ABSTRACT

Analysis of the Cadiz merchant fleet between 1778 and 1828 shows that once the Free Trade was established in 1778, the origins of the ships in the fleet were increasingly diversified and among them American shipyards stand out. Of the 1,720 ships that composed the Cadiz merchant fleet, 250 units (14.53%) had been built in the East coast of the newly independent United States (Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Maryland) — a figure that amounts to 23.66% of the 872 ships of non-Spanish origin. By comparison, the traditionally dominant English shipyards had provided only 20.87% while only 10.43% came from France. This phenomenon reflects a series of factors that prompted such acquisitions by the Spaniards as ship owners: 1) War and weather had decimated the Cadiz merchant fleet; 2) American ship sales reflected U.S. shipbuilding development policy, low prices, the lack of taxes on the transmission of such property; 3) Private American attitudes that regarded the ship itself as manufactured commodity open to speculation; 4) The possibility of selling merchant ships in the Cuban market (open to U.S. merchants because of the war); 5) The presence of economic networks and middlemen on both sides of the Atlantic. These factors made this kind of business, either via sale from shipyards or via purchase in a second-hand market, a paradigmatic example of the globalization of commercial exchanges at the end of the Ancien Régime.
trade. That is why the Spanish War of Succession was hardly over when the ministers of Philip V (king 1700-1746) adopted a series of measures aimed at reorganizing deeply depressed and disjointed sector of the imperial economy. The substantial reforms of the Navy by Jose Patiño in the 1730s and then changes in the commercial system under the Marques de la Ensenada in the 1740s that contributed to Spain's recovery of a respected place in the international community.

In spite of the fact that a substantial part of the metropolitan economy was sustained by the wealth of the colonies and despite the fact that a dynamic maritime economy needed of a suitable shipping infrastructure, reform of the merchant marine was not approached in such as strong a way as was reform of the Navy. The merchant marine was instead left to the pressures of long-run development and the initiative the private sector. Conceptually, the Crown envisioned the revitalization of the eighteenth-century merchant marine in three areas: 1) Expansion of the domestic shipbuilding industry to meet Spanish needs, 2) expansion of the number of ships and cargos in order to sustain a lively trade, and 3) modernization of the merchant fleet with newer technology and larger ships.

In theory the ships of the Carrera de Indias were supposed to be of domestic origin (part of the regulatory scheme for Hispanic shipbuilding since the fifteenth century\(^1\)), but that regulation was sacrificed in the eighteenth century in order to expand the number of ships available for transport service. The solutions was to nationalize foreign-bult ships.

Indeed, throughout the period 1717-1778, the maritime sector expanded and, as it did so, the presence of foreign-built ships within the Cadiz monopoly became more pronounced. In absolute numbers, this period had a merchant fleet of 598 ships, of which only 130 were Spanish-built (21 of them in the colonies), while 362 can be identified as foreign-built. An additional 106 were of unknown origin, but we can infer that good part of them were from non Spanish shipyards.\(^2\)

This was the reality that informed eighteenth-century economic thought on the colonial trade and was basic to the great legislative landmark of eighteenth-century Spain,

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\(^1\) Real Pragmatic September 10\(^{th}\) 1495 and March 20\(^{th}\) 1498 (collected in Novísima Recopilación, b. 9, t. 8, law 4), chapter I of the 1720 Project, 3\(^{o}\) article of the 1768 Decree for the trade of The Louisiana and the article 2\(^{a}\) of the Reglamento para el Comercio Libre October 12\(^{th}\) 1778.

\(^2\) These values come from A. García-Baquero González, Cádiz and the Atlantic (1717-1778), Seville, 1976, t. 1, p. 235.
the *Reglamento para el Comercio Libre* of October 12th 1778. ³ This plan was evolved with the goal of adapting the merchant fleet to newer realities, putting it in line with other European merchant fleets, in terms of both number and technical level of shipping, shortening stays in port, and facilitating more flexible and faster voyages. The reform aimed at expanding imperial commercial structures through the modernization of the mercantile traffic and speeding up the rhythm of the trade, in addition to expanding the number and domestic origin of ships. (The Conde de Campomanes considered that the annual round trip trade from Cadiz ought to involve at least forty ships.) In practice, the undeniable growth of the shipping sector in terms of both port traffic ⁴ and number of vessels involved, seen in the data from the first years of the *Reglamento*, combined with the notable presence of the foreign-built ships suggests that the quantitative goal of commercial expansion overshadowed any concern about the numbers of foreign-built ships in the commercial fleet.

³ The *Reglamento* brought a transformation in the colonial commercial organization, since it supposed the end of the monopoly of the unique port with 13 metropolitan ports authorization, the gradual opening of the commercial routes with the amplification of the American geographical environment to the direct business dealings (with the only exception, *de iure* although not *de facto*, of the Venezuelan and Newhispanic areas that would be incorporated definitively in 1789), the eradication of the fleets and galleons system and the inflection in the support to the Privileged Companies.

⁴ The *Reglamento* brought a transformation in the colonial commercial organization, since it supposed the end of the monopoly of the unique port with 13 metropolitan ports authorization, the gradual opening of the commercial routes with the amplification of the American geographical environment to the direct business dealings (with the only exception, *de iure* although not *de facto*, of the Venezuelan and Newhispanic areas that would be incorporated definitively in 1789), the eradication of the fleets and galleons system and the inflection in the support to the Privileged Companies.
Indeed, if the figures do not mislead, detailed reconstruction of the merchant fleet registered or re-registered and in service at Cadiz between January of 1779, when the Reglamento took effect, and February, 1828, when it was abolished, documents that, as greater commercial freedom took hold, the infrastructure and cargo capacity needed to support the fleet was solidified and diversified. At the same time, the fleet derived from more foreign centres of ship building, especially those of the American East coast. The fact that foreign ships were present in such high numbers systematized the process of integrating such ships into the Cadiz colonial fleet. Their purchase by Cadiz ship owners is revealed as paradigmatic of the Atlantic-wide strategies pursued by Cadiz ship owners as they managed the composition of their merchant fleet.

According to official sources, of the 1,720 ships active in the colonial trade at Cadiz, 872 were foreign-built, of which American shipyards provided 250 units (14.53% of the total and 28.66% of all foreign-built ships). This surpassed the contribution of the

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6 Main sources: Annual listings of ships exits (Archivo General de Indias, from now on A.G.I., sections: Arribadas, 467; Consulados, 929; Contratación, 1610, 1611, 1673, 1674, 1696, 1735, 1737, 1738, 1785, 2902A, 2902B, 2915, 2921 and 5097 and Indiferente General, 2173-2208, 2255, 2414-2420 and 2435). Records to give credit to the property of the ships (A.G.I. Consulados, 896-902 and 904-928), necessary to be admitted and be able to begin the procedures previous to the registration. They are the richest in information, especially starting from 1793. They are composed of several types according to the nature of the ships: certificates of a master carpenter (new built in Spanish shipyards), declarations of the foreign master shipbuilders (certified by the Spanish consul, specifying if the crew in charge of driving to the Spanish port of the shipowner was Spanish or foreign), master deeds and contract of sale of the ships acquired in a second hand market (being national or foreign ships).

7 The Cadiz port trade volume was sustained by crafts registered in this port and those enlisted in other ports of the Spanish domains (metropolitan or colonial). They granted powers of attorney so that processes were made by a subject of the Cádiz trade or a naval agent company that acted as if they were the true shipowners.

8 A.G.I. Contratación, 5097, b II, f. 315 and Indiferent General, 2440.

9 Being a direct order in shipyards (national, colonial or foreign), for derivation of other sectors (North-Atlantic or Mediterranean trade fleet, fishing or coastal fleets) and as a purchase in a second hand market (national, colonial or foreign ports).

10 Before having the values to ratify or rectify them, once the investigation of the last ten years of the period was completed, now in progress, using an alternative source, the Diario de la Vigía de Cádiz, since the official sources finish the series around 1818 and from that date there are only fragmentary informations.
traditional maritime powers (England with 182 ships, 19.58% of the fleet and 20.87% of foreign-built) and France (91 units, 5.29% of the fleet and 10.43% of foreign-built ships). Their presence was crucial to the expansion of the number of ships involved, one of the key objectives in the policies of the governors.

Thanks to the late but very rapid incorporation of American built merchant ships, they represented more than the quarter of the total of the foreign-built ships of the Free Trade fleet while holding first place in terms of carrying capacity (45.070 tons of 24.7%) of the 182.039.75 tons of foreign-built shipping serving the colonial trade at Cadiz. England was second, with (41.456.50 tons and 22.77%), followed by France (22.160 tons and 12.17%). This reflects the smaller capacity characteristic of American vessels (schooners, brigs, frigates, packets, corvettes and brigs-schooner), which gave them greater speed and handling qualities. These characteristics much appreciated at the time because it facilitated a long distance trade in which the speed was more important than carrying capacity. This type of fleet was better adapted to the changing conditions of the colonial trade and the lower tonnage was off-set by intensive rotation of the units. In this case modernization had more to do with creating a more flexible merchant fleet than with simply increasing cargo capacity.

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Having established the overall magnitude of the foreign origin of ships in the Carrera de Indias, the next step is a more detailed approach to the study of the phenomenon that will show us the factors that determined the incorporation of the American-built ships into the Carrera de Indias. The proclamation of the Free Trade Reglamento coincides closely with the entry of Spain in the conflict of the Thirteen Colonies, which means that we do not have normal trade patterns until the signature of the Peace of Versailles (1783). This puts us in a good position to track the rhythm of appearance and the procedures for entering ships on the Cadiz Register, either as ships owned by Cadiz ship owners or as ships being re-registered as Spanish.

To facilitate the analysis we have broken the discussion into three chronological stages. The first extends from the inauguration of Reglamento in 1778 until 1796, after which the end-of-the-century wars change the commercial system, allowing open trade for neutrals-flag ships in order to maintain commercial exchanges across the Atlantic. The second, very brief period is 1787-1801 and serves as link between two centuries. Despite
its brevity, it is a remarkably strong point of inflection for the take off of the incorporation of American-built ships into the colonial fleet. The third period begins with the peace of Amiens (1802) and ends with the closing of the Free Trade system in 1828.

1st stage (1779-1796)

As the annual movement of ships from the port of Cádiz evolved, Cadiz remained the most dynamic in the thirteen ports authorized by the Reglamento for free colonial trade. While its share of the total trade fell to around 75% of the metropolitan exports to the colonies in 1778-1796 and 77% in 1797-1820)\textsuperscript{11}, the overall growth trade placed great pressure on ship owners to provide enough merchants to support the trade and implement reformers desire to see the construction of Spanish-built merchant fleet. The pressure to expand capacity led to a relaxation of the regulatory scheme and created the possibility of using foreign-built ships through recourse to nationalization, which involved paying a fee to overlook alien origins of Spanish owned ships. This was a much healthier alternative for the national economy that the chartering foreign owned ships, since that arrangement meant that the profit form hauling freight went directly to the foreign pockets. The latter was a losing proposition for Spain if the profits in question exceeded the sum the money paid for Spanish purchase of the ship. At the same time the foreign-built ship was definitively integrated into the Spanish merchant fleet\textsuperscript{12}. Thus the acquisition of foreign-built ships alleviated the immediate problem of the fleet since it was quicker to buy an existing ship than to commission construction of a new one. The arrangement did, however, defer the goal of developing a domestic shipbuilding industry, a project that, as we will see, was frustrated by continuous wars, which aborted local production and shaped the evolution of investments in the transport sector.

This emergency policy was pronounced in the first stage of commercial freedom (1778-1796), for which they had available 663 ships, 252 of them domestically built (209 in


\textsuperscript{12} Likewise, in the war conflict periods the acquisition of foreign shipbuilding boats and their nationalization (real or fraudulent) it is a common practice in the metropolis and in the colonies, as alternative to the ‘neutral’ ships. See H. A. Silva, “La españolización de navíos norteamericanos en el Río de la Plata. Entre la legalidad y el fraude.”, in \textit{Estudios de Historia Social y Económica de América}, nº 6 (1990), pp. 65-68.
Spain and 43 in the colonies\textsuperscript{13}, 361 of foreign origin, and 50 of unknown origin. In this period the largest contributor to the supply of foreign-built ships was England\textsuperscript{14}, the second most important was the recently founded United States of America, with 60 ships (16.75\% of foreign-built ships) – an indicator of their future importance. The types of ships from America also reflects the evolving characteristics of the colonial merchant fleet: Frigates made up 48.25\% of the vessels built in American shipyards, brigs 33.25\%, and packets and schooners\textsuperscript{15} (8.50\% each). Moreover, their average tonnage (163.75 tons/ship) was less than the average size of the existing older merchant, reflecting the smaller holds of schooners and brigs. These ships came from much of the East coast, including New Haven (Connecticut), Salisbury and Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Virginia, Baltimore (Maryland), Charleston (South Carolina) and Balan (?). The most prominent source was the Philadelphia shipyards, thanks to their excellent geographical situation in the peninsula formed by the confluence of the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers. Riverbank shipbuilding in many cases competes with maritime locations because of the advantage of the riverside shelter and the ability to use the tide for launches. Even at present Philadelphia is the United State’s third port in trade, despite being 160 kms from the sea.

\textsuperscript{13} This increase (94\% as for the national shipbuilding with regard to the period of the Cádiz monopoly), although it doesn't allow to celebrate it is an indicator that, in spite of the competition in materials and manpower of the Royal Arsenals, the private shipyards, although much more slowly that the expectations of the enlightened, built the ships that would allow a gradual nationalization of the merchant fleet.

\textsuperscript{14} Mainly as for the privateering effects, with 97 units (26.75\% of the whole foreign shipbuilding or 35.50\% of those of known foreign factory). The third place, from a distance, is for France with 43 vessels (12\% of the foreign shipbuilding or 15.75\% of a well-known nation).

\textsuperscript{15} The schooners will be one of the key types of the American route because of their adaptation to the required tonnage and their speed, based in their sails (knife-shape, descending of the Latins) that hoist in their two masts and that were very appropriate to sail headwind, as well as for their numerous variants, in that the hermaphroditism appears with the round sails. The Cadiz schooners are largely American: the famous schooners, of great standing in the long distance shipping before the clippers appeared in the 1820\textdegree.
The fact that these sixty units make their appearance around the nineties, induces us to think that some American vessels were initially attributed to the English-built ships (or to those non identified). The documentation has not clearly revealed any ships as Anglo-American, however, and we have limited the discussion to those of known its origin. The meteoric rise of American shipping in this Cadiz trade is explained by the good quality-price ratio of American ships, the ease with which they were acquired (they were largely for sale Cadiz and Havana, where there was an established group of middlemen, agents and commission merchants) and, mainly, the suitability of their size and tonnage for the needs of the colonial Free Trade. The situation clearly support globalized economic exchange, not only involving commodities for import and export, but also the ships themselves, which the Americans treated as a commodity open to market speculation.

As a marginal factor, we should note that in this period Louisiana was under Spanish sovereignty, so the 10 ships built in New Orleans shipyards have been entered in the accounts into Colonial-built Spanish ships. These shipyards did considerable business exporting planks, riggings, pitches, and tar, especially toward Campeche.

The link for commercial exchange established in Louisiana explains the appearance of the ships built at New Orleans, which appeared in the narrow biennium 1789-90). They belonged to and American-Spanish settler in New Orleans and included the ship La Condesa de Gálvez and the frigates La Minerva and El Padre de Familia. Other Cadiz shipowners acquired ships that included the brig Nuestra Señora del Carmen and San José (a) La María, previously sold in Havana, and the frigate Nuestra Señora del Carmen (a) El Salvador sold by the New Orleans-born M. M. Knaresbrought when he lived in Puerta de Santa María's (near Cadiz) in 1787. Others were bought by Cadiz merchants through their American agents.

The one that appears earlier and has a more extensive exploitation in the Carrera (eight trips) it is the brig Nuestra Señora del Carmen (a) La Diligencia (177,25 tons) that belonged to D. and E. Pomman and R. Benet of Charleston, port in which was sold to Francisco Amsbert and Bonocio Roura for 1.710 pounds and 12 salaries of Southern Carolina's currency paper September 2nd 1786, and from there it travelled to Catalonia (original region of their new owners). Its appearance in Cadiz is in April 15th 1788, in that the master Roura buys the half of its partner for 22.500 r.v. and protocol the writing in the Andalusian port, setting sail for The Habana/Campeche in the month of May of the same year. Starting from this moment the trips were from and to Cadiz, without never going to Catalonia. It makes an annual trip from 1788 to 1790, two trips more in 1792 and 1793, with a register in La Guaira in November 1794. There is not proof of its exit, but in February 1796 there are references to its entrance coming from Venezuela, setting sail for the same destination in July. It is not known if it was captured, sold in America or broken up, but in 1800 it appears in the group of those that don’t exist yet (A.G.I. Consulados, 897, expte. 251; 906, 75; 908, 34 and 929).

The brig *La Diligencia (a)* *Nuestra Señora de Aránzazu*, for example, was acquired in Havana, while the packet *El Galvestown* was bought through a complicated trajectory that led to its entry into the Cadiz Register.\(^{18}\)

Another aspect of the trade reflects the tendency of Cadiz ship owners to buy vessels with proven sailing abilities, with the result that the second-hand market was the fundamental source for ships added to the Spanish merchant fleet. The ease of these transactions came from the presence of a developed network of middlemen and agents,\(^ {19}\) both in metropolitan ports and in colonial and foreign ports, all linked by commercial exchanges. Ships dedicated to the *Carrera de Indias* (not simply American-built ships) left traces in the documentation of their contacts along the coasts of the United States,\(^ {20}\) indicated both the existence of this international trade and the multiple functions of ships theoretically specialized in colonial shipping. The latter was generally the most profitable from the point of view of the profits/dividends) but ship masters did not disdain alternative routes if it meant avoiding a long stay port or compensated for the lack of available cargo in Spanish colonial ports.

Experienced trans-Atlantic trade, there is no doubt that they also served the East coast routes of the young North American nation.

The war between the Franco-Spanish alliance and England between 1797 and 1801 meant the loss or retirement of most of the ships of the previous period. The war left the fleet of 1796 tied up and saw its replacement with another, radically different fleet, one that had an ephemeral life.

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\(^{18}\) The sloop *El Galvestown* (292 tones), called too *Conde de Galvestown*, was in the *Carrera* service from the ports of Santander and Cadiz, while it was property of José Antonio de Campos (San Sebastian shipowner). It was sold in Bordeaux (1786) to P.F. Rosé (called then *Neptuno*); in turn passed over in New Orleans to J. Kennedy (1788), covering a parenthesis in its American route until it was bought by Juan Bautista Codrevila (Cadiz shipowner) in Havana (1792), there are references about it had just been re-built in New Orleans, being transformed in a packet boat with a tonnage a lot lower (219 tons). It new owner rebaptized *La Concepción (a) El Neptuno*. (See. J. Varela Marcos, *El inicio del comercio castellano con América*, Valladolid, 1991, p. 137).


\(^{20}\) For example, on the packet boat *El Pigmalión (a) El Caupolicano* there is references about a litigation against its captain for one fraudulent unscheduled stop into New York harbour. More concise are the news about other vessels, mentioning only the sank place: the brig *San José (a) El Imposible Vencido* shipwrecked at Plymouth coast, the packet-boat *San Lorenzo Martir (a) San Carlos* at Boston port mouth and the frigate *Virgen del Carmen (a) La Diana* was brought alongside at Charleston, after beaching at Bahama Channel (1786).
2nd stage (1797-1801)

This period is dominated by war. The English, from the onset hostilities against Spain, focused their attention on intercepting the Cadiz traffic. Since this port controlled most transactions among the Spanish colonies, it was a truly strategic point for the Spanish economy. Consequently the Cadiz merchant fleet was in the focal point of the activity of the British Navy and, more important, of English privateers that decimated the Spanish mercantile fleet, forcing the shippers of the Carrera to use new strategies to evade the blockade. Consequently, after 1797, newly built or bought ships were small in hopes that they would go unnoticed on the high seas21 and that the loss of any one ship wouldn’t be an economic setback too hard to overcome.22 At the same time, shipowners left their bigger ships inactive023 until the lack of security ended.

In this stage, although the nationally-built ships were more prominent (182 craft were in service, 107 of them national and 4 colonial24), foreign-built ships continued to play an important role (63 units). Here too the roll of American-built ships stands out, accounting for 19 ships (11% of the total fleet or 31,75% of foreign-built ships)25. This participation was linked with the role of United States as a trading neutral, especially in the colonial area, where the prices of their new or second hand vessels were competitive and their types adapted to the situation (the schooners26 capacity varied between 75 and 100 tons27). There

21 Some, as the corvette San Telmo (a) El Comercio de la India (110 tons, American shipbuilding), was able to make three trips, being the investment quite profitable.

22 They were acquired even for a single trip, as the schooner Nuestra Señora de Regla, San José y Ánimas (a) El Regulador (62 tons, American shipbuilding) that was so damaged at the time of the purchase (March 6th 1799) it had been brought alongside at Puntales the previous year, August 30th. The schooner La Ventura (80 tons, American shipbuilding), although made two trips, shipwrecked at Havana coast (1799).

23 The bombard Nuestra Señora de la Rosa (a) La Mejor Flor del Paraíso (250 tons, American shipbuilding) after coming back from Montevideo in 1799, was dismantled and sent to the beach of Puntales awaiting less turbulent times, according to its owner’s declaration, Pablo Colombo, when he registered it in January 1802.

24 Of those one was New Orleans shipbuilding, the brig La Santísima Trinidad (a) San Salustino (105 tons), from San Sebastian Register.

25 In detriment of those shipbuilt in England (6% / 17,50) and French (2,25% / 6,25) that had been the most important in the first stage fleet.

26 On the other hand, we only need to observe the units type launched in Puntales and Trocadero shipyards during this period to realize that the most important type is the schooner, perhaps
were, however, a number of larger ships that exceeded 175 tons along with others below 100.

In addition to buying second-hand North American ships, two new ships were contracted in foreign shipyards, both of the smaller type. One was the brig Jesus, María y José (120 tons and copper shelter) bought by Santa María & Cuesta Company when it was launched (1798) in Charleston. It was sent with colonials to Cadiz, where it was equipped for Veracruz, then captured by British privateers. Juan Murphy, one of the Cádiz merchant-shipowners that stood out chartering neutral ships, acquired in a somewhat confusing way a ship in the Amsbury shipyard on the Meramick river near Boston. It was launched in June 1799 and sailed from Boston to Cádiz, arriving in August. This was the corvette Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (a) La Preciosa (140 tons), which successfully made two later trips to America during this turbulent period.

Thus North American shipbuilding secured a presence in Spanish colonial trade as the protective American laws boosted the American maritime fleet with the help of legal, semi-legal, or frankly illegal frequent appearance on the part of American ships in the ports of the Spanish Empire.

3rd stage (1802-1828)

Influenced by the American ships that are seaworthy in the Atlantic crossing and adapt so well to the reduced tonnage premise.

27 It is the San Telmo (a) El Comercio de la India (110 tons). Its importance resides in the novelty of its type among the colonial traffic merchants, whose presence will be increased along the 19th Century.

28 Among those of more than 175 tons there are 2 vessels that were already on duty in the previous stage (brig La María Catalina and frigate San Francisco de Asís (a) El Tártaro), to which we could add those that having entered little time before the declaration of war formalized their first registration in the neutrals period: the frigate La María Josefa (a) La Primorosa (260 tons), bought in Havana in 1795 and resold in Cádiz in September 1796 because war foreseeing; the packet-boat from Havana Register, San Félix (a) Los Dos Hermanos (260 tons) that registered to the Cuban port in August 1796; as well as the acquisitions carried out by the Spaniards in the United States ports in September 1796: the frigate La Joven María Josefa (200 tons) and the bombard Nuestra Señora de la Rosa (a) La Mejor Flor del Paraíso (250 tons).

29 A.G.I. Consulados, 911, rec. 4.

30 A.G.I. Consulados, 911, rec. 68. Juan Murphy (or Morphy, born in Gibraltar) was more fortunate than other investors in the shipbuilding sector, since the boat didn't only escape from the captures happened during this black five year period but rather it still carried out 4 more shipments during the early 19th Century expansion period. Possibly another schooner owned by him, La Salvador (unknown origin), could also be American shipbuilding.
The substantial registration roll corresponding to the Spanish colonial merchant fleet in service between 1802 and 1829 shows 968 vessels, 501 of them foreign-built. Thus 51.75% of the ships were foreign, only slightly more than those built in Spain or her empire (434 ships, 331 and 103 colonial). Once again the enormous contribution of the American-built vessels stands out and takes on a new prominence.

Indeed, the United States was beginning to take a big part in the 19th Century European economy through their technological colonization, a fact seen in the 189 American-built ships in the Cadiz fleet. The American contribution has now rising to 37.75% of foreign-built ships and almost a fifth of the entire Cadiz Register.

This spectacular increase reflects several factors, the most outstanding of which include the circumstance that under the cover of trade authorized by special licenses (nominally trade by neutrals was still illegal, although allowed exceptionally in exchange for extra revenue deposited in the royal funds), many North American ships traded in Havana, Veracruz and other Caribbean ports without permission, and where their owners expected that they would not only be tolerated by the Spanish authorities, but would be welcomed.

Using data on the dates when these North American ships were launched, we can verify that

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31 So Louisiana passed to France (Second treaty of San Ildefonso, October 1st 1800, confirmed by additional act in Aranjuez, March 21st 1801), the two brigs and the frigate New Orleans shipbuilding, registered in 1802, have been entered in the accounts as foreign shipbuilding. From now on, as it was bought by the United States (April 1803), the few ships of that origin have been included among the American shipbuilding.

32 Even more, the foreign shipbuilding tons stand out, 61.75%. The 168.312.50 tons of the period are distributed between 103.898 foreign and 64.414.50 national (38.25%), of which 35.778.50 correspond to tons of the Spanish shipyards and 23.021.25 to the Creoles.

33 The second nation in importance for the vessels number built in its shipyards that will go to Cadiz is England (83 units, 16.50% of those foreign shipbuilding). France, as much through the second hand market as the new shipbuilding, is present at the Cadiz fleet with 50 units (10% of the foreign shipbuilding).

34 Although the general prohibition of the neutral trade between 1805 and 1808, it continued effective and its application was mitigated by those "cases of urgent necessity" and, mainly, by the systematic policy of the Crown to sell licenses for neutral shippings from North Europe and United States ports.

in a high percentage they were used commercially only for the first trip and were sold once they had arrived in a Spanish colonial port. The fact is that they were launched with the express purpose of their sale and that the flour and other products they carried were largely to avoid taking the ships empty to ports where it was known that they would have a favourable.

The second factor was that the quality-price ratio in the sale of these ships was very acceptable. Andalucian, Catalan and Spanish-American ship owners often used middlemen36 to buy the ships they needed by ignoring those offered for in Spanish ports and went to the main North American ports to buy the vessels that were appropriate to their needs, with the added incentive that the capital gains taxes (derechos reales, alcabala) derived from the transmission of the property could be avoided, something that further enhanced the final low price.

A third contributing factor was the great recovery of the North American shipbuilding industry after United States independence, thanks to a favourable combination of raw materials, specialized personnel trained in the English shipbuilding techniques, ports with strong commercial activity (in great measure boosted by the legal and illegal trade carried out among the Spanish colonies), strong colonial entrepreneurial drive, opportunities created the European war against Napoleon, markets to sell their merchandise (in this case the ship itself as a manufacture adequate to speculate with37), and creation of a bigger national merchant fleet thanks to protectionism38.

36 Because Barcelona port was experiencing a similar situation to Cádiz, Catalan bought vessels to carry about their exports. Many boats from Barcelona Register and American shipbuilding were authorized to open register in Cadiz.

37 We can see that the Periódico de la Vigia classified advertisements announced the ships on freight and on sale simultaneously, which is significant that the profit shipowner was diversified and that he values as much obtaining a contract to continue serving in the sector as the speculative business (resale added value).

Indeed, the positive results of protectionism appeared quickly. The Continental Congress, since the moment in that the War of Independence ended, encouraged shipbuilding and created a Naval Committee to build up both the Navy and the merchant marine. This last aspect was promoted through the Tres Acts of the Congress (promulgated in 1789, 1794 and 1804 and abolished in 1815) that, on one hand, provided support to shipbuilding with subsidies (600 dollars for those that were the property of North American ship owners and 300 for ships built by a society in which some foreigner participated) and, on the other, while foreign ships calling at North American ports were taxed, national ships were exempted. Nor did development policies neglect the infrastructural endowments of the Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Maryland shipyards – a pattern that coincides with the shipyards where vessels involved in the Carrera de Indias were built, and is reflected in relief felt in New York shipyards when activity in other shipyards fell off around 1810.

The Philadelphia shipyards used oak from Pennsylvania and Delaware forests and red cedar imported from Carolina and Georgia. Aside from expanding as a shipbuilding centre, Philadelphia became an important source of exports of shipbuilding materials such as masts, yards, timbers, and deck lumber, all destined for a variety of countries. Development of the ship building industry in Philadelphia was so pronounced that in both the first and third of our three periods, it was the single most important American source of vessels in the Cadiz Register. As the 19th Century moved on, New York displaced Philadelphia at the head of that list, using the same networks for the supply of raw materials and developing an export trade in ship building materials. Next to these two big centres, the documentation shows a series of shipyards, many of which were only briefly important and whose names disappeared from the sources. The list of shipbuilding ports, organized by state, includes: in Massachusetts -- Boston, Almesburg, Amsbury, Berwick, Duxburg, Hanover, Henwebank, Newbury, Pennbank and Salem; in Connecticut -- Chatham, Glastembury, Hadden, Middletown, New Haven, Noivich, Saybrook; in Rhode Island -- Warren and Twerton; Baltimore in Maryland; Salisbury in Delaware; and Fallot in New Hampshire (Fallot) shipyards. The very length of the list of

39 C. Lyon Chandler, *Early Shipbuilding* ..., p. 31: "The United States not merely was able to carry 92% of its imports and 88% of its exports, selling 'ships amounting to hundreds of thousands of tons' to foreigners. These legislative advantages began to be abolished in 1815, but during the 28 years of their enforcement who can tell to what extent they affected the economic growth of the U. S. and more especially Philadelphia, the largest city and seaport in the U. S."

contributing ports revealed in the sources speaks to the importance of ships from the United States for the Carrera de Indias based in Cadiz and for the Spanish merchant fleet in general.

It is also useful to illustrate this phenomenon by referring to a concrete and distinctive case, on that speaks to the motives of ship owner who were ready to rely on American ship builders and to the complicated international networks that, even in the beginning 19th Century, made it possible to exploit differences in production costs in less developed countries while transferring the product to markets where demand was stronger and prices higher. The story involves the 270-ton frigate Nuestra Señora de los Dolores (a) La Medea, built by order of Samuel Corp of New York on "the coast of Brazil to sell it to anyone in Cadiz." While there it was sent to the business of Strange & Co. which sold it in August 1802 to Leandro José de Viniegra for 200,000 reales. Between its launch on March 23rd of 1802 and its sale in August, it was loaded with Brazilians colonial products under the name of La Amable Lucia (a) El Juan and set sail for New York. There not only was the cargo changed, but the ship was renamed The Enigma of New York. It then sailed from New York and made an intermediate stop at Falmouth (Kent, England) to load additional cargo before finally sailing to Cadiz.41

In conclusion, the large contingent of American-built ships participating in the Carrera de Indias during the decades when the Free Trade Reglamento was in force contributed to the expansion of the merchant fleet based in Cadiz. This reflects the success of two of the three policies intended to stimulate and reform colonial trade. While in practice the merchant fleet was expanded and modernized, the situation did not favor limiting the fleet to ships built in Spain or its colonies (nationalization). While the expansion of the fleet was modest in terms of the number of ships, the renovated fleet was better adapted to the characteristics of the colonial trade of the time. In the short run, the size and types of ships provided by American-built ships fit the circumstances of trade during the sequence of wars that pitted Spain against England between 1797 and 1808. At the same time, the renovated Spanish merchant marine became more like those of other European countries, which favored smaller ships with faster sailing times between ports and quicker turnaround time while in port. This helps us understand the preference for American-built schooners.

Thus the expansion of the maritime fleet available to Spain’s colonial trade routes, and the high percentage of American-built ships entering that fleet relates to a series of factors that shaped the choices available to Spanish ship owners. On the Spanish side,

41 A.G.I. Consulados, 914, rec. 68.
continual war and unfortunate weather decimated the existing fleet and created the demand for more adaptable ships. On the North American side, government subsidies to the nascent shipbuilding industry, relatively low prices for new ships, the lack of taxes on the transfer of property, private attitudes that regarded the ship itself as a marketable commodity, and ongoing access to the Spanish market via Cuba together explain why merchants and shippers in Cadiz strongly preferred to buy American ships for the Spanish colonial merchant fleet.

Last, but hardly least, it is important to remember that this development was facilitated by an increasingly complex global economic networks. Both information about conditions in ports all over the Atlantic and the presences of numerous middlemen and brokers on both sides of the Atlantic, within and outside the Spanish commercial system were crucial. These networks allowed for the purchase at long distance of second-hand ships and for contracting construction of new ships in shipyards thousands of miles from Cadiz. The result is a paradigmatic example of the globalization of the economic exchange at the end of the Ancien Régime.