



Indirect Diplomacy: Cross-Imperial Contacts beyond Courts

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The classic model of early modern diplomacy implies the exchange of missions between courts and sovereigns, but recent scholarship emphasises that many cross-imperial contacts transcended this scheme. Whether missions were sent from Manila to Nagoya, from Sanlúcar de Barrameda to Marrakesh or from Buda to Vienna, regional authorities or local notables conducted these exchanges with tacit or indirect control of their sovereign court. Given the breadth and variety of this typology, which transcends the anecdotal exception, we set out to formalise how such indirect diplomacy developed throughout the first globalisation. Specific objectives include the following:

- Rethinking the concept of diplomacy to include broader communication between polities, the protectorates and cross-border contacts.
- Problematizing the concept of indirect diplomacy to find out why, how, and when recourse to broad communication became necessary in a given spatial-temporal context and whether it brought marginal benefits or had repercussions on a broader geopolitical level.
- Analysing the devices of control and of political communication that the sovereign authority had at its disposal for these missions, between validation and ambiguity.
- Recognising the perception of these missions' nature at their destination, between espionage, informality, and official recognition, as well as the relationship between negotiations, actors, and spaces.
- Determining a grammar of indirect diplomacy in order to ascertain the presence (or absence) of norms, practices, languages, and codes shared by diplomatic agents, avoiding a relativist re-reading of the history of diplomacy.

Confirmed speakers include Tilman Haug (Universität Münster), Lisa Hellmann (Universität Bonn), Gabor Karman (Hungarian Academy of Sciences), David Martín Marcos (UNED), Robin D. Radway (Central European University), and Hillard von Thiesen (Universität Rostock). We invite submissions of max. 250 words for twenty-minute papers or 3/4-paper panels to ruben.gonzalez@cchs.csic.es. Deadline for submissions is **31 May**.