

US-PORTUGUESE TRADE IN THE ERA OF THE FIRST REAL WORLD WAR AND BEYOND: Instability and Opportunity, 1796-1831

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Introduction

The transition from the end of the eighteenth century to the first decades of the nineteenth century was marked by political instability in Europe. The expansion of the ideals of the French revolution, and the spread of the global war driven by aggressive Napoleonic France caused deep instability in Europe. Across the Atlantic, other wars were giving birth to new nations and the world was facing tremendous changes. The understanding of the trade relations between US and Portugal from 1796 to 1831 can contribute to a deeper insight into an understudied period in terms of international trade. Overcoming a major lack of studies regarding trade relations between Portugal and the United States in this period, we have created a new database in this article, based on new Portuguese sources. We then analyzed the trade relations in conjunction with American quantitative data and several qualitative sources.

This paper taps into an important field of analysis, namely the discussion of the economic impacts of war on trade as well as the role of smaller (“weaker”) states in wartime situations. Many scholars have recently analyzed the disruptions caused by major conflicts like the world wars. And recent scholarship certainly puts the revolutionary wars and the ensuing Napoleonic conflicts into the same category. However, these scholars have paid relatively little attention to the smaller players in these wars, often assuming that they occupied an insignificant role in the conflict. Portugal, in particular, suffered three French invasions during Napoleon’s rule, and, since it did not adhere to the Continental blockade, it experienced trade restrictions with several of its former suppliers. Initially, the United States became a major trading partner for Portugal, despite its strained relations with an ally of Portugal, Great Britain, became a key supplier for the Portuguese market. However, after 1812, the war pitting United States against England brought new difficulties for the US-Portuguese trade, as US shipments with cereals and flour were frequently captured by England. The reversal of the political situation after the second defeat of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna once again changed the external environment for trade.

In this paper we want to analyze the changes in the Portuguese trade relations, both in terms of goods exchanged and the policies, with the United States during an extremely turbulent period in history. We want to explore the following questions: 1) What kinds of changes do we see in the trade flows between these two countries, especially whether the pressure of the war effort allowed more latitude for Portugal to explore its trade options; 2) Do we see substantial changes in the types of goods exchanged over this complex period? 3) What was the significance of this trade for both countries? In sum, the exchange of American cereals for Portuguese goods, in a context of the deep instability that existed in the early nineteenth century, can be assumed to have linked both sides of

the Atlantic Ocean in mutually beneficial trade. Yet, the context of this trade and its impact needs to be studied in detail, which is indeed our goal.

Research on Trade and the World Wars: What Role Did the “Weaker” States Play?

The transition from the end of the eighteenth century to the first decades of the nineteenth century was marked by political instability in Europe. The expansion of the ideals of the French revolution, and the spread of war driven by imperialistic France caused deep instability in Europe. Across the Atlantic, other wars were giving birth to new nations and the world was facing tremendous changes. The understanding of the trade relations between the United States and Portugal from 1796 to 1831 can provide a deeper insight into an understudied period in terms of international trade. Overcoming a major lack of studies regarding trade relations between Portugal and the US at that time, we have created a new database, based on Portuguese handwritten sources, which have opened up the possibility of obtaining a series of data for thirty-six consecutive years. This research was reinforced by some American quantitative data and several qualitative sources.

The following primary sources are handwritten, with the exception of the fourth: 1) Portugal’s Balance of Trade with Foreign Nations and Portuguese Colonies - quantitative data covering the thirty-six years between 1796 and 1831; 2) Monthly Military General Account of Provisions from 1815 to 1816¹; 3) Various qualitative sources, such as consular and military correspondence, memoirs and legislation²; 4) US “Foreign Commerce and Navigation” from 1808-1814³. In addition, we utilized other statistical compilations. Based on this new data, we want to provide new perspectives on Portuguese trade in this crucial period, and engage the relevant debates in the field of economic history concerning economic warfare and the effect of conflicts on trade.

This paper taps into an important field of analysis, namely the discussion of the economic impacts of war on trade as well as the role of smaller (“weaker”) states in wartime situations. In recent years the economic impacts of warfare have become a lively field study among economists and historians.⁴ Many scholars - including Alan Taylor and Reuven Glick; Lance Davis and Stanley Engerman; as well as Ronald Findley and Kevin O’Rourke - have recently analyzed the disruptions caused by major conflicts like the world wars. Alan Taylor and Reuven Glick have studied the indirect economic effects of wars, in particular World War I and II, with a large database, using a gravity model. Their analysis, focusing on disruptions of trade and the subsequent economic losses, yielded clear results: Trade was clearly disrupted by wars, levels of trade did not return to pre-

¹ *Arquivo Tribunal de Contas* (Archives of the Audit Court): ER 5451.

² *Arquivo Histórico Militar* (Military Historic Archive) and *Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo* (Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo).

³ *American State Papers – Legislative and Executive Documents of the Congress of the United States*.

⁴ See e.g. Mark Harrison, ed., *The Economics of World War II. Six Great Powers in International Comparisons* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See also Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison, eds., *The Economics of World War I* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Classic studies of this type are Alan Milward’s works on the European war economies; see e.g. Alan S. Milward, *The German Economy at War* (London: Athlon Press, 1965) and Alan S. Milward, *War, Economy and Society 1939-1945* (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

war levels, and these economic disruptions affected even those countries that were not directly involved in the conflict.⁵ Such impacts were clearly part of the overall story of the world wars and the entire 20th century, which featured shaky economic performances, political instability, and major economic and political crises for Europe and the world as a whole. The average growth rates of most European states were modest at best compared to the late 19th century performances or the so-called Golden Age, 1950-1973.⁶

What about economic warfare? Many scholars have doubted the efficacy of economic warfare, which can range from fairly benign policy measures and pressure to outright warfare in the context of total war.⁷ Lance Davis and Stanley Engerman have studied one particular form of economic warfare, naval blockades, over several centuries. They also emphasize both the costs and challenges of sustaining a successful blockade. For example, during the Napoleonic wars the legalities of blockades were not that clearly agreed upon, especially the issue of neutrality. The success of a blockade, as they point out, is often difficult to assess as well.⁸ Moreover, recent scholarship, as presented by for example David Bell, certainly puts the revolutionary wars and the ensuing Napoleonic conflicts into the same category.⁹ Finally, Kevin O'Rourke has provided innovative insights into the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars by focusing on the contraction of trade in particular. His results show that Great Britain was the least affected of the belligerents, whereas France and the United States suffered more. The welfare losses were around 5-6 per cent for the United States, which could be classified as substantial.¹⁰

What are we trying to argue on the basis of these findings? First, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars were truly total wars on the basis of the methods chosen by the belligerents. Second, the parameters of economic warfare were not very clearly defined. Third, the effects of the war spilled over to influence the relations between neutrals as well. Fourth, due to the fact that these wars had an impact on the trade relations of all nations, many countries scrambled to find new outlets and sources for their trade. Fifth, the United States was particularly hard hit by these wars, which forced it to seek

⁵ Reuven Glick and Alan M. Taylor, "Collateral Damage: Trade Disruption and the Economic Impact of War," *NBER Working Paper*, no. No. 11565 (2005).

⁶ Angus Maddison, *Monitoring the World Economy 1820-1992* (Paris: OECD, 1995), Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2001). For a broad analysis of trade patterns and conflicts, see especially Ronald Findlay and Kevin O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty: Trade, War, and the World Economy in the Second Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁷ See e.g. Alan S. Milward, "Economic Warfare in Perspective," in *East-West Trade and the Cold War*, ed. Jari Eloranta and Jari Ojala (Jyvaskyla: University of Jyvaskyla, 2005), R. Thomas Naylor, *Economic Warfare: Sanctions, Embargo Busting, and Their Human Cost* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001). On the variety of methods for engaging in economic warfare, see James P. O'Leary, "Economic Warfare and Strategic Economics," *Comparative Strategy* 5, no. 2 (1985).

⁸ Lance E. Davis and Stanley L. Engerman, *Naval Blockades in Peace and War: An Economic History since 1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁹ David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007).

¹⁰ Kevin O'Rourke, "The Worldwide Economic Impact of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815," *Journal of Global History* 1, no. 1 (2006).

alternative trading partners. Sixth, in this type of situation the bargaining power of “weak” (smaller, less powerful) states, like Portugal, increased, albeit temporarily.

Scholars have paid relatively little attention to the smaller players in these wars, often assuming that they occupied an insignificant role in the conflict. As for example Michael Handel has pointed out, “small power” and “smaller state” can be misleading terms to describe such states. They usually imply small geographic size. A more fitting definition can perhaps be found in the use of the term “weak state”. According to Handel, this concept can be applied not only to small, weak states but also to countries of considerable area, which were nonetheless weak players in the international system.¹¹ Here we would posit that Portugal, despite being a war zone for some of this period, was indeed such a state; a state that increased its international trade and bargaining power due to aforementioned external conditions. This was particularly the case vis-à-vis the trade relations between the United States and Portugal.

Overall Trends in the Portuguese External Trade

The Peninsular War involved three French invasions of Portugal (1807-1808; 1809; 1810-1811) and, together with the Spanish War of Independence from 1809 until 1814, this generated deep instability in the Iberian Peninsula. Since the transmigration of the Portuguese Regent, Prince D. João, and the Royal Court to Brazil in November 1807, Portugal’s army had been helped and commanded by English forces, the Peninsular army, and the invaders were eventually defeated. This help came mainly because of the Portuguese refusal to accept the continental blockade imposed by the French Empire in 1806 with the aim of closing all European ports to English trade. The Iberian Peninsula was devastated during this period, suffering massive deaths, pillage, and with many fields burned in order to prevent the advance of the enemy army. One irrefutable reality of this situation was the tremendous lack of cereals to feed the population, as well as the Peninsular army.

As a consequence of the close relations between Portuguese and British Empires, already established as an ancient alliance and strengthened during that critical period, in the early years of the nineteenth century England was both the main supplier and client of the Portuguese market. In the period from 1808 to 1813, when some external markets such as Holland, Prussia, France, Denmark and Hamburg ceased their trade relations with the Portuguese market (the latter three from 1809 on), the English, American and Spanish pursued this trade¹². Although distant, the American market took on a key position in terms of imports during the Peninsular War, a development which deserves to be highlighted and analyzed further.

¹¹ Handel, Michael I., *Weak States in the International System* (London: F. Cass 1981). He divides states into super powers, great powers, middle powers, weak states, and mini-states. The three last-mentioned can be understood as weak states. See also Eloranta, Jari, “European States in the International Arms Trade, 1920-1937: The Impact of External Threats, Market Forces, and Domestic Constraints,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 50, no. 1 (2002).

¹² Moreira, Maria Cristina, “La Importancia del Mercado Español en el Comercio Exterior Portugués (1796-1831)”, *Hispania Nova Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, no. 6 (2005), p. 14.

Based on Moreira's (2005) findings, the main suppliers of the Portuguese import market, which represented more than 89 per cent of Portuguese imports from 1796 to 1831, of the eight countries associated with this, the US achieved the sixth position as supplier from 1801 to 1807 (1,185 contos¹³, 6.9 per cent); the seventh between 1814 and 1820 (711 contos, 3.9 per cent), and below eighth from 1796 to 1800 (411 contos, 0.1 per cent). It is surprising that, from 1808-1813, the US was not only the second supplier, but also that Portuguese imports from the US reached their highest value (6,297 contos, 28.5 per cent), which was nearly six times higher than the average for the previous period. Furthermore, Portuguese imports from that particular country during 1796-1831 achieved the highest values in 1812 and 1811, of 13,628 contos and 13,073 contos respectively. The years 1813 and 1810, with values of 6,021 contos and 3,768 contos respectively, also clearly identify a great Portuguese demand for US products.

In the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Portuguese imports from the US represented 1,335 contos (1801-1810), 3,770 contos (1811-1820), and then declined to 128 contos (1821-1831). Imports from the US were very significant during the Peninsular War, as those values were never reached again during the remaining period under study. Other high annual values that deserve mention were 2,500 contos (1801) and between 1,200 and 1,600 contos (1803, 1804, 1809 and 1818). Exceptions to this are years 1796, 1798, 1808, 1820-1831, when Portuguese imports from US were irrelevant and, for those years, that value was between 400 and 900 contos.

What specific demand drove those significant imports during that perturbed period? Or, respectively, why would Portugal be willing or be able to trade so much with a country that was not on particularly good terms with its main ally, Great Britain? Before we go further, we need to examine the demand for US products. From a detailed analysis of Portuguese imports from the US by product, the main conclusion to be drawn is that during the Peninsular War the US was a particularly important supplier of cereals: mainly flour, corn, wheat and rice. Imports became even more important when compared with the role of Portuguese exports to the US in the same period.

In the context of the bicentennial commemorations of the French invasions, it is worth noting that during the Peninsular War the role of Portuguese imports from the US market grew significantly due to the demand for cereals. In fact, the highest Portuguese exports to the US coincide, in 1808-1813, with imports, although the annual average was only 586 contos (6.3 per cent of all Portuguese exports, the US being its fifth biggest customer). Curiously, the highest export value was reached in 1812 with 1,941 contos. This number was comparable to the rest of the nineteenth century, before the Brazilian ports opened up to rest of the world¹⁴; that is 1801 to 1807, when the value of 509 contos was similar to the annual average from 1796 to 1800 (465 contos). The US market only represented 2.9 per cent in the period between 1796 and 1800 (the fifth largest

¹³ *Contos* here means *contos de réis*, where *réis* were a Portuguese monetary unit of the time: one *conto* corresponded to one million *réis*.

¹⁴ In 1808, the Prince Regent, after his arrival in Brazil, decreed the opening of Brazilian ports to the rest of world, thus ending the Colonial Pact which had allowed Brazil to trade only with Portugal.

Portuguese export customer) and 2.3 per cent from 1801 to 1807 (the seventh largest Portuguese export customer).

After the Peninsular War and until the end of the second decade, from 1814 to 1820, these exports represented a mean value similar to those before the War: 407 contos (2.6 per cent, the seventh biggest Portuguese customer), although the exports in 1815 totaled an exceptional value of 1,034 contos. A yearly analysis reveals that 1800 and 1805 should also be highlighted, as exports reached values of 826 and 704 contos, respectively. The value traded in 1825 of 654 contos should also be noted, especially because it is included in a period when exports were consistently irrelevant, from 1821 to 1831 (average of 230 contos).

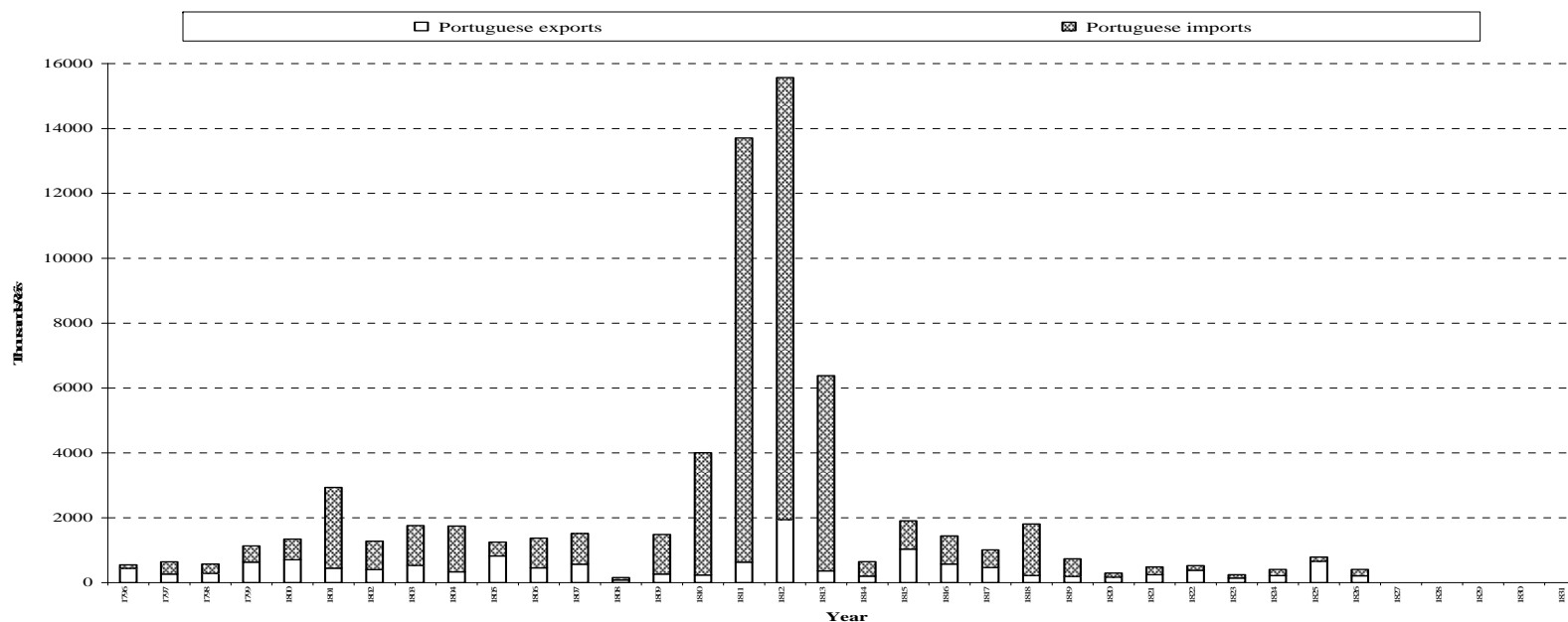
Figures 1 and 2 plot the development of Portuguese trade relations with the US from 1796 to 1831. Imports were mainly higher than exports during the most relevant trade years (until 1820), with the exception of 1799, 1800, 1805 and 1815.

Portuguese Imports from the US

From 1796 to 1831, cereals were predominantly the most important US products imported by the Portuguese, representing 68 to 95 per cent of total Portuguese imports (Table 1)¹⁵. The main cereals were flour, corn, wheat and rice, as shown in Table 2. The US supplied the basic cereals for human consumption during this troubled period. These products were even more crucial for the needs of the Luso-British army, which fought the French on Portuguese and Spanish soil during the Peninsular War. Flour was consistently the most important cereal supplied, the value increasing approximately fourfold between 1808-1813, when compared to 1801-1807. Corn was the second major product supplied, and its value increased three times in the same period. Wheat and rice also contributed to the growth in imports of cereals during the Peninsular War.

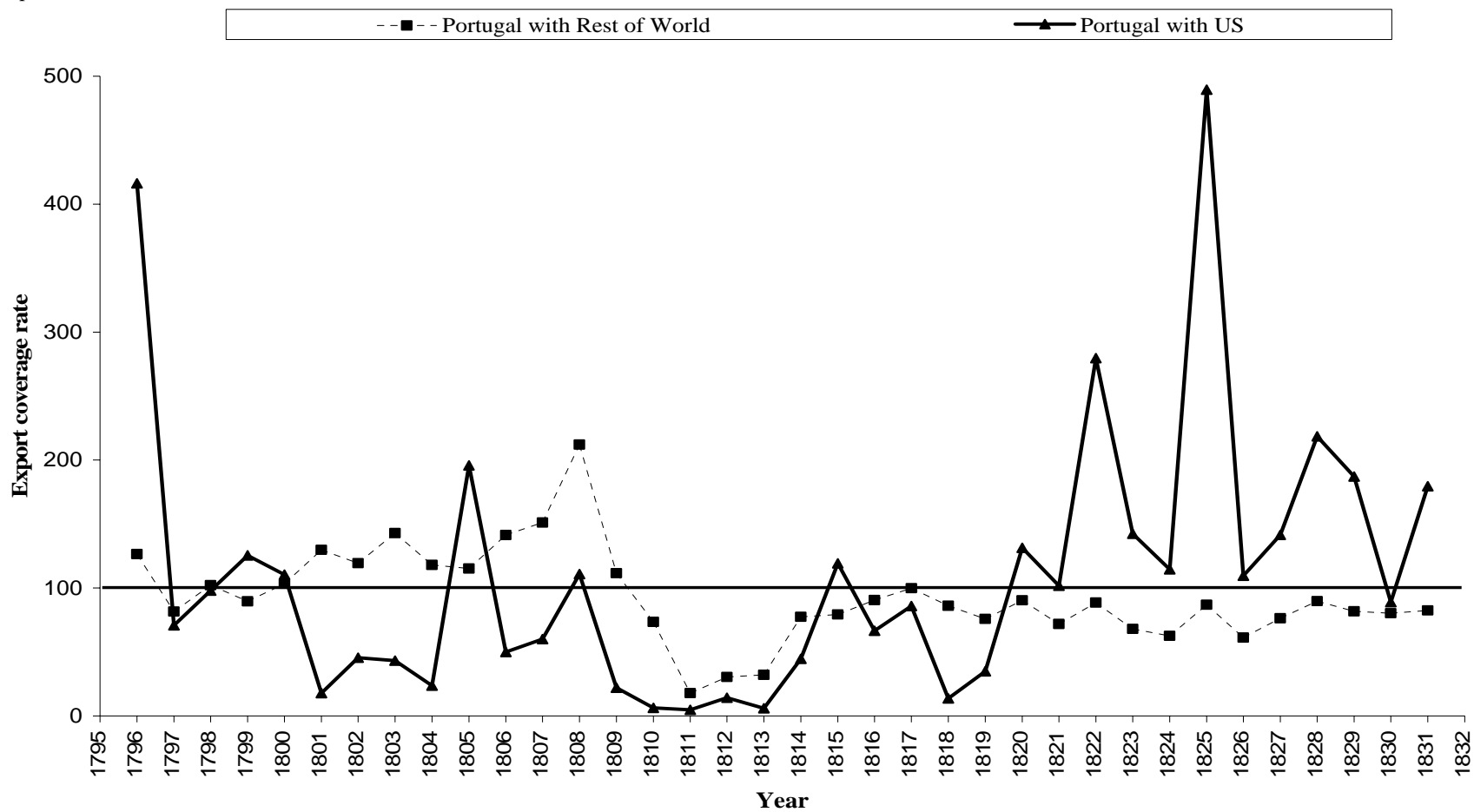
¹⁵ Except for 1796 (staves comprising 66.0 per cent) and two other years, 1814 and 1820, which include different products that represented less than 10 per cent of the total imports, with the exception of butter (14.5 per cent) in 1814 and fish oil (16.1 per cent) in 1820.

Figure 1: Evolution of Portuguese Exports and Imports with the United States, 1796-1831



Sources: 'Portugal's Balance of Trade with Foreign Nations and Portuguese Colonies', Portugal's Balance of Trade with US market. Arquivo Histórico do Rio de Janeiro, *Balança Geral do Comercio do Reyno de Portugal com as Nações Estrangeiras em o anno de 1798 e 1808* (Portugal's Balance of Trade with Foreign Nations in 1798 and 1808) Contadoria da Superintendência Geral dos Contrabandos e Descaminhos dos Reais Direitos. Instituto Nacional de Estatística, *Balanças Gerais do Comércio do Reyno de Portugal com os seus Domínios Ultramarinos e Nações Estrangeiras de 1796-1797, 1799-1807, 1809-1831* (Portugal's Balance of Trade with Foreign Nations and Portuguese Colonies 1796-1797, 1799-1807, 1809-1831), Contadoria da Superintendência Geral

Figure 2. Evolution of the Ratio of Portuguese Exports and Imports with the United States and the Ratio of Total Portuguese Exports and Imports, 1796-1831



Sources: Idem.

Table 1. Main US products Imported by Portugal, 1796-1820 (Per Cent)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Imports</i>	<i>Flour</i>	<i>Corn</i>	<i>Wheat</i>	Rice
1796	14.0	3.3	96.7	0.0	0.0
1797	77.0	24.3	8.0	1.7	65.9
1798	78.7	9.1	42.3	7.4	41.1
1799	78.5	4.3	71.5	6.6	17.6
1800	73.4	19.9	71.4	0.0	8.7
1801	95.2	14.4	53.8	5.7	35.4
1802	86.1	76.0	23.2	0.3	0.5
1803	96.1	47.8	43.5	3.2	5.5
1804	90.0	46.1	27.7	24.9	1.3
1805	69.1	50.3	35.4	13.4	0.9
1806	87.7	53.5	26.6	19.9	0.0
1807	93.9	79.5	14.4	6.1	0.0
1808	94.8	72.6	17.2	10.2	0.0
1809	74.6	63.3	26.5	9.2	1.8
1810	68.0	69.0	0.0	31.0	0.0
1811	82.7	69.2	13.4	6.3	11.2
1812	95.4	57.6	24.2	4.3	13.9
1813	91.0	56.2	24.7	11.1	8.0
1814	40.3	69.4	19.9	4.8	5.9
1815	90.8	61.4	15.8	5.2	17.6
1816	85.8	62.8	25.1	7.0	11.2
1817	79.0	75.8	0.0	16.6	7.6
1818	91.3	25.4	39.4	4.8	30.6
1819	86.3	13.4	70.8	7.1	8.7
1820	19.8	88.3	10.4	1.4	0.0

Sources: 'Portugal's Balance of Trade with Foreign Nations and Portuguese Colonies', Portugal's Balance of Trade with the US market.

Table 2. Portuguese Imports of Cereals from the United States, 1796-1831 (Unit: contos de réis)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Imports</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Flour</i>	<i>Corn</i>	<i>Wheat</i>	Rice
1796-1800	64.3	279	40	150	10	79
1801-1807	88.3	1,080	684	286	99	11
1808-1813	84.4	5,474	3,437	1,144	383	511
1814-1820	70.5	583	158	306	71	48
1801-1810	85.6	833	476	233	62	62
1811-1820	76.2	3,338	1,957	826	261	294
1821-1831	11.0	19	25	2	5	13

Sources: 'Portugal's Balance of Trade with Foreign Nations and Portuguese Colonies', Portugal's Balance of Trade with the US market.

Focusing on annual imports from the US in the period between 1796 and 1831, and bearing in mind that in the decade of 1821-1831 imports were irrelevant, one can discern a much more precise picture of the dimension of the demand for cereals per year. As already highlighted, flour had the highest contribution to Portuguese imports of cereals from the US, accounting for 63 per cent of the imports in 1808-1813 (Table 2), mainly due to the increase in the quantities demanded by the Portuguese market. During this period, 1812 was the year during which a maximum value was attained,

corresponding to 9,030 contos (8,209,788 alqueires¹⁶, of which 7,869,780 arrived at Lisbon; 240,528 at Oporto; and 13,200 at Figueira da Foz, all priced at 1,100 réis/alqueire; and 86,280 were unloaded at Setúbal at a price of 1,086 réis/alqueire). In 1811 that value equalled 6,073 contos (6,248,672 alqueires, of which 6,230,270 was wheat flour: 6,001,484 entered through Lisbon; 220,794 arrived at Oporto; and 7,992 at Figueira da Foz, priced at 973 réis/alqueire; 8,562 alqueires of corn flour entered through Oporto at 500 réis/alqueire; 9,840 alqueires of rye flour, of which 9,240 arrived at Oporto and 600 at Figueira da Foz, both priced at 710 réis/alqueire), and registered 3,366 contos in 1813 (equivalent to 3,452,544 alqueires, of which 3,328,848 from Lisbon was priced at 967 réis/alqueire while 100,524, priced at 960 réis/alqueire, entered through Oporto and 23,160 arrived at Figueira da Foz priced at 867 réis/alqueire; there are also records of 2,600 barricas¹⁷ arriving at Setúbal with a price of 11,604 réis/barrica).

The highest quantities of corn and wheat imports occurred in 1811, representing 4,484,829 alqueires (of which 3,589,480 entered through Lisbon, 819,599 through Oporto and 73,950 arrived at Figueira, all priced at 596 réis/alqueire although 1,800 more entered through Setúbal at a price of 540 réis/alqueire) and 1,140,702 alqueires (1,119,490 through Lisbon and 21,212 through Oporto, both at a price of 1,051 réis/alqueire), respectively. In the same year, the highest import value for both cereals was reached, of 2,673 and 1,199 contos respectively. While two other relevant years for corn were 1812 (2,583 contos for the import of 600,872 alqueires (502,992 at Porto, 50,880 at Lisbon and 47,000 at Figueira, priced at 717 réis/alqueire) and 1818 (1,082 contos, corresponding to 2,264,177 alqueires (priced at 478 réis/alqueire: 1,234,558 in Lisbon, 949,932 in Oporto, and 76,687 in Figueira; at a price of 400 réis/alqueire, another 3,000 alqueires entered through Setúbal), wheat had another significant import value in 1812 (621 contos, corresponding to 595,196 alqueires, of which 523,780 arrived at Lisbon, 51,616 entered through Oporto and 19,800 through Setúbal at 1,044 réis/alqueire).

American rice imports were also relevant during the Peninsular War, with 1813 being the year of the most significant import value, of 965 contos, although this was less important than that of the other cereals (the imported quantities were 137,679 quintais¹⁸: 135,826 quintais entered through Lisbon, and 1,853 quintais entered through Oporto, at 7,000 réis/quintal; and 512 arrobas¹⁹ priced at 1,750 réis /arroba entered through Figueira). In 1811 that value represented 869 contos (of the 135,715 quintais, 132,391 arrived at Lisbon and 3,324 quintais arrived at Oporto both priced at 6,400 réis/quintal) and in 1812 it reached 773 contos, associated with imported quantities of 109,625 quintais (100,758 quintais through Lisbon, and 8,867 quintais through Oporto; both at 7,000 réis/quintal) and 3,060 arrobas at 1,800 réis /arroba entered through Figueira.

¹⁶ *Alqueire* was a capacity measure unit.

¹⁷ *Barrica* was a capacity measure unit.

¹⁸ *Quintal* was a weight measure unit. Prince Regent D. João defined the quintal as 10 arrobas in 1812, which is the conversion measure used in this paper.

¹⁹ *Arroba* was a weight measure unit.

Table 3. Quantities of Main Imported Products from the United States, 1796-1820 (Unit: alqueires)

Year	Total Amount of Cereals	Flour	Corn	Wheat
1796	45,792	1,164	44,628	..
1797	211,223	149,598	49,125	12,500
1798	334,553	51,701	240,596	42,256
1799	668,927	24,012	612,435	32,480
1800	669,826	93,012	576,814	..
1801	2,111,254	1,365,596	738,976	6,682
1802	1,579,550	552,470	985,136	41,944
1803	2,580,620	1,003,902	1,055,260	521,458
1804	2,098,063	881,003	965,418	251,642
1805	444,421	182,108	187,886	74,427
1806	1,278,070	894,702	314,314	69,054
1807	1,305,178	799,782	382,521	122,875
1808	76,632	52,368	0	24,264
1809	1,180,766	830,595	265,437	84,734
1810	2,418,371	1,510,688	784,550	123,133
1811	11,874,203	6,248,672	4,484,829	1,140,702
1812	9,405,856	8,209,788	600,872	595,196
1813	5,280,733	3,452,544	1,500,059	328,130
1814	224,017	178,974	0	45,043
1815	977,141	275,556	651,446	50,139
1816	1,279,537	114,360	1,088,987	76,190
1817	423,843	335,736	80,723	7,384
1818	2,517,496	0	2,264,177	253,319
1819	1,122,889	86,400	570,532	465,957
1820	40,602	40,602	0	0

Sources: 'Portugal's Balance of Trade with Foreign Nations and Portuguese Colonies', Portugal's Balance of Trade with the US market. The unit for cereals is *alqueire*, although in the case of flour, *barricas* and *barris* are also units; these are not listed as they correspond to irrelevant import values.

The relevance of American flour supplies during the Peninsular War, which is evident from the previously analysed study of the quantitative sources, can be emphasised by cross-referencing two important qualitative sources: consular and military correspondence. Since it has been demonstrated that Portugal imported mainly flour from US market, it was striking to find references to that product in a nineteenth-century hand written document²⁰, found at Tribunal de Contas, for the years 1815 and 1816, just after the Paris Treaty had been signed. It shows clearly that the Portuguese army lists "American flour" in its military monthly reports of acquisitions in "General Account of Provisions" Conta Geral de Géneros. In fact, crosschecking this reference with the previously presented data, and assuming that by "American flour" what is meant is flour imported from US, the quantities acquired by the army correspond respectively to 30 and 56 per cent of the imported flour (Table 3), in 1815 (83,969 alqueires) and 1816 (64,140 alqueires) respectively.

²⁰ Arquivo Tribunal de Contas (Archives of the Audit Court): ER 5451.

During the Peninsular War, letters dated 20th of June²¹, 8th of August²², and 10th of December 1810²³ from Jozé Rademaker, the Portuguese Consul in Philadelphia²⁴, who was persistently requested to ensure that American traders exported flour to Lisbon, explained to the Portuguese Ministry of War and Foreign Affairs that many of those traders did not want to do so, due to the low profits obtained from that trade, after covering expenses, insurance, freight and taxes.²⁵ From elements contained in the letter dated 8th August, it becomes clear that the price for flour was 8,800 réis/barrica in Philadelphia, being sold at 12,800 réis/barrica in Portugal. The only way to persuade the traders, as Jozé Rademaker suggests, was to increase the selling price, or to lower the duty fees on the products they wanted to import from Portugal, namely white wines. However, Rademaker continued to publicise at all ports the opportunity for traders who wanted to export wheat and flour to Portugal, and he refers to the fact that several ships had left Baltimore bound for Lisbon, and another four from Philadelphia, with several more waiting to leave New York and Carolina.²⁶ Although the Portuguese statistics for each external market give no information on the regional provenance of the imported products, the relevance of the Philadelphia and New York ports in this trade was also confirmed by data from a military source²⁷, a document dated 25th February 1811, which made it possible to trace the main origins of that American flour, namely New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

This same source enables us to identify the price of flour in the US, namely 9 dollars 75 cents and 10 dollars in New York, 10 dollars and 50 cents in Philadelphia, and 9 dollars and 50 cents in Baltimore. For all these cases, this source reinforces the idea of low profits for traders, as referred to in Rademaker's consular correspondence, since it indicates that expenses, insurance, freight and taxes reached between 3 and 3 dollars 50 cents /barrica, which corresponded approximately to 2,756 réis, when considering an exchange rate of 848 réis per dollar found for 1809.²⁸ By applying this exchange rate to the figures mentioned in Rademaker's letter from 1810, it can be concluded that the profit was low, around 1,244 réis /barrica (1 dollar 47 cents /barrica), amounting to 10.8 per cent as the difference between 12,800 réis and 8,800 réis, 4,000 réis, excluding 2,756 réis for insurance, freight and taxes.

²¹ Letter sent in answer to a request to increase wheat and flour exports to Portugal, *Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo* (Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo) box 62074.

²² Idem.

²³ Idem.

²⁴ In 1810, the American Consuls in Portugal were: William Jarvie in Lisbon, James L. Cathcart in Madeira, John B. Dabney in the Azores, and Henry Hill in San Salvador in Brazil. Document no. 151, Consuls and Commercial Agents, Table Commerce and Navigation p. 820 in *American State Papers – Legislative and Executive Documents of the Congress of the United States*. Commerce and Navigation Vol 1. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lawhome.html>.

²⁵ Letter from Jozé Rademaker to D. Miguel Pereira Forjaz, Philadelphia, 8th of August 1810, on the shipment of flour to Portugal, *Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo* (Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo) box 62074.

²⁶ Letter from José Rademaker, dated 10th of December 1810, on the shipment of flours to Portugal, *Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo* (Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo) box 62074.

²⁷ *Arquivo Histórico Militar* (Military Historic Archive), PT AHM/DIV/1/24/245/31 Report from José Rademaker to D. Miguel Pereira Forjaz, minister and secretary of state for War Affairs, on food products and list of flour prices in the United States of America.

²⁸ Letter dated 29 December 1809, *Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo* (Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo) box 62077.

Tracing the consular correspondence for the year of highest American flour imports, which was 1812, of 8,209,788 alqueires according to the Portuguese trade balances, it was quite surprising to find references to quantities of this product for that same year. One letter stated that, on the 22nd of July 1812, four Portuguese vessels left Philadelphia bound for Oporto with 2,135 barricas of flour and, on the very next day, another five American vessels left Philadelphia for Lisbon containing 9,800 barricas, and "... much more would go if the fear of being captured by the English did not discourage them..."²⁹ However, this source makes no reference to the values or prices involved in those exports to the Portuguese market.

Unfortunately, in the Portuguese trade statistics quantities of imported flour are not expressed as barricas, but mainly as alqueires, and no conversion factor for these units can be found. There are, however, some records given in barricas and barris³⁰, though these are associated with very low values. Curiously, the quantities of barricas of flour referred to in the above-mentioned letter are not accounted for in the Portuguese Trade Balance records. Considering that those quantities only refer to two days of vessel movements and that a huge demand for American flour is revealed by several of the letters researched, together with the opportunity to cross-check the quantitative and qualitative sources, if the fact that the amount of flour had been converted to alqueires for the records in 1812 was an error in the records or a manifestation of contraband, remains open to discussion.

Why did the Portuguese import wheat flour, rather than the grain? A memoir on trade between Portugal and US, written by Ignacio Palyart in 1788, states that wheat was one of the most important farming products in the states of New York, Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, exported mainly to Portugal, Spain and some other Mediterranean ports (France and England only imported it when facing a bad yield). During the latter half of the 1780s, Portugal imported mainly raw wheat, avoiding manufacturing costs, after a period when imports were preferably of wheat in the form of flour. This change in demand affected the Philadelphians so much that in 1786 they overcharged for Portuguese wines, 20 per cent more than in other states. However, Portugal could unload goods at other ports which then entered Pennsylvania illegally, thus avoiding those duties. The importance of Philadelphia in the flour trade results from the scission between United Kingdom of Great Britain dependent North America and US, since Lower Canada was a great producer of wheat but this could only be exported by way of the St. Lawrence River, which is frozen most of the year. Therefore, Canada's trade was underdeveloped to the benefit particularly of Philadelphia, as "... Philadelphians monopolised wheat and transformed it into flour in their ports, re-exporting it to

²⁹ Letter dated 23rd of July 1812, on the difficulty of bringing flour to Portugal due to the war with England and what else is suggested about the Portuguese crews, *Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo* (Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo) box 62074. The War of 1812 was fought between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and its colonies: Upper Canada [Ontario], Lower Canada [Quebec], Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and Bermuda.

³⁰ Trade Balance for the years 1813 (2,600 at a price of 11,604 réis/barrica by Setubal), 1816 (2,560 priced 8,200 réis/barrica by Oporto) and 1817 (2,131 for 12,620 réis/barrica by Oporto), 1818 (20,579: 13,210 by Lisbon and 7,069 by Oporto both at 9,890 réis/barrica and 300 by Figueira priced between 6,000 and 9,890 réis/barrica) and finally 1821 (9,609 at 5.000 réis/barrica by Lisbon).

Portugal and other kingdoms...”³¹ The disruption of agricultural life and destruction of most mills due to the Peninsular War may have been the reason for the shift in the Portuguese demand for grain back to flour, again.

In this context, Portugal wanted to buy American vessels and to use them under the Portuguese flag in order to transport flour to Portugal. However, the existing trade treaty between England and Portugal demanded that the owner of the vessel, its captain and one third of the sailors were to be under the orders of the Portuguese Prince Regent. This reality prevented the existence of many other vessels which could take part in the flour trade, as there were not enough Portuguese sailors in the US for that purpose. In order to avoid this problem, in 1812 Jozé Rademaker³² suggested that the Portuguese should follow the procedures of the Spanish: only the owner of the vessel and its captain should be Portuguese.

The war which opposed US and England from 1812 to 1815, was accompanied by several attempts by England to put an embargo on US ports, adding many obstacles to international trade. Trade between Portugal and US was no exception; thus it faced another challenge, as many American traders that operated with English licences under the American flag exporting flour to Spain and Portugal saw their businesses compromised. Again, Jozé Rademaker attempted to persuade several Americans to become naturalised as Portuguese, in order to run vessels with the Portuguese flag under Portuguese passports (forty-nine passports which arrived in Philadelphia in 1812 were reported as insufficient). In fact, three vessels with food supplies left New York on 7th of September in 1812 in such conditions, one heading to Lisbon and two to the island of Fayal in the Azores.

From the various Portuguese sources mentioned above, indubitably the great importance of trade relations between Portugal and the US lied mainly in the Portuguese demand for American cereals from 1808-1814. Although in American State Papers –Legislative and Executive Documents of the Congress of the United States there is a lack of data regarding annual records of American imports and exports detailed by products for each external market from 1796-1831, from research of that source it became evident that, from 1808 to 1814, the Portuguese market was also an important client for American exports, ranking as second in 1812 and 1813; third in 1809, 1811 and 1814; and fourth in 1810 and sixth in 1808 (see Table 4).

³¹ *Memoir Observação sobre o comércio dos Estados Unidos d’America com Portugal* por Ignacio Palyart (Observation on trade between US and Portugal by Ignacio Palyart) in 1788. Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo (Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo box 62109).

³² In a letter dated 7th September 1812, *Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo* (Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo box 62074).

Table 4. Position of Portuguese Market in Terms of Value and Destination of US Exports, 1808-1814

Year	American export values	Portugal	
		Position	Percentage of American exports
1808	22,430,960	6 th	2.4
1809	52,203,233	3 rd	15.9
1810	66,757,970	4 th	11.5
1811	61,316,833	3 rd	18.7
1812	38,527,236	2 nd	24.4
1813	27,855,997	2 nd	36.2
1814	6,627,441	3 rd	8.5

Sources: This information has been collated from *American State Papers – Legislative and Executive Documents of the Congress of the United States*. The source does not differentiate exports by products.

The crucial issue of the supplies of American cereals to Portugal shows that, although distant, help from America was essential to the survival of the Portuguese people and the Luso-British army, an indirect but no less important support, that cannot be overlooked at the time when the bicentennial of the Peninsular War is being commemorated (2008).

Portuguese Exports to the US Market

Research based on Portuguese Trade statistics reveals that Portuguese export values to the US market were much less significant compared to Portuguese imports from that market. The structure of US demand from the Portuguese market relied mainly on wine, *Patacas Castelhanas* (Spanish silver coins) and salt, as imports of those three products constituted 65 to 98 per cent of the total value exported to the US from 1796 to 1820³³, as shown in Table 5.³⁴

The most relevant value of Spanish silver coins exported was reached in 1812, of 1,524 *contos*; 1805 corresponded to an export of 581 *contos* and, in 1800, it reached 460 *contos*. One can conclude that Portuguese exports to the US market in the period under study were irrelevant, with exception of the Spanish silver coins, specifically in the first year of the War of 1812. The Portuguese Trade Statistics indicate six origins for exported products: Portuguese Kingdom, Portuguese Islands, Brazil, Africa, Asia and re-exports. Although the origin of wine and salt was the Kingdom, Spanish silver coins were recorded as re-exported. The re-exported Spanish silver coins were not a means of payment but a product, according to Portuguese trade balance sources, namely those for

³³ The year 1825 was an isolated year among the period 1821-1831, with a relevant value of exports, as mentioned above: 654 *contos* from which 561 *contos* corresponded to wool.

³⁴ This excludes 1814 and 1815 mainly because of the demand for textiles in those years. Although the Portuguese exports to US were irrelevant in 1814, in the following year they reached 590 *contos* - 57 per cent of the total exports .

1817³⁵. Imports of Spanish silver coins were clearly insufficient to meet the external demand.

Table 5. Main Portuguese Export Products to the United States, 1796-1820 (Per Cent and Contos)

Year	Share of Total exports	Wine		Salt		Patacas castelhanas, Spanish silver coins (1)	
		Percentage of Exports	Contos	Percentage of Exports	Contos	Percentage of Exports	Contos
1796	89.5	45.7	201.7	19.6	86.6	24.1	106.3
1797	84.4	48.6	129.2	27.4	72.9	8.3	22.1
1798	85.4	36.8	104.3	25.3	71.8	23.3	66.1
1799	93.0	24.8	156.6	7.2	45.1	61.0	384.6
1800	94.2	20.1	141.6	8.8	62.1	65.2	459.6
1801	86.9	42.4	188.4	8.7	38.8	35.8	158.7
1802	87.8	34.4	138.2	22.8	91.6	30.6	122.6
1803	88.6	16.2	85.9	15.6	82.6	56.7	300.2
1804	87.9	43.6	145.8	20.2	87.7	18.2	60.8
1805	93.6	17.4	144.0	5.8	47.6	70.4	581.4
1806	89.8	42.5	194.8	12.1	55.4	35.3	161.6
1807	92.8	42.1	239.7	15.6	88.7	35.1	200.2
1808	80.7	65.9	54.3	14.8	12.2	0.0	0.0
1809	77.1	49.4	132.8	27.7	74.4	0.0	0.0
1810	69.3	16.5	39	47.8	112.9	5.1	12.0
1811	72.6	8.8	55.5	37.5	236.1	26.3	165.6
1812	93.9	4.6	88.7	10.8	209.9	78.5	1523.7
1813	64.7	2.0	7.3	62.7	226.5	0.0	0.0
1814	3.8	1.0	2.0	2.8	5.6	0.0	0.0
1815	19.0	10.3	106.4	5.7	58.9	3.0	31.2
1816	83.4	33.1	190.4	15.3	88.1	35.0	201.6
1817	97.9	10.5	48.8	6.1	28.5	81.3	378.4
1818	76.9	5.0	11.0	31.7	69.5	40.2	8.2
1819	89.0	1.7	3.3	37.5	71.2	49.7	94.4
1820	96.8	41.2	68.4	39.5	65.6	16.1	26.8

Sources: 'Portugal's Balance of Trade with Foreign Nations and Portuguese Colonies', Portugal's Balance of Trade with US market. Note: (1) During the period under analysis, there are several other references to this aggregated product in Portuguese trade balances: from 1798 to 1800; it appears as "Silver as *patacas* and *pesetas*" and in 1818 under the designation of "*Patacas* and *onças castelhanas*"; from 1801 to 1806 this product was referred to by "Silver as *patacas*" and merely by "*Patacas*" in 1807 and 1820. It is assumed that all were Spanish silver coins. In the year 1810 wool represented 13.7 per cent of exports, the third major exported product. In the years 1808, 1809 and 1813, only salt and wine in the first two cases and salt in 1813 represented more than 10 per cent of Portuguese exports to US. In 1815, fabrics (cotton, wool and linen) represented 57 per cent of Portuguese exports to the US market. In the previous year, fabrics were also the most important product, together with tea, but the values were irrelevant.

Therefore, this product had either joined the large stream of contraband imports as it was not recorded in terms of imports, or the recorded origin should be the Kingdom. However, at that time, neither Portugal nor its colonies were extracting silver. To put Spanish silver coins in the path of illegal trade, what better way than the trade balances

³⁵ *Balança Geral do Commercio do Reyno de Portugal com os seus Dominios e As Nações Estrangeiras Em o Anno de 1817*, Portugal's Trade Balance with Foreign Nations and Portuguese colonies in 1817.

themselves which, in their reports reinforced the fact that tobacco smugglers in Portugal, namely in Campo Maior, exported it to Spain in exchange for illegally introduced Spanish silver coins.³⁶

From the *Alvará*³⁷ of 17th October 1808 of the Portuguese Regent Prince,³⁸ it becomes clear that there were Spanish silver coins circulating in Portugal, as it is mentioned that the English Army in Portugal was effectively paid with them.³⁹ Due to the great increase in the quantity of silver coins in circulation, the Portuguese Prince Regent had to recognize the importance of the *pataca* and he assigned the value of 800 réis to each *pataca*. It is obvious that *patacas* used as army payments cannot be expected to be found in trade balance data.

Thus, in the context of global war, Portugal, as small player in the international arena and an old British ally, built a curious bridge between two important forces, the United States and Great Britain. Portugal functioned as a vital importer of American cereal in order to feed the Portuguese and British armies operating in Portugal and, on the other hand, supplied the US with silver that basically originated from British payments to that common Army. The enemy of my friend is not always my enemy, or so one could conclude.

Conclusion

The coming of modernity, industrial age, and ultimately the hegemony of Great Britain emerged out of series of massive conflicts, thrusting Europe and its colonies into the first real world war. These conflicts forced countries to choose sides and strained old alliances. Related to these processes, a new political and economic power entered into the fray during this period of transition, from the 1790s to 1815, the United States. In this article we want to re-examine the role played by smaller powers (in this case: Portugal) and the importance of trade relations with the United States. Based on new sources on Portuguese-American trade, we wish to analyze why and to what extent it was possible for Portugal to trade with the United States, despite the apparent animosity of the Great Britain, Portugal's oldest ally.

This article is intended to take part in a growing field of debate about the impact of major wars on economic and political development, especially the role of smaller ("weaker") states in wartime situations. Many scholars-including Alan Taylor and Reuven Glick; Lance Davis and Stanley Engerman; as well as Ronald Findley and Kevin O'Rourke-have recently analyzed the disruptions caused by major conflicts like the world wars. And recent scholarship, as presented by e.g. David Bell, certainly puts the revolutionary wars and the ensuing Napoleonic conflicts into the same category. However, these scholars have paid relatively little attention to the smaller players in

³⁶ *Balança Geral do Commercio do Reyno de Portugal com os seus Dominios e As Nações Estrangeiras Em o Anno de 1818*, Portugal's Trade Balance with Foreign Nations and Portuguese colonies in 1818.

³⁷ *Alvará* was a document issued by the Prince Regent.

³⁸ *Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo* (Institute of National Archives/Torre do Tombo box 62150).

³⁹ See Moreira, Maria Cristina, "Tracking down signs of the Portuguese fiscal-military state 1762-1816" in *War, State, and Development. Fiscal Military States in the Eighteenth Century*. (2007, edited by Sánchez, R. Torres), Pamplona, Spain. The military expenditures during the Peninsular War had the English government's financial support; the values are expressed in réis and pounds sterling.

these wars, often assuming that they occupied an insignificant role in the conflict. In the context of these findings, we wanted to analyze what opportunities and challenges Portugal faced during this extremely turbulent period, namely if it was able to profit from this situation. We wanted to explore the following questions in particular: 1) What kinds of changes do we see in the trade flows between these two countries, especially whether the pressure of the war effort allowed more latitude for Portugal to explore its trade options; 2) Do we see substantial changes in the types of goods exchanged over this complex period? 3) What was the significance of this trade for both countries?

Portugal, in particular, suffered three French invasions during Napoleon's rule, and, since it did not adhere to the Continental blockade, it experienced trade restrictions with several of its former suppliers. Thus, the Peninsular War caused severe disruption of agricultural production in Portugal, and United States, despite its strained relations with an ally of Portugal, Great Britain, became a key supplier for the Portuguese market. By cross-checking data from five primary sources, it became very clear that the most relevant period of US exports to the Portuguese market was 1807-1812. The main products imported from US during that period were cereals, both as grain and as flour. The sudden increase in the demand for cereals was clearly due to the need to feed the Portuguese people and the Portuguese and English armies, fighting the French on Portuguese territory. Clearly, the threatened position of the peninsula awarded the Portuguese some room to maneuver in the international markets, despite alliance commitments.

However, after 1812, the war pitting United States against England brought new difficulties for the US-Portuguese trade, as US shipments with cereals and flour were frequently captured by England. Meanwhile, Portugal exported mainly wine, silver in the form of Spanish *patacas*, and salt, although the export values were much lower than the imports during the period of more significant trade. Striking is also the prominent position of the Portuguese market as a US client market, during the Peninsular War, reaching more than a 10 per cent share of all US exports from 1809 until 1813. The reversal of the political situation after the second defeat of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna once again changed the external environment for trade.

Finally, we found that both Portugal and the US were interested in and pursued active trade relations during the crucial phases of these "world" wars. This trade served the growing demand for foodstuffs, particularly cereals, in Portugal. The exchange of American cereals for Portuguese goods, in a context of the deep instability that existed in the early nineteenth century, can be assumed to have linked both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in mutually beneficial trade. In terms of remaining research challenges, we should engage in detailed statistical analyses of the trade flows, to uncover hidden structural tendencies in this trade. This, however, is beyond the scope of this article.

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