunu and Frédéric Mauro, two French historians from the Braudel school, had already introduced the “Atlantic” into an historically formative space, when electing it as the central subject of two monumental studies. The special significance of geography in Braudel’s understanding of history and the precedent of his Mediterranean classic evidently had promoted this approach. Both books were pointing the way in many respects to further research. Regardless of the comment above, that the Iberian history of expansion can be disregarded largely in the present context, these works have to be mentioned, as they exerted lasting influence on the historiography not only of Spain but also of Portugal.<sup>9</sup> Both investigations for the first time presented a wealth of empirical data for the historical interactions between Europe and America, providing a challenge to use them as an “academic quarry” far beyond Iberian history of expansion and thereby giving manifold impulses for further research.

After a “History of the Atlantic Ocean” had been published in 1957,<sup>10</sup> barely noticed by the discipline, the Belgian Charles Verlinden published a history of the Atlantic civilization in the middle of the 1960s. This study can be described as the first coherent attempt to construct a common “Atlantic history” in economic, social, and cultural terms, beyond the movement of ships and trade exchanges, at least for Europe and America. Verlinden regarded the Ocean as a theatre of historical developments producing a “common historical heritage” and even a “civilization” since the late Middle Ages. But the dissemination of the book remained predominantly limited to specialists in the history-of-expansion field.<sup>11</sup> By then central historical debates shifted onto the problems of colonialism and imperialism, development and underdevelopment, dependence and dominant capitalist economy. It was a time of intense ideological debates when the conflict between East and West was culminating. The first of I. Wallerstein’s World System –volumes, published at the beginning of the 1970s, showed clearly the impact of these debates, relying very strongly on the so– called theory of dependency, developed in Latin America. The influence of this concept is still to be detected in Wolfgang Reinhard’s overview volumes on the history of European expansion, published in the 1980’s<sup>12</sup> and may be considered as a kind of summarizing expansion history. But at the same time the attempt to identify an historical interdependence among Europe, Africa and America, spanning the entire Atlantic area and having consequences lasting into the present, became visible, even if from a different, chiefly an economic history-perspective. In this context it has to be emphasized also that for the first time early modern expansion became connected quite clearly with the emergence of a “world economy”, a process, for which European expansion became even regarded as its motor. After receiving during a short time much attention the influence of the work remained rather limited in Europe, even though the book was translated to other languages, as is to be seen, for example, by the German translation and its rather low impact.

One should mention in this context also the “International Commission on Maritime History”, acting within the “International Commission of Historical Sciences”, which has been directed for many years by the French historian Michel Mollat, and was strongly influenced by the school of Fernand Braudel and its reliance on geography. Probably it contributed also a lot towards turning maritime spaces into a subject of historical scrutiny, even towards characterizing them as separate historical units. But since the 1950s this happened with a purely historical-geographical perspective and was not connected with the

attempt to develop coherent concepts of historical interpretation on the basis of such maritime spaces. The older term “overseas history”, which is still used in Europe, but goes back to the time before the Second World War,<sup>13</sup> has also to be mentioned. But with its central concern to examine the activities of Europeans outside their continent and sometimes also certain repercussions it differed only slightly from “history of expansion” and methodically and conceptually seems not to have developed any integrating general interpretations for the period dealt with here.

It should be pointed out already now, that it is not the author’s concern to use these different terms in order to engage in a nominalist argument about terms like “Eurocentrism” or “multiculturalism” or the like, only that some of these terms –especially those connected to “discovery and conquest”, “European expansion” and recently also “Atlantic history”– are also linked with different methodological approaches and perspectives to the problems, and, more important, also with different possibilities of gaining insights. But it has to be said also, that the differing terminology used by the academics working on these problems, never led to claims of exclusivity for definitions or schools. This was prevented on one hand by their relatively small number and on the other by new challenges which have been produced by them over time.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century term to characterize the epoch “Age of Discovery and Conquest” was strongly marked by an understanding of history on the basis of the individual as central historical actor. Accordingly, study was focussed on the examination of the origins, motivation, actions etc. of the personalities of “great” seafarers and discoverers or important conquerors of empires outside Europe. Adopting the term “European expansion” academic interest shifted to the study of the broader structural interrelations in economy, society, politics, religion and culture, which gave birth to the process of expansion in the countries involved. The forces which supported and stimulated it and contributed to the mobilization of people and resources to gain footholds in non-European regions, founding factories or military strongholds along coasts, settlements and colonies became the central field of interest. But meanwhile, as the traditional history of discoveries and conquests was “following” the actors into non-European archives, the more structurally oriented history of expansion did not. With its interest centered on the European backgrounds, the reasons and forms of the process of expanding beyond traditional areas wherein countries had developed during the Middle Ages research remained restricted predominantly to sources from European archives. These very often had been already filtered during the historical process itself by quite different administrative levels, giving thus a somewhat distorted vision. Expansion history thus tended always to stress the metropolitan point of view and for a long time saw contradictory evidence in far away colonies as “exceptions”. By the time, these exceptions became so general that it was necessary to deal with them in a different way. Despite this restriction there is no doubt that expansion history did a lot in accomplishing an enormously valuable task of making sources accessible and discovering new problems.

However much a view and a questioning position from Europe to the outside was connected with this history of expansion way of procedure, is made clear especially by two phenomena. On the one hand, academics limited themselves, even when studying the history of the respective colonies, mostly to colonial politics and their implementation on the basis of the sources found in colonial central administrations. As already has been pointed out, these sources, preserved in European countries had in most cases passed already through quite different administrative filters before they arrived in the European metropolis. This in turn gave rise to special questions in further research, questions related to other problems of

central government in the general line of European developments or stressing much more the impact of government policy on colonial affairs. On the other hand this area of research never asked about the repercussions of the expansion into foreign spaces onto Europe itself. Academics certainly intensively attempted to reconstruct and quantify the trade and financial statistics in colonial exchange relations in order to be able to make up profit and loss calculations and to evaluate the benefits of the respective colonial expansion. This holds even when, as in the case of England, the history of expansion has been connected with the history of English industrialization.<sup>14</sup> Fairly far-reaching repercussions of the process of expansion on Europe, however, for example the intensifying adoption of non-European products, especially since the seventeenth century, the introduction of non-European plants and animals even North of the Alps, i. e. the cooler regions of the Old World, remained unexplored. Most of these adopted crops, dye stuffs, the potato, spices, sugar, corn, vegetable varieties, the turkey and tea, cocoa, coffee produced quite fundamental structural changes, restructuring the agrarian, commercial, fiscal and industrial sectors as well as behavior regarding trade and consumption. Most of these phenomena were never dealt with in expansion history. At best literary history and the related history of “civilizations” and recently history of consumption, in any case areas of research “alien to expansion” within the broad spectrum of the historical sciences, have started to investigate these problems comparatively late.<sup>15</sup>

Since the history of expansion was mostly pursued along the lines of the respective “national” expansion processes, in the end it ended up almost inevitably in the examination of the history of “colonial empires”. These were at best compared in “Atlantic” perspective, as shown, for example, by the titles of Boxer and Parry. To the degree to which the range of action of the respective European powers increased during the process of expansion, it almost inevitably turned into a “colonial empire” or at least into “trading empire”. As ultimately the apparatus of power of the home countries decided what had to happen in regions outside Europe, the traditional European concepts of empire seemed to be the only conceptual framework at hand for characterizing the results of expansion. While doing so political objectives were very often tacitly equated with “colonial reality”. If a government issued a prohibition, this “meant” that the object of prohibition really was implemented in the respective regions, besides, of course, some exceptions. Things very often were seen the like, to express it in a simplified way. The particularly frequent complaints of colonial administrations of all colonial powers about widely spread “corruption”, i. e. the circumvention or non-observance of metropolitan rules and prohibitions, were more often than not dismissed as “exceptions”,<sup>16</sup> but are proving themselves meanwhile more and more as substantial structural features. The maritime spaces, especially the Atlantic, which were situated in the sphere of influence of the respective colonial empires, were for the most part implicitly annexed by it or counted among the areas disputed amongst different powers. The colonial empires “came into being”, “grew”, “gained strength”, became “weaker” or “decayed” in expansion historiography for a long time, assessments which illustrated the limits of the concept and the methodological approach related with.

The traditional history of European expansion also had difficulty in recognizing a further phenomenon, whose significance is widely underestimated in Europe still today: the fact that in the course of the expansion during early modern age Europeans were unable to gain a foothold either in Africa or in America or in Asia, to say nothing of conquering indigenous empires, without the collaboration or at least tolerance of all or parts of the local population. This issue has barely been analyzed. The fact, although it is in different forms and intensity, that European settlers, merchants or conquerors politically, economically, and culturally had to act between two cultures. They had to adopt at least methods of understanding, negotiation

and political dealing with indigenous ethnic groups,<sup>17</sup> on the one hand, and had to be aware of the cultural, religious, political etc. patterns of the home country. Thereby they soon differed largely from the inhabitants of the respective European countries of origin. Just for this capacity they were mostly observed with distrust or contempt by their own compatriots in the home country.<sup>18</sup> This problem, which seemingly leads us far away from the Atlantic, has, however, great importance for defining the concept of “Atlantic history”. It contributed always more to separate colonial elites and the governing elites in the home countries and even produced special policies to discipline colonies, as will be discussed later.

Consequently the “Atlantic” as a phenomenon transcending the different colonial empires was only gradually rediscovered. In the 1970’s the need was felt to arrive at more far-reaching patterns of interpretation after years of investigation of the separate colonial empires<sup>19</sup> and to begin comparisons of these different colonial empires, and also of different colonial policies conceived by European governments and implemented more or less effectively etc.<sup>20</sup>

However, two other historiographical developments, preceded this development contributing decisively towards the evolution of an “Atlantic history”: the very rapid increase of studies on the “Atlantic slave trade” and the development of a quite independent –from the European empire perspective– historiography on American colonies since the 1960’s. Both fields, at least partially, were much indebted to the mentioned works of the two French historians, Pierre Chaunu and Frédéric Mauro, at least as far as the Iberian and the African area is concerned. Since the first over all quantitative evaluation of the Atlantic slave trade by Philip Curtin<sup>21</sup> at the end of the 1960’s a virtual boom developed in the research regarding the slave trade. An intensification of the study of closely related issues was one of the consequences of this increase in slavery studies. Topics like slavery in America, like the American plantation system in Brazil, the Caribbean and in the USA or like biological consequences of these different migration-processes, became centers of research interest. It is impossible here to follow more closely this relatively independent branch of research, so the interested reader is referred to recent overviews.<sup>22</sup> Essential for the present context seems to be the circumstance that this line of study provided the Atlantic, so to speak, with its proper historical object as well with a central historical pattern of interpretation and methodological approach. This was largely achieved by discussing the so called “Atlantic triangle”.

Outlining this trade in a rather simplified manner, it was organized in the following way: European merchants – Portuguese, Dutchmen, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Danes, at times even Brandenburgers and Kurländers – sold European products to African traders, exchanging their goods for slaves. These were then transported to different parts of America and sold mainly as workers for the plantation system producing tropical and subtropical products from Brazil to today’s USA. There the ships loaded sugar, cocoa, dyes and other plantation products and returned to Europe. In this way, the Atlantic was directly connected with a complex set of problems, which in principle only could be dealt with from such a maritime perspective. This complex system in itself was related to a wide range of different problems of research. It was also linked nearly to all the regions bordering the Atlantic at the same time. In place of the separate colonial empires these connections with European, African, North American and Latin American history came more and more to the fore of the academic interest and increasingly forced back the traditional approach of expansion history with its various colonial empires. But at the same time individual parts of the Atlantic, closely connected with the slave trade and the plantation system, also became increasingly the focus of historical research. These were particularly the so-called middle passage, i.e. in general terms the central Atlantic space, the Caribbean and from the later 1970’s also the northern Atlantic area

with its British and Dutch rivalries. The southern Atlantic has remained rather unexplored until today.

The questions relating to the profits of this trade and their investment led, as mentioned, to the discussion of the origins of English industrialization. The forced migration of African slaves was compared and thematically connected to the European migration to America. The discussion of the consequences for Africa of these population losses and the debates on the significance of the plantation complex in both American continents for further development soon promoted discussions of the historical origins of development and underdevelopment –just consider the North-South debates since the 1970’s. For Western Europe, Africa and America this new dimension of an Atlantic history promoted even more studies about population and migration history and related consequences for the regions concerned, mainly based on the well-known push and pull approach. All in all this new dimension of Atlantic history at the beginning had strong ethical-moral implications– the Organization of African States nowadays still demands financial compensation for the population losses and the suffering of African people concerned. Slavery became an important factor in the ideological arguments about colonial exploitation, imperialism, underdevelopment, and racism since the 1970’s. It could be said –to borrow an expression from astronomy– that some kind of ideological *halo* developed around the empirical historical examination of the Atlantic slave trade or rather the Atlantic triangle with all its economic, social, political, cultural, and demographic implications. Inside this *halo* general debates and evaluations were often conducted with moral arguments and rarely with a thorough knowledge of source-based historical evidence. But more revisionist modern research, proving convincingly that the slave trade would not have been possible without the collaboration and even control of African inhabitants along the coastal regions and that all African slaves did not necessarily work on plantations and die there. It became evident also that high prices for slaves in America since the 18<sup>th</sup> century made them expensive and led in a large degree to better treatment and nutrition. African slaves in the Caribbean were often much better nourished than, for example, East German or East European dependent farmers or farm hands,<sup>23</sup> often also bound by legal ties to their lords. Slowly this evidence contributed to more complex points of view on early modern Atlantic history. Pointing out these circumstances does not mean washing white slavery but these circumstances have to be mentioned in order to get a better understanding of the plantation complex and its productivity. There is no need to adopt an opposite extreme point of view, following, for example, the historical case of the baroque concert on Cuba in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. This refers to a proven case where an Irish plantation owner had an orchestra of black slaves playing music composed by Haydn under a German conductor on occasion of a celebration. In a similar way it should not be overestimated that in other areas comparatively many runaway slaves turned out to be musicians and that even a natural horn player could be found among them.<sup>24</sup> In addition historical traditions concerning the whole Atlantic area were soon depicted even in the field of the history of political ideas<sup>25</sup> and gradually also in other historical areas.<sup>26</sup>

Historical works using Atlantic in the title increased steadily in number since the 1970’s.<sup>27</sup> It is therefore no surprise that many partial “Atlantic’s” can be found amongst them. Next to the already mentioned “Atlantic empires”, characterized by the respective colonial powers, we find, for example, the “tropical Atlantic”,<sup>28</sup> indeed, even a “tropical Versailles” on the American Atlantic shores,<sup>29</sup> the “black Atlantic”,<sup>30</sup> etc. Sometimes the colonial home countries in Europe are simply added to the Atlantic.<sup>31</sup> Cultural phenomena are also portrayed in the Atlantic context in a broader manner and thereby similarities are at least suggested.<sup>32</sup> Sometimes just “history of the Atlantic” can be seen once again.<sup>33</sup> Parading all these titles



here would certainly go beyond the frame of this short sketch. Such an overview alone would cause the conjecture, that by now many authors are projecting well known phenomena from other fields of study and even from traditional European history onto the Atlantic and its empirical realities. Does the Atlantic more and more serve as a projection foil or plane, which is “populated” with well-known concepts for example from European history? Starting mostly with book titles and tables of contents –the wealth of publications often does not allow a more intensive analysis– it is certainly not permitted to draw such a conclusion. Numerous pointers for justified suspicion, however, exist. Even if this development does not yet represent a consistent justification for a concept of “Atlantic history”, it is possible to recognize a process of “filling the Atlantic space” with empirical evidence, very often interpreted as referring to concepts well known from other fields of study. This process can be termed an attempt beyond pure projection to identify, describe and define familiar concepts in different, specifically “Atlantic”, ambiances. One characteristic of this development may be recognized very early, i.e. thinking in larger contexts, both in regard to space and content. From there developed more or less inevitably the need for larger definitional frameworks, but also for comparisons and generalizations overcoming the limits of traditional generalizations in history. But it took until the 1990’ s, before this led to more precise efforts to discuss special methods and definitions suited to the new concept of Atlantic history.

Even if in many cases it does not seem difficult to combine and link these different Atlantics to more generalizing concepts, for the early modern period one important barrier obviously exists. Such a strong dividing line is apparently the separation between the Iberian south and central Atlantic and the Northern Atlantic, influenced more by British, French and Dutch traditions and connections, and their corresponding impacts on both American continents. First one has to point out, that scholars mostly are specialized in one area and context or an other, determined very often by language facilities. Second there is the problem of how to overcome the evident phenomenon of quite different historical developments on both sides since at least the XIXth century. This barrier is also largely maintained by stereotypes that one side cultivates with respect to the other. These often go back to the European roots of religious and / or national perceptions the different colonial powers had with respect to each other. Until now few efforts have been made to test this barrier from an “Atlantic history point of view”. From this perspective, of course, differences can be observed, but also a lot of similarities and parallelisms, some of them mentioned in preceding pages. One has to point out that neither the Anglo–American colonies nor the Spanish and Portuguese followed a homogenous model of historical development. We can find very different types of colonial societies within the Spanish area of domination or in Portuguese Brazil as well in British, Dutch or French colonial areas. The linkages to the Atlantic appear quite different and the development after the time we are dealing with in this context are also different. There are good reasons to start a new phase of comparison, not as much from the perspective of XIXth and XXth century developments looking backwards, as mostly done until now at least in Europe, but from the perspective of early modern Atlantic history.

Before the attempts at defining “Atlantic history” can be discussed, another branch of historical research, which since the beginning of the 1960’s has increasingly split away from the then dominant expansion history, has to be mentioned shortly. I refer to the relatively independent field of “colonial history”. This was motivated by the desire to understand the colonial past of the states in America and Africa, that become independent in the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Historians felt the necessity to understand the processes of independence and the formation of states, analyzing the importance and consequences of the respective “colonial heritages”. Besides this, it developed from a desire to examine the various realities in the

colonies themselves, beyond the attention the traditional history of expansion had dedicated to these problems. These studies of colonial history, centered on larger continental areas as well in the Americas as in Africa, increased rapidly and became more and more autonomous from expansion history. Depending on the respective areas, colonized in different epochs by different European powers, these areas of research developed over time in regionally very different forms, often in rather isolated ways from each other and with manifold special features. Within the framework of this area of research comprehensive attempts at systematization remained usually restricted to the respective cultural spaces, for example in relation to Spanish and Portuguese, English, French or Dutch colonial history. Finally research on the separate colonial histories since the 1980's provided a great wealth of empirical results regarding the most varied subject areas. Now comparative approaches, set out from the Atlantic perspective and including many cultural areas, could rely on a sufficiently dense basis of empirical evidence. This applies to economic and social history, the respective political and administrative systems, the fields of church and mission activities, ethnogenesis, indeed, for the culture as a whole.

For the present context the studies about the treatment, the dealings with and the measures for the integration and exclusion of ethnically different populations are of special interest. This applies as well to the indigenous peoples of America and Africa or the ethnically or religiously and culturally differently shaped groups of the population coming from Europe, which had voluntarily or compulsorily immigrated. A further central factor discovered by colonial historiography, which has to be mentioned, is the phenomenon of ethnogenesis. This concept, introduced only very recently, more or less as a substitute of "race-mixture", refers to the process of the development of new ethnic groups. These came into existence by the mixing of people of European origin among themselves, or of these with indigenous or Black African people, or of Black Africans with indigenous elements of the population, even of people of African origin with each other. Since the slave transports brought together Africans of very different ethnicity, cultural and religious traditions, slavery produced quite new African Americans also. This also applies to African coastal regions, where people from all over the Atlantic world, even American natives, came together and mixed with each other. Generally this mixing process was connected to the development of new cultural identities, as illustrated by the syncretic religions which in the 20<sup>th</sup> century got an increasingly significance in the Brazilian or Caribbean cities, attracting even intellectuals. Or let us recall the Caribbean music or American Jazz, all products of these new cultures, which so widely conquered European and American popular culture.

These colonial studies made it quite clear that Europeans could settle down nowhere outside Europe without the collaboration or, at least, the toleration of the indigenous populations, be it the Portuguese, the Spaniards, British, French, Dutch or whomsoever. From these findings resulted very far-reaching consequences for the developing colonies. Everywhere, in whatever colonial regions Europeans settled, they developed a different behavior compared to the populations of the respective home countries. They learned new attitudes in dealing with indigenous cultures and with people and authorities of their respective European countries, up to the point that they could even, like an actor, identify with different roles, dressing, speaking etc. depending on the role they had to play.<sup>34</sup> This capacity to adopt changing attitudes very soon made them suspicious of authorities and compatriots in the home countries. There they were considered as *Parvenus*, if they had got rich, or suspected of "going native", which meant something like "not very reliable in responding to established cultural patterns of the home country". The newly developing ethnic groups most often played a role as intermediaries between the population of European origin and the

indigenous population. Even if at first glance this phenomenon may appear unrelated to Atlantic History, it turns more and more into an additional instrument of identification and delimitation of the new field helping considerably to define the impact of the Atlantic on continental histories.

How much the research on these topics has been stimulated again by an International Congress of Historians remains to be seen. But it is a fact, that the problem of “Alterity” was the focal subject of the International Congress in Stuttgart in 1985. The congress at least accompanied a new line of historical research becoming very popular in Europe in the following time.<sup>35</sup> In this context one should mention also the initiative the Mexican government promoted in 1985. With the 1992 Columbus jubilee in mind, the Mexican government adopted a proposition made by a commission of outstanding historians, presided over by the famous historian of the Aztec Empire, Miguel León Portilla. The commission proposed to speak no longer of “discovery and conquest of America” –a concept, as we have seen, already long before widely abandoned. Instead it was proposed to use the Spanish term “encuentro de culturas” or its translations. By this it was attempted to give a higher valuation to the role of the indigenous population in American history. Despite long discussions on the validity of the concept the term was soon adopted especially in Anglo-American historiography and replaced not only “Discovery and Conquest” but also “European expansion”.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore studies in colonial history made it apparent, that every region acquired by a European power possessed an inner “frontier”. These were settlement and cultural boundary zones with very specific forms of interaction between independent indigenous ethnic groups, on the one hand, and populations connected to the colony and / or to Europe, on the other. From there two further essential characteristics of non-European areas of settlement, differing generally from realities in European home countries, became evident. Relatively large degrees of political autonomy of these colonial regions against political intervention of governments and against social discipline imposed by Christian churches were predominant there. The ability of the inhabitants of these frontier areas to come to terms with different cultural and ethnic conditions, adopting, if necessary, totally different cultural attitudes had become a second characteristic of these areas. As already mentioned this situation could be used even to improve political autonomy or, in case of legal persecution, to change cultural sides. The inhabitants of the colonial home countries thoroughly lacked this ability, and increased their distrust and even discrimination towards these populations originating from Europe but living in the colonies. As colonial well-being increased, making colonies even more autonomous from crises in Europe, nearly all European powers turned to occupy colonial administrations with officers sent from Europe to take charge of disciplining colonies, that showed declining loyalty towards the home countries. Thus ties within the empires became weaker. In this way the Atlantic became more and more attractive as a region of greater freedom, greater possibilities and, of course, risks of failure, but, at the same time, always a new frontier, a finding valid for all European colonies in America, despite the many differences in their specific developments. This interpretation, derived of course from the Turner-thesis in the USA, has been found a useful tool of analysis for Iberian colonies as well.

What does this mean for the concept of “Atlantic history”? While it is appropriate to be suspicious of broad generalizations, we may observe, that, at first, the established history of expansion of the time after the Second World War started to fill the Atlantic space with empirical data, facts, evidences and references related to it. Studies about the Atlantic slave trade, slavery and related economic systems –developing fast since the 1960s– provided

essential new empirical insights into the forms of the trade itself. But the concept of the Atlantic triangle –nowadays outdated in its original model of describing it– offered at the same time a first basic scheme, which was able to provide at least roughly order and structure to the bewildering amount of empirical results. The beginning of this development at first was mostly derived from the national historical perspectives. Additionally this approach provided new perspectives on the participation or the role of all continents involved in or being affected by the process of expansion in early modern times. Europe still seemed to be the motor of the process, but the two American continents and Africa got a more important standing also. From this point onwards the concept of an “Atlantic history” began spreading along with increased empirical knowledge and at first without precise methodology and definitions. When the continental links to these Atlantic phenomena became increasingly the center of interest for further research in special parts of the Atlantic, the various colonial histories with their results became important. As has been outlined above, they provided essential help in defining the Atlantic Amphitheater. The phenomena mentioned above enabled scholars to determine the extension of the influence of these Atlantic phenomena onto the landlocked countries of the continents, to identify the prevailing players and the range of their actions and autonomy. For Europe, where these data were still missing to a large extent, the study of repercussions started either from the Atlantic perspective or from quite different fields of study, more related to the “cultural turn” of history since the 1980’s.

Since about the middle of the 1980’s a fundamentally new method of research began to be more broadly used in Atlantic historiography, which at that time still presented a rather diffuse image. This approach was focused on the investigation of networks of merchants and players in the whole Atlantic area or at least large parts of it. Without remaining within the framework of the narrower national historical perspectives, which had dominated in the older history of expansion, studies on such networks partially laid out quite new grids of relations on large Atlantic regions. Apart from specific religious or ethnic groups, like the Sephardic Jews, Basques, Irish people, Freemasons and others, even “multinational networks” were identified.<sup>37</sup> These studies made it evident that in the Atlantic areas at the most distant points people collaborated in trade, mediation and other exchange processes without regard to language, culture, religion or color. Very often this collaboration operated also without much regard to legal rules established by the European powers claiming sovereignty in the respective regions. Thinking in terms of networks of human beings, capable of being identified, proved an exceptionally fertile methodical approach for Atlantic history. Now it became possible to examine the structural results in a considerably more refined form not only in relation to their development in time, but relating them to special human groups, revealing common phenomena etc. It became possible to define “Atlantic history” in a methodologically more solid way and to analyze more clearly its overall common features in relation to the traditional national perspective within European historiography. A short example may illustrate this.

After the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 the allied powers, France and Spain, had lost their navies. Napoleon had ordered the blockade of the European continent against Britain, its trade and control of the sea, but probably also against the Atlantic trade in general, from French-controlled Western and Middle Europe. For the Spanish crown a problem arose: how to get hold of the important deliveries of precious metals from the Spanish American colonies. In the case of Mexico the problem was solved –while the war went on– in a very curious and surprising way. A merchant company in the principal Mexican harbor of Veracruz, belonging to an Irish family of Spanish descent named Murphy agreed with the Spanish viceroy in Mexico to organize the delivery. The Murphy merchant house took over the state-owned

silver treasure, signed up the English navy in Jamaica and at sea loaded the silver from its own ships onto the British navy ships, which transported the silver to London on the basis of a previously agreed fare. In London the silver was handed over to the partners of the Murphy's from Veracruz. This partner company, Gordon & Murphy, issued letters of exchange on the Spanish crown, which were brought through the continental blockade to Spain. The Spanish crown presented the letters for payment in Amsterdam and in Hamburg. The costs of the transaction were, considering the war, comparatively low: after all 80% of the sum exported from Mexico reached the Spanish crown.<sup>38</sup>

This short summary of the transaction makes it seem comparatively easy, but one has to take into account how many persons and authorities were involved in the process, a process which was illegal for the European powers. It should also be considered that most people concerned had no reason to document the transaction extensively, so that reconstructing the transfer is only possible by following the separate stations and searching for clues in the sources. For the case under discussion this means examining archives in Mexico, Jamaica, London, Madrid and the Netherlands. With that, the potential and the reach of an appropriately understood "Atlantic history" becomes visible. The combination of the mentioned sub-areas of historical research offers the opportunity to piece together these elements of different European political processes, the expansion context, the colonial experiences and the developments predominantly taking place in maritime spaces. Interpreting all these phenomena requires a higher level of abstraction. On the other hand one has to examine changes in the Atlantic sub-areas in their mutual influence over large geographical distances, which becomes clear if we recall that the British navy, while transferring Mexican silver, was preparing an attack on Spanish Buenos Aires in the Southern Atlantic. Atlantic history thus becomes a connecting element between European, North American, Caribbean, Latin American and West African history.<sup>39</sup> An essential characteristic of this Atlantic history seems to be in any case that it mainly calls for views from the exterior on historical phenomena or special regions of different continents examined at any one time. At first this appears to mean limitations of opportunities for insights, but combining such views from outside with the more common inside and very often also more grass-roots based perspective it is usually easier to come to valid interpretations of historical phenomena in general, confronting both.

A short example from the history of Hamburg may illustrate this. In regional history, the abolition of Hamburg convoys to the Iberian Peninsula around 1730 is discussed almost exclusively from the perspective of the debates among the merchants themselves and between the merchants and the senate. But on viewing the process from the outside, it becomes clear that two groups existed among the merchants. One group traded mainly with goods of the Iberian Peninsula, especially of Andalusia, like fruit, wine, oil, also salt, while the others, through intermediaries, had penetrated the Spanish American trade and thereby depended on its periodical nature. Up to the time after the Spanish Wars of Succession the Spanish colonial trade was rigorously shaped by the system of fleets running twice a year from Cádiz to the Caribbean.<sup>40</sup> In the 1720s the Spanish crown began to relax this rather inflexible system step by step and to license single ships running throughout the whole year and into nearly all Spanish - American regions. For merchants participating in the American trade this may have suggested ending the inflexible and costly convoy system, while the merchants specializing in Mediterranean fruit and other Spanish goods had good reasons to maintain it. It cannot be proven in detail that the matter was as outlined here. But it should have become clear that a view from the outside, like the one illustrated here, offers many more possibilities of interpretation than a view purely from inside.<sup>41</sup>

Atlantic history, after the process we called “condensation of historical findings in the Atlantic”, for the present can surely be defined more precisely for the time from the Late Middle Ages until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is related to the fact that in the time after 1830, on the side of the American continent with its many newly established independent states, defining themselves as nations, predominantly national historical sets of problems dominated research. At the same time the colonial age just began in Africa on a larger scale and Europe entered the age of the struggle between monarchic principle and constitutional democracy on the one hand and industrialization on the other. It was also the time of mass emigration to America. These phenomena contain enough “Atlantic potential”. If one considers the age of imperialism and the beginning world trade, even more perspectives are pointing not only to an Atlantic perspective, but also beyond in the direction of a “world history” or “global history”.<sup>42</sup> Some more recent publications are already clearly revealing this tendency.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the potential for interpretations of the concept “Atlantic history” a very practical danger ought not to be ignored. Most of the historians participating in these debates are at the top of the current level of research only in one or perhaps two of the subject areas concerned and have to achieve knowledge in other fields by bibliographical research only. This often leads to rash judgements. Specialist historians of the non-Iberian Caribbean for example criticize as incompetence the fact that Cuba introduced a productive plantation system only very late, after the return of the island, occupied by the English, in the Peace of Paris in 1763 to Spanish control. However, they fail to see the decisive problem, namely: what purpose should they have had to do this in Cuba? The Spanish merchant fleet, which annually twice entered the harbor of La Havana, was a much more lucrative trade than the plantation system. The fleet came to Cuba loaded with European goods and needed supplies. A part of the goods coming from Europe could be used for lucrative smuggling trade with the neighboring Iberian areas, which were not visited by the fleet. At the same time the payments for the supplies occurred much sooner than would have been possible in the sugar trade, since the fleets, which were going on to the mainland, returned to Havana two to three months later. Now a fleet was loaded with large quantities of precious metals, was to be supplied again for crossing the Atlantic and was able to pay in cash. In the sugar trade payment in form of letters of exchange for one’s products was handed over at once, but the payment in cash generally needed the access to the European capital market. Thus the producer, who had to pay in cash for his minor supplies and other acquisitions not to be paid for in letters of exchange, got cash comparatively later. When Spain, after the return of the island from England, totally abolished the fleet system between 1765 and 1786, a thriving plantation system developed very fast. This makes it apparent, that a way of looking at things as outlined here, holds a wealth of risks even for a historian who is very knowledgeable in other areas. The author as a specialist in early modern Spanish and in Latin American colonial history is quite aware of this danger for himself, especially in the current context. Despite these problems the intellectual exchange of historians, working in very different fields of what became now more and more Atlantic history, but sharing a common interest in questions crossing borders, is leading to very constructive debates and contributes to the integration of knowledge and thereby of the whole field.

This was also the case in 1999 on the occasion of a “summer school” in Hamburg with the topic “History of the Atlantic System, c.1580 - c. 1830”, where the aim was to continue debates developing since the 1990’s about theory and methodology of “Atlantic history”.<sup>44</sup> The term “system”, built into the title of the conference as conscious challenge, soon moved into the center of the debate. Atlantic history on the other hand was accepted generally. After

intensive discussions a certain consensus had been achieved towards the end of the conference that the term “system” could be used at most for the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The concept of “system” had been used repeatedly in existing bibliography, but had been mostly limited to separate sub-areas, more in the sense of several “Atlantic systems” existing parallel with each other.<sup>45</sup> This author tends to describe these as “sub-systems”, which are regarded as parts of a central integrated system oriented, at least during the XVIIIth century, largely towards the producers of precious metals, i. e. the Iberian colonies as the main attracting regions in the Atlantic. However, it has to be admitted that a number of problems of definition and insufficient empirical evidence stand against this point of view.<sup>46</sup> By now Stanley J. and Barbara Stein are also talking about an “Atlantic system” in the singular, both by broadening the temporal area of validity of the term, including the time before 1700, and by focusing on questions of economic history.<sup>47</sup>

How can the state of the discussion of methodology be summarized or even be given a new perspective? For the time being the system concept as central frame of reference for the Atlantic does indeed seem to be helpful and useful. This means that for the broadest and most general perspective a system - related or “systemic” methodical approach has to be chosen. Without getting stuck in system theory, the reference to two essentially different forms of systems should be sufficient for the moment to clarify differences already mentioned. We should distinguish open systems and closed systems, with a given scale of stages in between. This would allow us to speak of sub-systems with a character more or less open or closed. It has to be remembered that it is the identification of more and more new such “sub-systems” –from a national perspective identified as “English”, “Spanish” etc. Atlantic or from the perspective of the history of the slave trade and slavery etc.– which contributed to the “filling” of the Atlantic space in regard to content. Systems, however, need elements keeping them together. For most of the mentioned sub-systems adjectives like “English”, “French” etc. are sufficient for identifying the connecting elements. For the Atlantic in total, however, these have to be identified still to a great extent.

At this point the already mentioned network concept seems helpful. The more not nationally shaped networks could be identified, the more it would become apparent that different networks coexisted in the Atlantic: networks which tended strongly to isolation and networks remaining open throughout most of historical developments. It has to be taken into account that closed systems more often than not have one principal center as well as some subordinate centers. They are more or less directly and hierarchically orientated towards this center. Open systems, instead, are normally polycentric and stronger horizontally organized. In relation to networks this means that the existence of reference systems with diverse centers or crossing points has to be postulated and identified, where networks of relations gain density, touch or connect or intermingle. These can be only partially hierarchically structured. This seems to be at first rather complicated. In relation to the Atlantic the harbor towns along the European, American and African coasts have to be considered as such centers. We already have a lot of evidence on them in order to try such an analysis. The Atlantic or Caribbean islands can be added as such possible centers of open networks, like the harbor towns they are already identified as such centers in many cases. Relating to other aspects, however, more precise definitions are necessary. More information on their relation to their horizontal or/and hierarchical function to the outside and in regard to the *hinterland* is needed. In relation to the questions on their open or closed character, whether they are integrating or excluding wider regions, one already has a lot of scattered information. The phenomenon of corruption and the central aspects of colonial history can provide further approaches and even still more evidence for an explanation and definition of such networks.

One may advance the hypothesis that such an extensive space as the Atlantic is in need of complex networks in order to tie it historically together at least in the way it appears for the XVIIIth century. To keep these networks functioning we need more information about their unifying ties: communication, exchange of people, goods and ideas, common interest, basic elements of other common interests, which over all distances induce the cooperation between partners, calculable behavior, reliability and cohesion regardless of adverse circumstances or divisive factors. Furthermore a common sense of justice and possibilities for sanctions have to exist. A certain polycentrism is therefore imperative for all these network systems. Open systems especially, in order to enable communication and exchange, depend on reciprocity regardless of political power structures, as illustrated by the example of the English fleet which transported the Spanish silver and at the same time undertook or planned an attack on another Spanish base, Buenos Aires. This means that an Atlantic network based system requires a certain degree of openness and polycentrism in order to exist as such. Each political (national), state or religious-cultural monism is therefor diametrically opposed to the principles of functioning of such a system or would fundamentally change its character. Naturally, historical developments took place restructuring the interests, forming new centers or alliances within the networks or even led to shifts of emphasis within a broader framework. These can be examined, at least in part, with the “push” and “pull” factors, known in a more general form from migration history. From a methodical perspective, like the one here briefly outlined, it is only of partial importance what emperors and kings defined as legal guidelines of politics, of war and peace, on the one side of the system, while formally dependent but rather autonomous colonies on the other side exist. These traditional parameters of European historiography are or may be largely insignificant for central structural developments, if greater openness of the system is given on the Western side of the Atlantic than on the Eastern one. It remains to be seen how far the elements of networks which are hierarchically orientated towards a center, behave towards the horizontal, open network phenomena, i. e. for example loyalty towards a home country on one side and the striving for autonomy, free trade etc., on the other. On the Atlantic side there is a tendency towards openness, beyond the epoch of interest here, simply because of the sheer size of the uncontrollable spaces. This seems to have increasingly weakened the vertical aspects of loyalty towards the mother country. Even in Europe the example of Napoleon’s continental blockade shows that it was impossible to establish overall control in a supposedly totally closed system. These geographical conditions, linked closely to economic, social and mental phenomena, surely contributed to essential alterations in the wider context of the space during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The relatively great autonomy of Iberian America in the 17<sup>th</sup> century probably inspired Ruggiero Romano to the already mentioned comparison, which he based in principle on a systemic approach without using the term. As Braudel has emphasized again and again, geography is a central object of understanding or analyzing history, especially for the historian dealing with an extensive area like the Atlantic.

In this context it has to be recalled that the European powers were able to conduct several wars against each other on American soil and entered alliances with native peoples. But no colonial power ever won a war against an individual, territorially somewhat consolidated colony since the end of the XVIIth century. Of course, England managed to occupy the fortress of La Havana in 1762 for a short period of time, but preferred to return the strategically most important island of the Caribbean soon afterwards, in the Peace of Paris in 1763, to Spain. Beforehand an English attack on the Isthmus of Panama had failed. England lost the war against its own colonies. In 1806 English troops entering the Rio de la Plata were able to force the Spanish viceroy and his troops to withdraw to the interior, but were then defeated twice by the town militias of Buenos Aires. Despite a massive intervention of European troops between



1796 and 1803 France suffered a devastating defeat in Haiti. Spain was also unable to hold the sparsely populated areas of Venezuela and Colombia against the insurgents despite dispatching large troop contingents. Already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch had lost their colonial empire in the Southern Atlantic not so much to the Portuguese, but rather to the rebellious Brazilians. After their victory they even sent a fleet with American Indian fighters to Angola and won back this African colony from the Dutch as well. The Portuguese crown had ordered its governor very late to head an already winning insurrection movement, in order to keep control over an event that legal authorities otherwise would have blamed on them. Without wanting to draw too far-reaching conclusions, it seems that the colonial populations had developed fighting techniques adequate for large spaces. At the same time their sparse population had adapted to the climatic conditions, which always confronted newly brought in European troops with problems. During the clashes between the European powers in America this deficit was nearly always compensated for by the respective allied “auxiliary troops” who were living in the region. Even in 1782 in Peru the great rebellion of Tupac Amaru in the highlands of the Peruvian Andes against the colonial power could only be suppressed with the help of Peruvian Indian allies from the region.

From this perspective a phenomenon like the enormous production of precious metals in Portuguese and Spanish America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century gains significance, which probably forces us to discuss again traditional ideas on the Atlantic system. The high production of precious metals in Brazil and in Spanish America, combined with competition for small working populations, led to the highest wages in the Western world and in Europe and to the highest prices asked for any goods. This resulted in a considerable gradient of wealth, at least among elite’s, within America to the East and North but continuing to Europe as well. Only against this background can we explain why America was able to develop such an appeal at first for the European powers and merchants and then for more and more migrants. When in 1808 the Portuguese royal family moved to Rio de Janeiro, it did not only flee from Napoleon –Napoleon would surely have treated them in a honorable way. The move also responded to quite earlier propositions of Portuguese statesmen inverting imperial concepts. So the royal family went willingly to the part of the empire which was larger, more populated and economically richer anyway, in order to create a “tropical Versailles”.<sup>48</sup> The fact that the royal family was accompanied by some 10.000 persons and transported on an English fleet did not necessarily point to a precipitate escape.

Even Germany, apparently only weakly oriented towards the Atlantic during the XVIIIth century, had soon realized its importance, as can be seen by the increasing number of books, articles and travel accounts printed on American problems since the middle of the century. New research findings show that long before the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the cities of the Hanse and the regions of the hinterland not only had plugged into the Atlantic system commercially in manifold ways and tried to get involved in it, but also started to investigate it. There is even evidence, for example, that around 1812 a rich Hamburg merchant decorated part of the walls of his home with paper painted with motifs from pre-Spanish Mexican ruins. Alexander von Humboldt prepared his journey to America by reading and establishing contacts during a six month stay in Hamburg. His writing about his travels is perhaps the last great description of the old, open Atlantic-American system of the early modern age, before the conditions in the Atlantic context changed fundamentally circa 1808/1815.

In relation to the term “Atlantic system” it is certainly necessary to advance and refine the network analyses in order to answer the question whether we are dealing with one or several systems. Many clues do exist which provide reasons for reducing the number of “systems” or

“sub-systems”, leading to their compression into a unity. Despite this, the circumstance alone that such a debate on systems already delivers so many arguments for or against the positions shortly outlined, illustrates its importance. Despite of this special problem the existence of a methodically founded “Atlantic history” as a historical sub-discipline between European and global history can no longer be denied.

However we define the concept of “Atlantic history” in detail, from the perspective of the previously mentioned fields of study we cannot avoid evaluating the historical importance of the Atlantic West coasts, at least for the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as distinctly higher than the traditional history of expansion did. Wallerstein is right that the importance of the Iberian colonial powers Spain and Portugal as well as their influence on their colonies had strongly decreased. But in contrast their American “colonies” had enormously gained in importance. The production of precious metals in Brazil and Spanish America, measured in tons annually, and the population, approaching 20 millions towards the end of the century, formed a market, which no trading power in Europe could ignore. During his journey Humboldt even assessed the importance of South America as higher than that of the North American United States, which had just gained their independence. Having been there he estimated their future potential for development as considerably higher at the time of the writing down of his books. Because of the importance of the colonies and less because of the Iberian home countries the Atlantic in the 18<sup>th</sup> century can therefore be justly described as a space shaped directly and indirectly by Iberian influence, with numerous “sub-systems”, which were more or less oriented towards this Iberian complex.

There is no doubt by now that the concept of “Atlantic history” is sufficiently established and clearly discernible in its academic potential for new insights. This field is no longer relying only on the beginning of aggregation and combination of numerous empirical data, since methodical debates have started, providing a closer view of the unity of object of study and methodological instruments. Nevertheless numerous open question of fundamental importance remain to be clarified. These begin with the need for a new definition of the chronological phases of development. While doing so it has to be considered that the “rise and fall” of colonial empires is simply not any longer an adequate concept for Atlantic history, which is discernible principally as an open historical process reaching up to the present time. A further central question is the influence of the Asian trade, which was running through the Atlantic and rapidly intensified since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, on the developments within the Atlantic area. The inclusion of Africa also has to be referred to here. Through the history of the slave trade, African history is linked sufficiently to “Atlantic history”, but in its different course of development it is in need of many clarifications from the Atlantic context. In this regard, one important question is why colonial penetration was achieved only in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and why it was initiated again after European colonialism in America has been confronted with varied political, cultural etc. limits much earlier. Should this be related to the ending boom of precious metals in South America at the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century? The problems related to the formation of states in Latin American in the 19<sup>th</sup> century have also been examined nearly exclusively from an inside view, although Atlantic connections in the political developments of later times are obvious, not only in regard to the important harbor towns. Does one have to conclude that the Latin American states remained relatively open systems, due to ethnic conflicts within them, to the still clearly accentuated inner borders and to the considerably lower European immigration. Meanwhile the USA, at least economically, and most of the European states even more, became more closed? Is this linked to the fact, that they lost their wealth in precious metals, which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century had turned them not only to open, but also potent and attractive systems? Already in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century Mexican

mining interests were quite aware that a break down of the mining industry would mean forced development of manufacture and industry.<sup>49</sup> At this point Alexander von Humboldt has to be remembered again. He compared in a very interesting but also different way the cities of Spanish America he had visited with the European urban centers in regard to the cultural and social “climate”. Regarding Europe it is necessary to ask from an Atlantic perspective, on the other hand, how far the openness of the Atlantic space constituted an element contributing towards the development of the idea of the nation state, and of nationalism, as can be thought starting from Napoleon’s continental blockade. The nation perhaps also as an attempt to erect a wall against uncontrollable foreign influences and spaces? These examples may suffice to hint at the great historical questions which could be connected to future developments and debates within “Atlantic history”.

If in Europe in 1955 the concept of “Atlantic” history was still understood as a purely political concept to make history legitimize current developments, today at least the empirical methodological foundation cannot be denied anymore. Of course, at the same time attempts to use history for political purposes can be observed everywhere today as well. Respecting the Atlantic history, this can be recognized without effort in topics and rhetoric on the occasion of political summit meetings, state visits etc. using terms like “Atlantic partnership” etc. The fact that “Atlantic history”, as outlined here, has been essentially a development stimulated and urged onwards by Anglo Saxon historiography, seems at first glance to confirm this link to current political processes. But nowadays also historians, who are neither from Britain nor the USA, but are simply using English as academic “lingua franca” with the greatest distribution, are participating in these debates on history of the Atlantic. In addition, in many American countries and increasingly also in Europe, the ethnic composition of the population demands a way of historical teaching responding to regions where new immigrants come from. There are the many ethnic groups from Africa, Europe, Latin America and of course genuinely Americans in the USA, who are asking about their respective past in this process. The rapidly growing foreign elements of the population in Europe, coming from former colonies or immigrating from other contexts increasingly do so as well. Apart from international political rhetoric, concrete political needs of the education system have to be described as promoting elements in the development of such broad historical approaches. In contrast to 1955 the subject is now consolidated in scientific terms so far that it can defend itself against misleading uses and interpretations, referring only to the mass of accumulated empirical evidence, which rarely can be reconciled with the generalizations required for “political correctness”.

## NOTES

- \* The author is very grateful to The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, Providence, RI., USA, for the grant of the Andrew W. Mellon Senior Research Fellowship in spring 2002, which made it possible to write the following overview. For critical remarks I am indebted to Prof. Dr. Pieter Emmer, University of Leiden / The Netherlands and to Prof. Dr. Wim Kloosters, University of Maine / USA. For important help translating the German text into English I am grateful to Mrs. A. Bührmann and Professor Dr. J. Muldoon. Errors of course are mine.
- <sup>1</sup> Clarifying terms it should be pointed out that the “Atlantic” is not referred to when used exclusively as a geographical concept in connection with coastal regions or provinces, whether belonging to Europe, Africa or America. These cases will not be considered, both within the text and the bibliographical references. The term “Atlantic” refers exclusively to extended spaces of the ocean and the concepts, interpretations and empirical findings which are related to it, even when individual cities with the specific function as a center in extensive networks are mentioned, especially in the bibliographical references. Cf. the explanations pp. 31 ff.
- <sup>2</sup> Cf. Karl Dietrich Erdmann, *Die Ökumene der Historiker. Geschichte der Internationalen Historikerkongresse und des Comité International des Sciences Historiques*. Göttingen 1987, p. 315 for the complex as a whole and the relevant bibliographical references; on the current political meanings related to the concept cfr. in more detail Nicholas Canny in this volume and Bernard Bailyn, *The Idea of Atlantic History*. Working Paper No. 96-01. International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, 1500 - 1800. Harvard University. Cambridge, MA 2001, an enlarged version of the article cited below in note Nr. 44, the author refers in his article to the origins of the concept of “Atlantic history” in the USA before World War Second, but these precedents are not related to early modern and expansion history and therefore will not be considered here. It has to be pointed out also that during the years of National Socialism in Germany the Atlantic has been considered in historical writing as well, more as a threatening phenomenon, cf. for example Alexander von Borries, *Europas Schicksalsfront: Atlantik; vom Völkerringen zur See in fünf Jahrhunderten*. Berlin 1942; cf. also Louis B. Wright, *The Atlantic Frontier. Colonial American civilization, 1607 - 1763*. New York 1947, who is one of the first authors to relate colonial “American Civilization” to “Atlantic history”. Since all essential developments regarding the development of “Atlantic history” in relation to early modern expansion history occurred after World War Second, we decided to exclude earlier historical references to the Atlantic Ocean in the present context.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. Nicholas Canny, *Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America*, in: *The Journal of American History*, vol. 86, Nr. 3, Dezember 1999, pp.1093 - 1114; and idem, *Atlantic History, 1492 - 1700: Scope, Sources and Methods*, in this volume; also Bernard Bailyn, articles cited in notes 2 and 44; cf. also Horst Pietschmann, *Geschichte des atlantischen Systems, 1580 - 1830. Ein historischer Versuch zur Erklärung der “Globalisierung” jenseits nationalgeschichtlicher Perspektiven*. Berichte aus den Sitzungen der Joachim-Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften E. V. Hamburg, Jg. 16, Nr. 2. Hamburg 1998. While Canny stresses, also in other contexts, the Anglo Saxon role in the process of establishing the concept, this author has always emphasized more the French history of the concept, although the analyses are approximating each other later.
- <sup>4</sup> In the 1950’s already, on the Canary Islands the publication of a historical journal named “Anuario de Estudios Atlánticos” (“Yearbook of Atlantic Studies”) was begun. Despite of its academically sound contributions, distribution remained largely restricted to specialists of Iberian expansion history. Cf. also Alberto Vieira’s additional bibliographical references in this volume.

- <sup>5</sup> The chronological structure given above is based mostly on Pierre Chaunu, *L'expansion européenne du XIIIe au XVe siècle*. Paris 1969; idem, *Conquête et exploitation des nouveaux mondes. XVIe siècle*. Paris 1969; Günter Kahle, *Lateinamerika in der Politik der europäischen Mächte*. Köln, Weimar, Wien 1993. Of crucial importance from an European point of view recently Hans-Otto Kleinmann, *Der atlantische Raum als Problem des europäischen Staatensystems*, in: *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* (Köln, Weimar, Wien), vol. 38, 2001, pp. 7 - 30.
- <sup>6</sup> See the term for example in the diary of a Hamburg convoy, shipping to the Bay of Cádiz in 1671/2, cf. Friedrich Martens, *Hispanische Reisebeschreibung de anno 1671*, ed. by W. Junk. Berlin 1925, entrance from December 16, 1671.
- <sup>7</sup> Meanwhile piracy became a special field of study not only in the context of Atlantic history but also in the history of other maritime areas.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. for example Antonio García Baquero González, *Cádiz y el Atlántico 1717-1778. El comercio colonial español bajo el monopolio gaditano*. 2 vols. Sevilla 1976; Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Los Corzo y los Mañara: Tipos y arquetipos del mercader con América*. Sevilla 1991; Antonio-Miguel Bernal, *La financiación de la carrera de Indias (1492 - 1824). Dinero y crédito en el comercio colonial español con América*. Sevilla, Madrid 1992; Pablo Emilio Pérez-Mallaína Bueno, *Los hombres del océano. Vida cotidiana de los tripulantes de las flotas de Indias. Siglo XVI*. Sevilla 1992; Enrique Otte con la colaboración de Guadalupe Albi, *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias, 1540 - 1616*. México 1993; Manuel Bustos Rodríguez, *Los comerciantes de la carrera de Indias en el Cádiz del siglo XVIII (1713- 1775)*. Cádiz 1995, to name just a few outstanding contributions. Enrique Otte, a German academic and emeritus professor of the Freie Universität Berlin, is included here, since he lived many years close to the Spanish “Archivo General de Indias” in Seville and preferred to publish his writings mostly in Spanish or English. About Portugal cf. for example Luis Adão da Fonseca, *The discoveries and the formation of the Atlantic Ocean: 14th century - 16th century*. Lisboa 1999. K. S. Mathew, *Indo-Portuguese trade and the Fuggers of Germany: sixteenth century*. New Delhi 1997; Alberto Vieira, *Portugal y las islas del Atlántico*. Madrid 1992 and in this volume; A.A. Marques de Almeida, *Capitais e capitalistas no comércio da especiaria: o eixo Lisboa-Antuérpia, 1501 - 1549. Aproximação a um estudo de geofinança*. Lisboa 1993; António Carreira, *As companhias pombalinas de Grão-Pará e Pernambuco e Paraíba*. 2nd. ed., Lisboa 1983; Luís Lisanti, compiler, *Negócios coloniais. Uma correspondência comercial do século XVIII*. 5 vols. Brasília 1973.
- <sup>9</sup> Charles R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire. 1600 - 1800*. London 1965; idem, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415/1825*. London 1969; John H. Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire*. London 1966; Hueguette et Pierre Chaunu, *Séville et l'Atlantique. 1504 - 1650*. 8 vols. in 11. Paris 1955-1959; Frédéric Mauro, *Le Portugal et l'Atlantique au XVIIe siècle. 1570 - 1740*. Paris 1960. It should be noted that both English – speaking authors had already stressed the maritime dimension in earlier works. But they had it not included in the title of books before. By doing so they apparently attempted to provide them with a more general historical meaning referring to the concept of empire. Both historical entities have been empires whose origins were largely due to “mastering the sea”.
- <sup>10</sup> Cf. Leonard Outhwaite, *The Atlantic; a history of an Ocean*. New York 1957.
- <sup>11</sup> Charles Verlinden, *Les origines de la civilisation atlantique. De la Renaissance á l' Age des Lumières*. Neuchâtel, Paris 1966.

- <sup>12</sup> Immanuel M. Wallerstein, *The modern world-system*. New York 1974; idem, *Mercantilism and the consolidation of the European world-economy, 1600 - 1750*. New York 1980; Wolfgang Reinhard, *Geschichte der europäischen Expansion*. 4 vols. Stuttgart 1983 - 1990.
- <sup>13</sup> In Germany, for example, the Bamberg Center for the History of European Expansion, founded in the 1970's, is still using the term "overseas history" ("Überseegeschichte"), cf. for example Thomas Beck, Horst Gründer, Horst Pietschmann, Roderich Ptak, eds., *Überseegeschichte. Beiträge der jüngeren Forschung. Festschrift anlässlich der Gründung der Forschungsstiftung für vergleichende europäische Überseegeschichte 1999 in Bamberg*. Stuttgart 1999. The Department of History of the University of Hamburg replaced the term – partly on the initiative of the author of these lines – in the course of a restructuring of the inner organization of the department by "Non-European History" ("Ausereuropäische Geschichte"), a name which admittedly signalizes only a shift in emphasis, without describing a clearly defined subject. In France and Belgium the term "overseas history" can still be found in older, traditional institutions and titles of journals.
- <sup>14</sup> For an attempt to summarize the discussion up into the 1980's cf. Horst Pietschmann, *Der atlantische Sklavenhandel bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts. Eine Problemskizze*, in: *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 107. Jg. 1st. vol., Freiburg, München 1987, pp.122-133. Later the discussion about the industrialization and the colonial trade had been conducted less intensively, until it has recently flared up again.
- <sup>15</sup> As has been already explained, the area of oceanic trade and finance is the only field intensively discussed in regard to its inner-European consequences, as well as the area of research on the flow of precious metals to Europe, cf. on the organizational aspects Pieter Emmer, Femme Gaastra, eds., *The organization of interoceanic trade in European expansion, 1450 - 1800*. Aldershot, Brookfield 1996; on the flow of precious metals to Europe, since Earl J. Hamilton's classic on the price revolution so intensively studied, cfr. Michel Morineau, *Incroyables gazettes et fabuleux métaux. Les retours des trésors américains d'après les gazettes hollandaises (XVI - XVIIIe siècles)*. London, New York, Paris 1985. The effects of the many products flooding into Europe were widely ignored. After a first attempt to summarize these repercussions, met with only a weak resonance at least in Europe, cf. Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian exchange; biological and cultural consequences of 1492*. Westport 1972, the author's second book, cf. idem, *Ecological Imperialism: the biological expansion of Europe, 900 - 1900*. Cambridge, New York 1986, stimulated first attempts also in Europe to investigate these repercussions more intensively. A first attempt to overview the field in the Federal Republic of Germany has been: *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas*, vol. 32, 1995, containing the contributions of a conference in Wolfenbüttel; published in Italy, but from a general European perspective: *Prodotti e Tecniche d'Oltremare nelle Economie Europee Secc. XIII - XVIII.- Atti della "Ventinovesima Settimana di Studi"* 14 - 19 aprile 1997, a cura di Simonetta Cavaciocchi. Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica "F. Datini", Prato. Serie II: *Atti della "Settimana di Studi e altre Convegni"*, Bd. 29. Firenze 1998. Adding the catalogue of an Italian exhibition in Génova during the Columbus Qincenentary, the relatively poor level of research in regard to a central subject has been outlined fairly exactly, cf. *Animali e Piante dalle Americhe all' Europa*. Génova 1991, disregarding a few individual, closely limited regional studies and the investigations following the approach of history of consumption, usually focussed on individual products. Recently a broadly focussed book has been published in this line, cf. Peter N. Stearns, *Consumerism in world history: the global transformation of desire*. London, New York 2001. From the point of view of cultural history is to be mentioned Silvio A. Bedini, *The Pope's Elephant. An elephant's journey from deep in India to the heart of Rome*. New York, London 1997, the first indebth study of the reception and treatment of exotic animals sent by king Manuel I from Portugal to Pope Leon X in Rome early in the XVIth century. In relation to intellectual repercussions, adoptions and debates about the subject of

expansion within Europe Manfred Kossok has to be named as an early pioneer, cf. Manfred Kossok, *Im Schatten der Heiligen Allianz. Deutschland und Lateinamerika 1815 - 1830. Zur Politik der deutschen Staaten gegenüber der Unabhängigkeitsbewegung Mittel- und Südamerikas*. Berlin 1964, as well as many of his essays, of which the most important have been collected and newly published, cf. *idem*, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, hgg. von Matthias Middell. 3 Bde., Leipzig 2000; recently also Renate Pieper, *Die Vermittlung einer neuen Welt. Amerika im Nachrichtennetz des Habsburgischen Imperiums 1493 - 1598*. Mainz 2000; Peer Schmidt, *Spanische Universalmonarchie oder "teutsche Libertet"*. Das Bild des spanischen Imperiums in der Propaganda des Dreissigjährigen Krieges. Stuttgart 2001; centered on a later period Jeremy Black, *Maps and History. Constructing Images of the Past*. New Haven, London 1997.

- <sup>16</sup> Cf. amongst others Horst Pietschmann, *Burocracia y corrupción en la Hispanoamérica colonial. Una aproximación tentativa*, in: *Nova Americana* (Torino), Nr. 5, 1982, S.11 - 37. A broad examination of the "flexible" handling of the metropolitan setting of rules in colonial regions is still lacking; for colonial British America see H. Wellenreuther in this volume.
- <sup>17</sup> Cf. Edward G. Gray, Norman Fiering, eds., *The Language Encounter in the Americas, 1492 - 1800. A Collection of Essays*. New York, Oxford 2000. There are similar publications on Spanish and Portuguese America.
- <sup>18</sup> Cf. Nicholas Canny in this volume.
- <sup>19</sup> Among the titles accumulated since the 1970's cf. for example Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*. London 1973; John Robert McNeill, *Atlantic empires of France and Spain: Louisbourg and Havana, 1700 - 1763*. Chapel Hill 1985; Peggy K. Liss, *Atlantic Empires. The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713 - 1826*. Baltimore 1983; Ian Kenneth Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675 - 1740: an exploration of communication and community*. New York 1986; David Hancock, *Citizens of the world: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735 - 1785*. Cambridge, New York 1995; Jonathan I. Israel, *Conflicts of Empires. Spain, the Low Countries and the Struggle for World Supremacy, 1585 - 1713*. London 1997; David Birmingham, *Trade and empire in the Atlantic, 1400-1600*. London, New York 2000. In some of these titles new methodical approaches are already discernible.
- <sup>20</sup> One has to refer in this context to one of the most important books published by the recently deceased Italian historian Romano, regarding himself as a member of the Braudel school in the classic and not the "postmodern" sense, cf. Ruggiero Romano, *Conjonctures opposées. La "crise" du XVIIe siècle en Europe et en Amérique ibérique*. Geneva 1992, the first historian to substantiate the – for historians of expansion quite bold – thesis, that in contrast to most parts of Europe an extended colonial region underwent an independent, positive economic development, while most colonial powers in Europe were in deep crisis. Two leading historians in the field of the history of Spain and Spanish America, Woodrow Borah and John Lynch, had already advanced this thesis, but Romano was the first to substantiate it on the basis of statistical comparison.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf. Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade. A Census*. Madison 1969. It has to be pointed out that the author published many books in later years, which were connected to transatlantic aspects of slavery etc., but cannot be listed in detail in the space available. From the wealth of literature regarding Africa should be mentioned about the development of the conditions on the West African coast under the influence of the slave trade only a few, cf. Robin Law, *The Oyo Empire, c. 1600 - c. 1836. A Western African imperialism in the era of the Atlantic slave trade*. Oxford 1977; *idem*, *The slave coast of West Africa 1550 - 1750*. The

- impact of the Atlantic slave trade on an African society. Oxford 1991; John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Formation of the Atlantic World, 1400 - 1680*. Cambridge, New York 1992, widely used by L. Harding in this volume. It should be recalled, that more or less parallel to investigation of forced migration of African slaves also European transatlantic migration in early modern times has been increasingly studied, cf. P. C. Emmer, ed., *Colonialism and migration. Indentured labour before and after slavery*. Dordrecht, Hingham 1986; Nicholas Canny, ed., *Europeans on the move. Studies on European migration, 1500 - 1800*. Oxford, New York 1994.
- <sup>22</sup> Cf. Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic slave trade*. Cambridge, New York 1999; and a CD-ROM published in parallel by Stephen D. Behrendt, David Eltis, Herbert S. Klein, David Richardson, *The trans-Atlantic slave trade: a database on CD-ROM*. Cambridge 1999, which contains detailed data of all up to now ascertained ships in the Atlantic slave trade, informing on transported slaves, journeys made etc. Klein, Curtin and the authors mentioned have published a whole series of additional books and articles regarding the broad complex of slavery. Cfr. H. Klein in this volume on behalf of the revisionist empirical findings mentioned below.
- <sup>23</sup> Cf. Horst Pietschmann, Hg., *Arbeit im transatlantischen Vergleich. Comparativ. Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsgeschichte*. 4. Jg., Nr. 4, 1994, S. 7 - 108.
- <sup>24</sup> Cf. Wim Klooster, *Subordinate but proud: Curaçao's free Blacks and Mulattoes in the eighteenth century*, in: *New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West - Indische Gids*, vol. 68, Nr. 3 & 4, 1994, pp. 283 - 300, here p. 285.
- <sup>25</sup> Cf. for example J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment. Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition*. Princeton 1975. The approach might appear surprising to many readers with respect to Latin American history, but recent studies rediscovered these traditions also.
- <sup>26</sup> Thus very recently Ann Rebecca Bach, *Colonial transformations. The cultural production of the New Atlantic World, 1580 - 1640*. Houndsmills, New York 2000.
- <sup>27</sup> The author located several hundred titles with reference to the Atlantic complexes. The large majority of these texts has been published in English, but increasingly titles are being published also in French, Spanish and Portuguese and only occasionally in other languages. The enormously wide scattered periodical literature only in exceptional cases could be cited, as already has been pointed out at the beginning. - Only one coherent effort to characterize shortly the different "Atlantics" should be mentioned here, cfr. *Itinerario*, vol. XXIII, no. 2, 1999 : Round Table Conference: *The Nature of Atlantic History*. The following contributions are of special interest for what is pointed out in this paragraph: Pieter C. Emmer, *Willem Klooster, The Dutch Atlantic 1600 - 1800. Expansion without Empire*, pp. 48 ff.; Silvia Marzagalli, *The French Atlantic*, pp. 70ff.; Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Iberian Atlantic*, pp. 84 ff.; David Hancock, *The British Atlantic World: Coordination, Complexity, and the Emergence of an Atlantic Market Economy, 1651- 1851*, pp. 107 ff.; Deborah Gray White, 'Yes', *There is a Black Atlantic*, pp. 127ff.; David Eltis, *Atlantic History in Global Perspective*, pp. 141ff.; Alison Games, *Teaching Atlantic History*, pp. 162 ff. Most of the authors still rely strongly on the expansion approach, extending European based perspectives to the Atlantic.
- <sup>28</sup> Philip D. Curtin, *The tropical Atlantic in the age of the slave trade*. Washington D.C. 1991. Whether the choice of titles by the author signalizes a change in interpretation of the Atlantic dimension in historical



contexts investigated, compared to his title from 1969 – cf. annotation no.16 – would be interesting to examine. Such a development in the author’s thinking seems likely, as is illustrated by the title of one of his most recent works, pointing out to a more “global history”, cf. Philip D. Curtin, *The world and the West: the European challenge and the overseas response in the Age of Empire*. Cambridge, New York 2000.

- <sup>29</sup> Kirsten Schultz, *Tropical Versailles: Empire, Monarchy, and the Portuguese Royal Court in Rio de Janeiro, 1808 - 1821*. New York 2001.
- <sup>30</sup> Henry Louis Gates, Jr., William L. Andrews, eds., *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic. Five slave narratives from the Enlightenment, 1772 - 1815*. Washington, D. C. 1998; Vincent Carretta, Philip Gould, eds., *Genius in bondage. Literature of the early Black Atlantic*. Lexington 2001.
- <sup>31</sup> Cf. for example Brendan Bradshaw and John Morrill, eds., *The British problem, c. 1534 -1707. State formation in the Atlantic Archipelago*. New York 1996, a book, exclusively related to political developments of the United Kingdom in the period referred to.
- <sup>32</sup> Nicholas Canny, Anthony Pagden, eds., *Colonial identity in the Atlantic World, 1500 - 1800*. Princeton 1987; Hugh Amory, David D. Hall, eds., *The colonial book in the Atlantic world*. Cambridge, New York 2000.
- <sup>33</sup> Thus the book of the French historian Paul Butel in its English translation is called simply: *The Atlantic*. London, New York 1999, while the French original carries the title “*Histoire de l’Atlantique*”.
- <sup>34</sup> For colonial Latin America cf. Horst Pietschmann, *500 años de Historia Iberoamericana. Variantes ejemplares del desarrollo histórico*, in: *El Reino de Granada y el Nuevo Mundo. V Congreso Internacional de Historia de América*. Mayo de 1992. 3 vols. Granada 1994, vol. 3, pp. 75 - 86.
- <sup>35</sup> Cfr. the anthology, based on a meeting sponsored by the European Science Foundation: *La imagen del Indio en la Europa Moderna*. Sevilla 1990, there the introduction by this author: *Visión del Indio e Historia Latinoamericana*, pp. 1 - 11, with references to the congress mentioned above. It is perhaps the first publication on the subject for the context of Portuguese and Spanish America. Since the controversy over the Columbus Jubilee in 1992, initiated by Mexico in 1985, and already referred to above, the Spanish term “*Encuentro*”, English “*Encounter*”, less the slightly incorrect German translation “*Begegnung*”, gained acceptance for this area of research with reference to America. In France the term seems to have been widely rejected. For recent state of research cf. Susan Danforth, *Encountering the New World, 1493 - 1800*. Providence 1991; Anthony Pagden, *European encounters with the New World. From Renaissance to Romanticism*. New Haven 1993; idem, ed., *Facing each other. The world’s perception of Europe and Europe’s perception of the world*. Aldershot, Burlington 2000. The pioneering study in this area of research was published in the 1950’s by the Italian Antonello Gerbi whose book was published for the first time in 1955, cf. the latest edition Antonello Gerbi, *La disputa del Nuovo Mondo. Storia di una polemica, 1750 - 1900*. Nuova edizione a cura di Sandro Gerbi. Milano 2000.
- <sup>36</sup> Cf. Horst Pietschmann, *Amerika 1992. Zeitgeist und politische Instrumentalisierung eines Zeitenwende - Jubiläums*, in: *Der Zeitgeist und die Historie*, hgg. von Hermann Joseph Hiery. Dettelbach 2001, pp. 181-198.

- <sup>37</sup> Cf. for example Jacob M. Price, *France and the Chesapeake. A history of the French tobacco monopoly, 1674 - 1791, and of its relationship to the British and American tobacco trades*. 2 vols. Ann Arbor 1973; Samuel J. Hough, *The Italians and the Creation of America*. Providence 1980; despite the title, which seems to refer to traditional history of expansion, Wim Klooster, *The Dutch in the Americas, 1600 - 1800*. Providence 1997, also belongs into this context. Cfr. Spanish and Portuguese Jews in the Caribbean and the Guianas: A Bibliography. Compiled by Mordechai Arbell. Providence 1999; Paolo Bernardini, Norman Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 - 1800*. New York, Oxford 2000; María Cristina Torales Pacheco, *Ilustrados en Nueva España: los socios de la Real Sociedad Vascongada de los Amigos del País*. México 2001, about the Basques; Dauril Alden, *The making of an enterprise. The Society of Jesus in Portugal, its empire, and beyond, 1540 - 1750*. Stanford 1996; another network-building group, which was especially important in the Spanish context, were the Irish, who apparently so far have not been coherently investigated. In a more general context is also to be categorized here Peggy K. Liss, *Atlantic empires...quoted in annotation 16*; idem, Franklin Knight, eds., *Atlantic port cities. Economy, culture, and society in the Atlantic world 1650 - 1850*. Knoxville 1991; Claudia Schnurmann, *Atlantische Welten. Engländer und Niederländer im amerikanischen atlantischen Raum 1648 - 1713*. Köln, Weimar, Wien 1998; Jessica Harland - Jacobs, *Hands across the sea. The masonic network, British imperialism, and the North Atlantic World*, in: *Geographical Review*, vol. 89, Nr. 2, 1999, pp. 237 - 253; Peter Linebaugh, Marcus Rediker, *The many-headed hydra. Sailors, slaves, commoners, and the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston 2000; Renate Pieper, *Die Vermittlung einer Neuen Welt...quoted in annotation 14*. With view to the network approach older studies with strongly geographical regards, which were aiming to reconstruct shipping and trade routes and the stages necessary for the receiving of supplies etc., are also re-gaining importance, cf. for example Artur Teodoro de Matos, *As escalas do Atlântico no Século XVI*. Lisboa 1988; T. Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands. Madeira, the Azores, and the Cape Verdes in seventeenth-century commerce and navigation*. Chicago, London 1972.
- <sup>38</sup> The reconstruction of the details cfr. in: Carlos Marichal con la colaboración de Carlos Rodríguez Venegas, *La bancarrota del virreinato. Nueva España y las finanzas del imperio español, 1780 - 1810*. México 1999, Chap. V.
- <sup>39</sup> The historiographical development is also reflected in some book series titles. Since the 1980's the Johns Hopkins University Press, for example, publishes a series entitled: "Johns Hopkins studies in Atlantic history and culture", cf. also annotation 37. Moreover, since 1996 Bernard Bailyn annually organizes an international conference at Harvard University entitled "International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, 1500 - 1800", contributions being published in a series of working papers and probably soon collected in a series of books; cfr. details on Web site <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~atlantic/>.
- <sup>40</sup> The source regarding convoy shipping, quoted in annotation 6, illustrates this. The convoy described there arrived in Cádiz at the beginning of January, about 4 weeks before the departure of the Spanish fleet. The text refers to the departure of the fleet at the beginning of February with only one sentence, but nothing else - there is almost no reference on business affairs, except salt loading. Instead we find a lot of details on incidents in seafaring, observations of weather and nature, a lengthy description of plants and animals in the bay of Cadiz, landscape drawings and even on curiosities in popular life. The convoy finally left for Hamburg at the end of April / beginning of May, a date which cannot be connected to the American trade, but rather closely with the season of fruits in Andalusia.
- <sup>41</sup> The yet unpublished PhD - thesis written by Annette Ch Vogt, approved in October 2001 by the Faculty of Philosophy and History of the University of Hamburg, on the Caribbean trade of the Hamburg merchant

company Wappaeus was able to prove, for example, that between 1816 and 1836 nearly 50% more ships from Hamburg arrived in the Danish Caribbean island Saint Thomas, than are to be counted on the basis of the the port-files in the Hamburg state archive.

- <sup>42</sup> Both concepts, used already in the context of titles of reviews and many books, can not be discussed in detail in this context. The german translations “Globalgeschichte” and “Weltgeschichte” until now are used in a rather unclear and not precise way, which again might be related to problems of perception. For these recent developments cf. Ernst Breisach, *Historiography. Ancient, Medieval & Modern*. 2nd. edition, Chicago, London 1994, pp. 395 ff.
- <sup>43</sup> Felipe Fernández - Armesto, *Millennium. A history of the last thousand years*. New York 1995; Patrick Manning, ed., *Slave trades, 1500 - 1800. Globalization of forced labour*. Aldershot, Brookfield 1996; Kevin H. O'Rourke, Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Globalization and history. The evolution of a nineteenth-century Atlantic economy*. Cambridge, Mass. 1999; Peter H. Stearns, *Consumerism...* quoted in annotation 14; Jeremy Black, *War and the World. Military Power and the Fate of Continents, 1450-2000*. New Haven, London 1998; Lauren A. Benton, *Law and colonial cultures. Legal regimes in world history, 1400 - 1900*. Cambridge, New York 2002. Since 1995 the English publishing company “Ashgate” publishes a series –so far comprising 32 volumes according to the Web site of the company at <http://www.ashgate.com>– entitled “An expanding World”, edited by A. J. R. Russell-Wood, John's Hopkins University. The different volumes, each edited by one or several editors, contain articles mostly in English on central aspects of the history of European expansion, on Atlantic history, the different colonial histories, but also on the history of other maritime regions in Asia. They are introduced by a review article written by the respective editor. These volumes are a kind of summary of the historiographical developments, but they point already beyond these developments towards a “global history”, as also illustrated by the series title. Cambridge University Press publishes a series entitled “Studies in comparative world history” and the “American Historical Association” a series “Essays on global and comparative history”, to name but a few. A very recent example of the influence of the “Atlantic-history - perspective” in writing “national history” is Alan Taylor, *American Colonies. The Settling of North America*. The Penguin History of the United States, ed. Eric Foner. New York, London 2001. A partial effort in German has advanced already to the end of the colonial period, cfr. Norbert Finzsch, Ursula Lehmkuhl, Hermann Wellenreuther, Hgg., *Geschichte Nordamerikas in atlantischer Perspektive von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Until now 2 vols. Münster, Hamburg 2000 - 2002, both vols. have been written by Hermann Wellenreuther, *Niedergang und Aufstieg. Geschichte Nordamerikas vom Beginn der Besiedlung bis zum Ausgang des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Bd. 1; idem, *Ausbildung und Neubildung. Die Geschichte Nordamerikas vom Ausgang des 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Ausbruch der Amerikanischen Revolution 1775*, Bd. 2.
- <sup>44</sup> Cf. Alan L. Karras, J. R. McNeill, eds., *Atlantic American societies. From Columbus through abolition, 1492-1888*. London, New York 1992. In an extensive introductory essay Karras deals with the topic: “The Atlantic World as a Unit of Study”; Bernard Bailyn, *The Idea of Atlantic History*, in: *Itinerario* (Leiden), vol. 20, Nr. 1, 1996, p. 19ff.; cf. also Nicholas Canny's titles quoted in annotation 3.
- <sup>45</sup> Cf. Barbara L. Solow, ed., *Slavery and the rise of the Atlantic system*. Cambridge, Mass, Cambridge, New York 1991, especially the contribution by P. Emmer. Idem in this volume.
- <sup>46</sup> It has to be reminded that the liberator of South America, Simón Bolívar, in the preliminary stages of the Congress of Panamá in 1826 still had the hope to establish a great America without the USA, but with England as guaranteeing power, being quite aware that this would mean economic dependency.

- <sup>47</sup> Cf. Stanley J. Stein, Barbara H. Stein, Silver, trade and war. Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe. Baltimore, London 2000, Chapter 1: “Spain, Europe and the Atlantic System, 1500 - 1700”.
- <sup>48</sup> Cf. Kirsten Schultz, quoted in annotation 26.-In this context it is important to point out, that new research efforts are engaged to reconstruct finally the Portuguese Atlantic economic system, cfr. Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, The economic network of Portugal's Atlantic world, in: Francisco Bethencourt, Diogo Ramada Curto, Norman Fiering, eds., The Portuguese Empire 1400-1800. Cambridge University Press, forthcoming. I am indebted to Prof. Luiz Felipe Alencastro, Université de Paris IV and Andrew W. Mellon Senior Research Fellow at The John Carter Brown Library since a few weeks for providing me not only the reference but also the text of his contribution to this volume but also the opportunity to discuss his broader research interests on the South Atlantic.
- <sup>49</sup> Cfr. Representación que a nombre de la minería de esta Nueva España hacen al Rey...los Apoderados de ella, D. Juan Lucas de Lassaga... y D. Joaquín Velasquez de León... Printed México 1774.