Carnival 2008

Journal of the International Students of History Association

FACETS OF POWER
Voilà. You are holding the ISHA Carnival issue of 2008. Planning it started after the 2007 ISHA spring conference in Turku, when I found out that the next issue needed an editor. There were many things I was supposed to do during the next year like the 50 years history of Kritiikki, the association of history students at the University of Turku, not to mention my Master’s thesis. Then, during the GA meeting at the end of the conference week someone came to me and asked if I was willing to take on editing Carnival and without thinking I agreed to do it. The 50 years history got published but my thesis is still way from being finished, though Carnival is not to be blamed for that.

For this edition Irene and I decided to combine the issue of Carnival and the spring conference publication of 2008 in hopes of getting more people to submit their writings and funding Carnival partly through the conference. In the end we received four wonderful articles, three of which dealt with the theme of this Carnival and the spring conference in Delft 2008, the Facets of Power. The articles are organised alphabetically and the writers are responsible for their works respectively. I wish to thank all the writers for their valuable contribution for this issue as well as Irene for assisting me during this process.

The plan I mentioned above didn’t quite work out and similar challenges are still there for future editors to tackle. That’s why I’m glad there’s been an ongoing discussion about the future of Carnival on the ISHA web forum. It’s good that all possibilities are examined, since both writers and sponsors are needed also in the years to come. An electronic Carnival has both good and bad sides as well as a printed one. I hope that no matter which form is chosen for the upcoming issues, Carnival will continue to exist and unite ISHA-members all over.

In Turku on the 29th of March 2009
Minna Uusivirta
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This year’s New Year’s seminar was held in the beautiful city of Osijek in Croatia, from 27th December until 2nd of January. The academic topic was ‘War’ and there were five workshops in which this topic was discussed: Philosophy, Terrorism, Wars in South-Eastern Europe, Science and War and Decisive Battles.

When all the participants arrived in Osijek, the city was already covered in snow and throughout the week it kept snowing and people kept throwing snowballs at each other. We were welcomed at the Ice-breaking party where we had our first opportunity to taste Osjecko, the beer from Osijek.

The next day we had our first workshops and we visited the Slavonian museum and the state archives, where there was a very friendly manager with a bottle of schnapps. The Slavonian museum also offered us a good view of the local bird scenery with an exhibition of Slavonian birds. In the evening the group was divided into different pub crawls and we all got to experience the nightlife of Osijek for the first time.

The highlight of the next day was a visit to the cinema where we saw the movie ‘Harrison’s Flowers’. The movie gave an impressive view of the war in the east of Croatia as well as a totally unconvincing love story with Andy McDowell in the leading part.

The fourth day we all tried to stay awake during the last work groups, no offence to the work group leaders of course, and took a short tram ride in an antique tram, quite the tourist attraction! On the 31st we took the bus to the city of Vukovar on the Croatian/ Serbian border. The city still shows many scars of the war and that was quite impressive.

When we got back it was time to prepare ourselves for New Year’s Eve! The organisers of the seminar had arranged a party for us at a location near the (ground-heated!!!) main square of Osijek and prepared all kinds of mysterious drinks for us, like ‘sex

By Irene Croonen
Vukovar, by the Serbian border
in the snow’. It was an exciting evening, which some of us regretted the next morning with the worst hangover of 2008 (including vomit on the carpet…)

Some of us decided to go ice-skating the next day on the ice skating ring next to the dorms. The hangovers of the night before were made even worse by the national drinks party that evening. Never before had I seen such a nationalistic NDP…at one point we were all singing our own national anthems. It was once again a great evening.

It was the first time that ISHA-Osijek organised an ISHA seminar and we were all very impressed with their effort. The accommodation, the food, the parties were very good and I think I’m safe to say that everybody had a great time! And that everybody was amazed by the ground heating of the main square!
Great conference with a lot of new faces and a beautiful venue.” “Great organisation, interesting workshops and heaps of fun. Still to mention: The incredible kitchen crew for the best food on an ISHA event ever.” “Special kiss to kitchen crew! Their effort will not be forgotten.” “I had a really good time this week.”

All these positive, and of course so true, comments are about our conference in Delft. Since all of these comments are from participants, I’m going to give you a peek in the head of someone who was a part in organising all of this.

Most of the ISHA-sections have been involved in organising a seminar or conference, but not the same can be said about the individuals in those sections. I’ve joined ISHA myself in May 2006, and only heard the crazy stories from dinosaurs like Janós Betkó. During the winter of 2007 somebody came up with the idea of organising the conference. From the start I’ve been really enthusiastic. The whole thing sounded like a big adventure and we had some ambitious ideas concerning the academic programme, the food and the evening programme and we thought nothing could go wrong within our organisation…

It’s clear that the picture that I painted around organising a conference wasn’t all that realistic. Our first problem came very soon. We couldn’t find accommodation that was big enough and that we could afford in Nijmegen. A couple of months later Eelco and Maarten found the solution: we would move the whole thing to Delft. I was happy that we could still organise the conference and I was very positive about the idea. But moving the conference to Delft has been our biggest problem in the end.

The first problems that came up due to this change of location were connected to finances. Nobody would support us. Even our own university was sceptic; they said that we were promoting Delft, not
I had my doubts before the conference, but during the actual event I became more confident. It’s a bit strange to experience a conference as an insider instead of a participant, especially since stressing out is kind of my speciality. I wanted everything to be perfect and as part of the organisation you notice every small thing that goes wrong. It’s also very difficult to estimate how the participants are feeling.

But in the end everything went very well, as proven by the comments above. First of all, we had great participants. They all were very motivated and participated very enthusiastically in every part of our programme. It was also nice to see so many new faces. We got a lot of positive feedback about the food and the work of the kitchen crew, as they did a great job.

The workshops also went very well. The workshop leaders were committed and well prepared, as were the participants. This contributed to good discussions and very funny final conclusions.

The organisation had their stuff together. There was good communication during the whole week and I realise that that was a very important factor of success. Everyone was committed and our hard work of the last year really paid off.

Of course I have some tips for the future organisers among you:

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The whole thing sounded like a big adventure and we had some ambitious ideas
Don’t feel like your life depends on the success of your project. Have fun during the event.

1) Don’t feel like your life depends on the success of your project. I did, and no matter how many things went wrong, it all worked out in the end.

2) Communication is the most important thing during the event, but also during the preparation of it. Try to see your project loose from your friendships and try to be as honest as possible. Of course in a nice way.

3) Try to be positive about the work of your fellow organisers. As ‘president’ of our crew, I tended to be negative, especially when things were going badly. But our conference proved that everyone did their job.

4) Think twice before organising an event in an unfamiliar city. We had a lot of difficulty with it, as mentioned above.

5) Have fun during the event. You don’t want to look back and don’t remember what happened because you blacked out because of stress.

And since a little ‘thank you’ should be part of this whole story; Julia, Lia, Irene, Leonie, Mark, Maarten, Eelco, Huub, Rutger, Charlotte, Thijs, Anoep, Ruud, Mies, Bouke, Twan, Jasper, Jord and Jelle: thank you for your commitment!
The topic of representing all aspects of power in Roman imperial society would require writing a book, so I chose to concentrate on a relatively narrow subject: power imagery of the relationship between the princeps and the senatorial elite of the first century AD in contemporary written sources.

The literature on the subject of imperial ideology and its justification is vast and my aim is not to come to new understanding of it, but rather to try to show the most prominent scholarly achievements regarding it. Considering this, Roman society was traditionally seen as based on a strict hierarchic order. As the things rarely fit in such neat boxes as these, modern historiographers, among them Andrew Wallace-Hadrill and Peter Brown, have come to somewhat different conclusions.

In the aftermath of the late Republican civil wars, the military and political power was concentrated in the hands of the winner: Augustus. Much has already been written about his ability to balance the problematic political climate of late republican-early imperial Rome to his own advantage, as well as the means he used to justify and make firmer his grip on the power and control of the society. The social structures of the Republic, the Senate for one, continued to exist, but were reorganized and adjusted: Augustus rounded the number of the senators to about 600 and „purged“ it from „unseemly“ members. His ideology was based, as may be established from the sources, on symbolism of the „old Republican values“ or, as T. Ramsby and B. Severy-Hoven put it in their treatise on conceptualization of the empire as feminine and domesticized (2007:43):

“Like a poet selecting the theme and vocabulary of his carmen, Augustus shaped the Roman cultural landscape with a particular emphasis on a “return” to family values.”

They continue to base their claims on archaeological evidence of the Ara pacis reliefs, that visual ode to Augustus’ ideological program. What has Augustus himself to say on the subject of his person in the Res Gestae?

“The senate decreed that every fifth year vows should be undertaken for my health by the consuls and the priests. In fulfilment of these vows games were often held in my lifetime, sometimes by the four chief colleges of priests, sometimes by the consul.”
There is nothing peculiar in the way with which Augustus’ text – itself written as a means of propaganda, always stressing out the role of the Senate in order to pacify the patrician families of the early principate – puts an emphasis on the religious rituals surrounding the princeps. According to Carlos Norena:

„Public sacrifices to deified emperors and the imagery of imperial apotheosis surrounded the emperor with an aura of divinity. An extraordinary array of rituals, images and texts, then, gave visual and symbolic expression to the emperor’s numerous functions and publicized the manifold benefits of imperial rule.”

This view of a divine right to rule is not in conflict with an opinion given by Eric Orlin in his essay on reconstruction of Augustan religion as expressed in Virgil’s Aeneid, which he sees as an attempt to create “an unified sense of religious identity which will include both Romans and Italians.”

The final passage of the Aeneid is indeed not too subtle, even for a court poet:

“Let now thy visionary glance look long
On this thy race, these Romans that be thine.

Here Caesar, of Iulus’ glorious seed,
Behold ascending to the world of light!
Behold, at last, that man, for this is he,
So oft unto thy listening ears foretold,
Augustus Caesar, kindred unto Jove.
He brings a golden age; he shall restore
Old Saturn’s sceptre to our Latin land”

And yet, for a willing partner of Augustus’ political programme, what can be more natural than expanding its ideology into the media available to the educated upper social layers?

Beside the obvious employment of visual and literary media as a means of justification of one’s political motivation, I’d like to bring out another possible field for political play: the body. Peter Brown sees it as “an instrument of representation – a vent for the moral codes of the well-born” and, in the line with this statement, I find this paragraph from Caius Suetonius Tranquillus’ Vitae Divi Augusti interesting:

“He ate sparingly and commonly used a plain diet. He was particularly fond of coarse bread, small fishes, new cheese made of cow’s milk, and green figs of the sort which bear fruit twice a year. The following passages relative to this subject, I have transcribed from his letters. “I ate a little bread and some small dates, in my carriage.” Again. “In returning home from the palace in my litter, I ate an ounce of bread, and a few raisins.”
Suetonius is, with his gossipy nature and relatively unreliable sources, often regarded as a kind of source to be approached with caution, but this passage – besides the fact that he extracts his info from Augustus own’ letters, to which he as a secretary to Hadrian had access – I consider to fully account for Brown’s opinion. It is possible to read and compare it with certain accounts of later Julio-Claudian emperors, for example, this description of Caligula:

“In the devices of his profuse expenditure, he surpassed all the prodigals that ever lived; inventing a new kind of bath, with strange dishes and suppers, washing in precious unguents, both warm and cold, drinking pearls of immense value dissolved in vinegar, and serving up for his guests loaves and other victuals modelled in gold; often saying, "that a man ought either to be a good economist or an emperor".”

Not to mention an earlier text from Pliny the Elder which Suetonius has thoroughly read:

“We have heard also of a private person giving orders for the walls of the bathroom to be sprinkled with unguents, while the Emperor Caius had the same thing done to his sitting-bath - that this, too, might not be looked upon as the peculiar privilege of a prince, it was afterwards done by one of the slaves that belonged to Nero.”

Not only is Augustus seen as devoted to simplicity, a man for whom luxuria doesn’t mean much, but his grandson and one of the successors stands on the completely opposite end of the spectrum. Should we believe Pliny and Suetonius, Caligula openly defied and reversed Augustus’ ideological programme. Perhaps the possibility of reading these texts while bearing in mind A. Wallace-Hadrill’s statement that “luxuria was not a senseless waste; it was a social necessity in a highly competitive society...” concerning the spread of luxury middle-class houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum, could show that behind Suetonius’ eloquent description stand two different, and yet not entirely opposing ideologies, intertwined together around the figure of the princeps.

To conclude this short essay, can we say that Augustus’ propaganda was a success? Regarding the evidence so far mentioned, definitely yes. Later generations, those of second and third centuries AD, regarded him as pater patriae and a figure to be honored and admired. Caligula was assassinated in the third year of his rule, an indicator of his popularity, ironically said. The imagery of power perhaps changed during Roman times, but the appeal which different political and cultural concepts had was definitely boosted by various means used to promote them.
Notes:

1. Ramsby and Severy-Hoven, 2007:43
3. Norena, 2001:146
4. Orlin, 2007:74
11. Ramsby and Severy-Hoven, 2007:44

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At the end of the decolonization process, many developing countries continued to depend economically on the European countries for several years. Afterward, international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, replaced them, supporting the economies of these countries through investments and development policies of various kinds. In addition to these organizations, regional institutions for economic development, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and others arose.

These organizations have not always been able to solve the problems of developing countries and sometimes they have accentuated the economic decline. An example is given by events linked to Egyptian development policies. During the English protectorate the Egyptian government subdued, without having a say, the initiatives of Great Britain. The debt contracted was very high, and the Egyptian government was forced to promote several projects to increase the social and economic situation, in order to redistribute the population and to lighten the population pressure on the Nile Valley.

Policies that were of great importance were those designed to make productive desert territories taken during the Nasser age, which can be divided into two phases. The first period between the ‘50s and the ‘60s, during which several actions for reclaim of thousands of feddan have been set out in the province of Tahrir, south west of the city of Alexandria. The reclaimed lands were divided into small lots and given to landless farmers, allowing the final settlement of thousands of families. The second period, starting from the ‘70s, has opened
a new distribution policy of desert lands, diametrically opposite to that pursued in the first phase. In fact, it consists of getting considerable funds from private investors and subdivided the land no longer in small lots but in large areas, which were sold or given in concession to the same financiers of land reclamation projects.

This policy is still in use, but it is in total contradiction with the idea of encouraging the transfer of thousands of people in these new areas. In fact, the management of large companies in these territories involves an influx of workers restricted to the needs of the company established; however, if those great lots were divided into smaller lots, it could assure residence, work and benefits to thousands of families.

Adopting a similar solution, in line with the policies of the ‘50s and the ‘60s, would improve significantly the economic conditions of the lowest social classes, but at a cost deemed excessive for the government. Moreover, it is unthinkable that Egyptian government can get into debt further with the Western countries or international organizations such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. So the solution of private investments seems to be the only feasible for economic growth and the only one that is not excessive for coffers of the state.

The projects carried out by the Egyptian government over the last two decades are, therefore, in line with this outlook, but some of them remain questionable regarding the high costs and the real effects on development. Today, the sites for these interventions are essentially two: the Sinai Peninsula and the Southern Desert. These regions are affected by major projects currently under implementation: the North Sinai Development Project and the South Valley Development Project. They are commonly called Mega Projects, because they are projects of large scale economic and industrial planning, and they involve intervention from local governments.

NORTH SINAI DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

In order to reduce the food gap, to lighten the valley of the Nile from the high population density and to decrease unemployment, the Egyptian Government has taken into consideration the potential offered by the Mediterranean side of the Sinai Peninsula. In the past, this was only identified as a “buffer zone” with the State of Israel, and it is still strategically important for the presence of hydrocarbon reserves. The fulcrum of development is the expansion of Port Said and the transformation of vast desert areas into places of possible human settlement. Achieving these goals is considered possible by the completion of two small projects: Sharq Al-Tafri’a Project and Al-Salam Project.
The Sharq Al-Tafri’a (East Port Said) Project, started in the mid-’90s, is located on Suez Canal near Port Said. In this area a commercial port and an industrial district will arise, covering a total area of about 220 square kilometers. This Project is supported by the construction of a canal (Al-Salam Project) that transports fresh water to irrigate about 1,700 square kilometers of desert lands, between the Mediterranean coast and the slopes of Sinai. The canal will be originated from the delta of the Nile and will be able to withdraw about 4 billion cubic meters of water per year from the branch of Damietta.

SOUTH VALLEY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The New Valley governorate has been identified as an ideal place to make cultivated and populated arid lands, in order to increase the capacity of agriculture and to provide an additional reserve of water. Although the region is furthest from the capital and is most torrid throughout the year, its lands are lapped by one of the more important water reserves for the entire African continent: the Lake Nasser. Until today it has been considered by Egypt as a “big tank” of water. Besides being an important negotiation tool in “hydro geopolitical” international issues for the government, it is a way for general improvement of economic and social conditions. The exploitation of its waters in fact may stimulate the improvement of agriculture and promote progress in the industrial and technological sectors. The transformation of the whole region is carried out since 1997 by several local projects, including the development of the area of East Oweinat and the depression of Toshka just north of Abu Simbel.

EAST OWEINAT PROJECT

This project on the south western border of Egypt invests about 2,100 square kilometers, about half of which are turned into agricultural lands by means of groundwater recovery. The area has been subdivided into 20 lots, allocated to the companies funding the project, some of which are American, Italian and Saudi. The total cost is estimated more than 400 million dollars.

THE TOSHKA PROJECT

The realization of this project is integrated with the development plans of the New Valley governorate (El-Wādī El-Gādīd). These were launched at the end of ’50s by Nasser, with the aim of making the depressions of the Western Desert cultivable and promoting new settlements on the oasis, along this “new valley.” To reach the goal it would have been necessary to get water from fossil groundwater through the implementation of several wells. These projects were carried out without a plan.
They would have had a real impact on the local population, since the new lands were divided into small lots (between 42,000 and 200,000 square meters) and distributed between new owners, renters or local authorities. The success of individual projects, however, has not guaranteed the benefits expected in the beginning, but still favored the arrest of emigration from the regions involved.

In the decades that followed, foreign policy issues and the continuous need of water have turned the attention of the government to major projects related to the Nile. In fact, with the completion of the Aswan High Dam all the questions were related to Lake Nasser, its development and the exploitation of its water. In the early ´80s, a canal called the Toshka Spillway was dug to make more profits from the waters of the “great lake”. It was dug on the bed of the Wadi Toshka, an ancient seasonal tributary of the Nile and it would allow irrigating the depressions of the desert.

The abundant rainfall of 1996 forced the government authorities to use this “outflow” canal. The reflux of water flooded the great depression to the north-west, allowing thus the formation of four lakes. The presence of these lakes has encouraged the cultivation of land surrounding so successfully that the Egyptian government has decided to encourage irrigation of lands between these lakes and the Lake Nasser. The starting point for this project was located to the north, in the Gulf of Toshka, from which it takes its name: Toshka Project.

Through the implementation of the Toshka Project, the aim of the Egyptian government was to extend the agricultural lands. As the same Egyptian authorities said, it would be possible to make cultivable approximately 14,000 square kilometers of lands in South Egypt only through the use and recovery of the water of Lake Nasser and through the exploitation of fossil groundwater of the Western Desert. In the first phase of the Project, however, the government expects to be able to exploit 2,100 square kilometers, made cultivable using the water of the new canal. On the new lands it will also create big farms and processing industries of raw materials, generating an increase of offers on the domestic and abroad markets.

At international level Egypt wants to prove to be a country no longer developing, independent from foreign loans

Around these areas, the government would provide for the creation of new urban settlements and extension of existing ones, building houses for about 5 million people. These initiatives would create a reverse migratory movement from the desert toward the Nile Valley. From a political point of view, the success of this project should ensure an increase in popularity of President Mubarak, as well as the Aswan High Dam allowed Nasser to achieve a great personal prestige. At international level, Egypt wants to prove to be a country no longer developing.
that is no longer developing, is independent from foreign loans and can cover debts contracted in the last century.

On 9 January 1997, the execution of the first phase of the Toshka Project has begun. A canal will bring water from Lake Nasser near the Gulf of Toshka to the lands of New Valley. In this stage, it is expected that the length of the canal will be about 310 kilometers and it will reach the city of Baris in the Kharga Oasis. In the second stage, along the Dakhla Oasis and Farafra, it should reach the Qattara Depression, drawing a new valley where 24 new cities will arise (Rossi, 2004). The two components of the Toshka Project are the Mubarak Giant Lifting Station and the Sheikh Zayed Canal.

THE MUBARAK GIANT LIFTING STATION

The Mubarak Giant Lifting Station is the pumping station that will carry water from Lake Nasser to the Canal. It has been projected so that it is possible to draw water through 6 underwater pipelines and 24 pumping turbines: in full swing, the whole structure can draw about 25 million cubic meters of water per day. The estimated costs for the construction of the pumping station are around 300 million dollars.

THE SHEIKH ZAYED CANAL

The Sheikh Zayed Canal originates near the Giant Mubarak Lifting Station from which it receives water. Its construction was divided into several stages. The first stage will cover the distance of 72 kilometers. In order to carry a great amount of water, the Canal will have enormous dimensions: it will measure 54 meters wide on the surface and its depths will vary between 6 and 9 meters. Then, four smaller branches will cover a total length of 125 kilometers and they will allow a better irrigation of the surrounding lands. The cost of the canal and complementary infrastructure construction is estimated to be more than 300 billion dollars.

QUESTIONS, PROBLEMS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Several pessimistic studies, articles and comments were published about the Toshka Project and other similar projects. Nevertheless, the Egyptian government has supported the importance and necessity of creating a new way of settlement to the north of Lake Nasser. Since the ‘70s, studies and projects aimed to increase the amount of cultivable lands and to reverse the migration flow in order to offset the strong population density on the Nile Valley and on the greater Egyptian towns.

The privatization of water would be the most likely future

World Bank and FAO have set side by side with the government and several Saudi and Western private investors attracted by possible new sources of economic benefits. The little successes obtained with the projects started in the ‘70s have not demoralized the government, which has become instead a promoter of the “mega-projects” without estimating the real effects and
consequences. Several issues in fact have been raised by those who have studied and analyzed these new development plans in different contexts, such as economical, social, environmental, but especially in the geopolitical context with regard to the delicate international issues.

On the **economic sector**, it has been wondered if it would be appropriate to direct investments toward local projects that are more detailed and able to reach the lower social classes and certainly would have a lower impact on the territory. Investments, however, are mostly of foreign origin and in absence of Egyptian donors the future earnings will benefit only foreign companies.

The success of the projects is likely to have an impact on the **social sphere** as well. Success and wealth could ease international tensions but failure is likely to cause unrest and riots. The aforesaid demographic situation in the Nile Valley, if not resolved, would break the delicate balance between the various Egyptian communities, with a considerable impact on all sectors of the economic and domestic policy.

On the **territorial and environmental issues**, Fouad and Barbara Ibrahim highlighted their disagreement about the goodness of the Project: the soil of the desert on the north of Toshka has the same geological characteristics of other neighboring regions of the Nile Delta; therefore it would be more appropriate trying to make a good use of them. The High Egypt, in fact, is one of the most arid places of the planet. Here the water required for cultivation is twice that required in a region located on the Mediterranean coast. The risk of salinization of the land is high, as confirmed by irrigation projects in the oasis of Siwa and Dakhla and in Wadi Natrun.

We must not to forget that throughout the Nile course there are continuous tensions between communities, but also among countries for the management of water resources. The role of Egypt in the context of the Nilotic basin is fundamental, so Egypt could get into conflict with the countries of the basin like Eritrea, Uganda and Kenya in the past and Ethiopia and the Sudan today. These countries do not consider the proper exploitation of the waters of the Nile from Egypt, especially if it declares that the Sheikh Zayed Canal will be able one day to convey up to 5 billion cubic meters per year. From where will it be able to collect a similar amount of water?

The Egyptian government goes on to claim that the allocated quota in the agreements of 1959 will never be exceeded, although Ethiopia doesn’t recognize them. This is perhaps the most widely addressed issue in the international arena through studies, analysis and commentary written by various sources. Fouad and Barbara Ibrahim themselves posed the same question about the source of water necessary for the project. In Egypt, they state, water supplies are scanty and badly distributed. If the already reduced flow of the Nile is subtracted by a portion of that entity, surely the agriculture could collapse throughout the country. If Egypt will really use such quantities of water, if Sudan fails to comply with the agreements of 1959 and if
Ethiopia provides new hydraulic works on the river course, the current diplomatic relationships could deteriorate. Although the hypothesis of conflict between the major countries of the basin is considered highly possible, there is also another scenario deemed possible, that is the privatization of water resources. This process of privatization has been promoted in recent years by the World Bank in different regions of the world, regarding that water is a commercial good and such should be subject to the laws of the market. An economic value attributed to its failure and scarcity, but at the same time from its indispensability for survival.

Privatization would allow a more rigorous, careful and rational use of water, limiting waste: this is the vision of many institutional bodies and several multinational companies and this policy has been adopted in many countries. But many experts dispute the privatization of natural resources needed, particularly water, because the effects are not those indicated by the World Bank. In most situations where control and management of water resources has passed into private hands, there have been devastating consequences for consumers, who have seen the water quality and potability dramatically reduced. On the contrary, there has been a rapid growth of prices for water consumption, so much that companies have seen their profits increase by 700%. The Nile basin would be the ideal situation to bring forward the policy of privatization, as multinationals would be able to obtain the lowest possible price for water management in these countries.

An alternative development scenario is linked to the cooperation between the riparian countries. In fact the establishment of an international organization that represents and protects all the states of the basin would be, to according to many, the ideal solution to achieve collective agreements, which are not violated by the institutions involved. A supranational organization monitored by super partes institutions could allow coherent, rational and intelligent use of water and could on the other hand reduce wastage, friction and conflicts. The research for new alternatives sources of water and the cooperation between members would ensure an economic balance within the entire basin, and would set guidelines for dissolving the conflicting nodes of this critical region.

The definition of the future of the Nile basin depends particularly on the value that is given to water and natural resources in general. If the guidelines of the World Bank will be pursued, water will be regarded as a commercial good like any other good. The privatization of water, then, would be the most likely future, but certainly very risky from the point of view of social and political stability, not only in Egypt but also in the Nile basin. However, if they listen to the voices that claim the essential and survival value of the water and if governmental policies, interregional distribution, management and retrieval of water resources will be undertaken, the prospect of cooperation between riparian countries would be likely and almost 1/3 of the African continent will benefit from it. Something is moving in this direction, but there is still much to be defined concretely.
Notes:


5. Ibid.


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History is a discipline based almost entirely on textual accounts of the past. Literary texts are one of these textual sources. While they may only contain a minimum of useful detail for the political historian, there is much to be found in them for use in the study of popular cultural history.

This essay will look into how much can actually be found in such texts for use in this field. It will look into the debate in the 1980s surrounding the work of Robert Darnton in the area, in his application of anthropological and semiotic theory to the subject. This debate involved the role of these disciplines in the analysis of this textual format, and the reliability of basing anything at all on literary texts.

Darnton asserts that when analysing popular cultural history, the historian needs to treat that culture as an alien one, like an anthropologist would in the course of their work. When applying anthropological techniques to the examination of literary texts, the differences between the two disciplines should be borne in mind. Anthropology uses much more than texts when analysing cultures. It uses immersion in the culture; it interviews and observes living people and communities, interacting in ways that are not possible with any but the most recent history. It does not depend on one source for its interpretation, or indeed on one type of source. This means that anthropology can only be partially applied to history.

History has to depend solely on texts. Every text is subjective due to the fact it has actually been written by someone. Each and every text is, to one extent or another, infused with the author’s ideology. While this can be a hindrance for historians working in many other forms of history, for the purposes of the use of literary texts as a source for popular cultural history this subjectivity is a tool that may be used to great effect, rather than a hindrance. The author’s prejudices, ideologies and beliefs provide a window into how people thought at the time of writing. The literature itself, like all literature, was aimed a specific audience who thought in a particular way. Thus, the content of a story also can tell us a lot about the group that would have read that story, and about the author themselves, providing a point of entry into the culture of the people of the past.
Using the conclusions drawn from one text, or even a group of texts and then using them to describe a wider society in this manner can lead to a distorted picture. They should not be taken as typifying that culture. There is a danger, just as in the use of anthropological theory in archaeology, of going too far with too little evidence. There are always many subcultures within a larger society, both today and in the past, and while it is tempting, the audience for a literary text may often only consist of a tiny element of a larger popular culture and thus not truly represent that culture, more one person’s view of it. The past always contains a ‘silent majority’ who are rarely if ever described, and even then only in a simplified and standardised form.

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Darnton’s case study of the story of The Great Cat Massacre of Rue Saint-Séverin has provided the basis for most of the subsequent discussion of this ethnographic method of history. The story is told from the point of view of Jerome, a senior apprentice at the workshop of a Parisian printer. It tells of the terrible conditions endured by him and his fellow apprentice Léveillé, and of how they exact revenge on their master. They do this by keeping him and his wife awake at night with cat calls, leading the master to order them to kill the alley cats. They proceed, along with the journeymen, to first of all kill the mistress’ ‘pet pussy’ and conceal the evidence before going on to have a burlesque trial and execution of the other cats. The mistress and master react in different ways. The master is more concerned with the loss of working time, whereas the mistress sees it as a grave insult. The workers glory on the incident for long after, with the apprentices rising in their opinion due to the event.

There has been much discussion over the nature of the story. Is autobiographical, semi-autobiographical or a work of pure fiction? It was part of a collection...
of stories by Nicholas Condat, in which he recounted various tales from his career in the printing trade, which he had been involved in throughout his working life. Darnton sees it as autobiographical, a work similar to that of Benjamin Franklin et al. Chartier disagrees, putting forward that it was more of a novel portraying a secret world within a world. He makes the comparison to the picaresque tradition, and there is indeed much truth in this, it does bear a remarkable similarity to novels of this tradition.

There are a number of literary themes common to the period to be found in the story. The most obvious is the misères genre. The suffering of the two apprentices would have struck a chord with the literate working class who had endured their own apprenticeships. The suffering was in all probability ‘hammed up’ for the readership. These exaggerated circumstances would also have increased the enjoyment for the reader of more elite extraction. The influence of the ‘how to…’ tradition is there to be seen, and as LaCapra asserts there are very many other possible generic sources.

Whether or not it was autobiographical or a work of pure fiction is irrelevant. It is the portrayal of its setting and its inhabitants that is important. It gives an insight into how these printers thought and acted. It gives a point of entry into a society that is otherwise hard to penetrate. How far exactly into that society may be penetrated is a different matter. The society was obviously one growing more unequal, or so it would seem from the text. This was the case in the growing urban centres of Europe in the Eighteenth Century, in which the story was set. It is evident from the text that infrastructural changes were leading to changes in superstructure, to follow a Marxian model. Superstructural changes occur more slowly, meaning there is a degree of social turmoil as forces within the superstructure react to this infrastructural change.

From the text it is evident that the employees sought to preserve their positions, or to, more favourably, return to the previous workplace structure. This desire to return to a perceived golden age, real or not, was common in all popular unrest in the Early Modern Period, from the Bundschuh Revolt to the bread riots in France. The journeymen were unhappy at their loss of status in the workplace, lack of job security and the lack of prospects at ever attaining the level of master craftsman, now the preserve of the increasingly distant bourgeois.

The apprentices’ hardships were greater than those of the journeymen and they were the instigators of this prank against the master and his household. The mistress put it succinctly when she exclaimed: “These wicked men can’t kill the masters, so they have killed my pussy.” LaCapra points out that they have victimized helpless creatures in order to get at the perceived source of their difficulty, i.e. those more powerful than themselves. This is a point on which Darnton, Chartier and LaCapra all agree. Where they disagree is on the level of meaning attached to the actions by those involved.

Darnton has the participants as astute manipulators of a vast range of polysemic
symbols in order to exact revenge on many levels without going into open rebellion.\textsuperscript{21} He backtracks a little in 1986, saying “I do not mean to imply that all the workers extracted all the meaning from the incident”,\textsuperscript{22} although he does remain convinced of the virtuoso performance put in by some of the workers in the manipulating of these symbols. For him, the cat is of utmost importance in this system of symbols. It was, and still is, a very symbolic animal. It is an animal that is ‘good to think’ to follow after Lévi-Strauss,\textsuperscript{23} due to its liminal nature where it defies basic categorisation.

Darnton probably goes too far in his analysis, but what he says should not be completely discounted. The cat is a very symbolic animal. It would have had a high sexual symbolic value then as now.\textsuperscript{24} The cat was made a scapegoat for its master, as the journeymen would never dare attack outright the man who had such control over their livelihoods. The domestic cat represented the excesses of the bourgeois, with the cat being treated better than those in the master’s employ. As such, the conflict can be seen as a conflict between the two liminal elements associated with the master’s household, the pet and the apprentices.\textsuperscript{25} The pet had supplanted the apprentices, and their actions can be interpreted as them acting out of revenge and self interest, in order to regain control of the liminal zone they occupied. Conversely, the incident saw also saw them move further away from the household, as their actions led to them being accepted into the opposing micro-social zone occupied by the journeymen.

The fact that the incident was thought to be so funny has proved puzzling for those analysing the story. How so? Cruelty towards cats is still, even in the present day thought funny by some.\textsuperscript{26} Cats are still thrown on bonfires at Halloween and suffer regular acts of random cruelty. They are still disliked and distrusted by many today. Perhaps if Darnton consulted sociological sources on the matter he might realise that the people of the past were a little less different than he thinks. The author’s feelings of mirth may also stem as much from the increased social status he gained from the incident as well as the actual acts themselves.

Darnton’s assertion that the participants deftly melded actions from a number of their popular festivals in order to increase the symbolic impact of their actions\textsuperscript{27} and that by killing the cat they called the master’s wife a witch and a slut\textsuperscript{28} is possibly bringing the analysis too far. The application of symbolic values from differing periods of time to this particular story is risky. It cannot be said that what one thing meant to someone in the Sixteenth Century carried the same meaning to someone living in the Eighteenth. Chartier is certainly of this opinion, but he probably goes too far in the other direction, saying that there were too many cleavages in French society for a system of symbols to have had meaning for all the people of a given time.\textsuperscript{29} The point he makes on the need to define the instances of behaviour in the text on the basis of the specific way they were assembled or produced rather than their categorization according to remote resemblances to codified forms among the repertory of Western folk influences\textsuperscript{30} is certainly valid. The participants in the actions
were probably not consciously melding together the main parts of various rituals. It is more likely that they were acting in the only way they knew how, the way in which they acted in the aspects of their lives that gave them most enjoyment.

Chartier attempts also to show the meaning that the terms symbol and sign had for the people of the time, and how this might suggest that the characters in the story were not the astute manipulators of symbols that Darnton thought them to be. However, it should be noted that individuals at that time could manipulate symbols in the more modern sense without even knowing they were doing so. Semiotics is quite a modern discipline, and to say there was no manipulation of signs and symbols before its advent would be unfortunate. This further illustrates the conflict between the material and symbolic forms of anthropology in their use for cultural historical purposes. It also illustrates the conflict between textuality and anthropology when used for these ends, as the over use of one can negate the effect of using the other.

No matter how much the text is analysed, the native’s true point of view cannot be attained entirely. The examination of the symbols used by those people under analysis also does not present a full picture of how these people thought and viewed their world, but used together the two methods can lead to a deeper penetration into the culture of the time. The danger of over-analysis has been mentioned already. To borrow a concept from the domain of physics, the more something is measured the more it changes. What may seem to be the logical conclusions of today may actually be today’s commentators changing the meaning of the contents of a given text to suit their own hypothesis and ideology.

Here is where subjectivity can cause major problems. While, as already mentioned, the subjectivity of the author of the literary text can prove a boon to the historian des mentalités. It is the subjectivity of the analyst that is the problem, as it is going to always shape their analysis. Different historians have different ideologies with which they want the past to conform, meaning that their analysis is going to reflect this. Darnton’s keen interest in semiotics means that he assigns a great deal of ability in manipulation symbols to the cultures he studies. Chartier’s preference for textuality and materialism also shines through throughout the article.

In conclusion, anthropology and semiotics have to be used carefully in the analysis of literary texts involving popular culture from the historic period. There is a severe danger of over-analysis and of going too far with the conclusions as the case study shows. While Darnton’s writings contain the most attractive ideas, his detractors should not be dismissed either. Textual analysis and the study of the use of symbols both have a role to play. The issue needs to be addressed from the “native’s”
point of view while at the same time applying a modern theoretical framework. The cultures of the past did manipulate symbols, and the case study used in the essay demonstrates this, but they also did more than just manipulate symbols, they also lived their lives. They had ideologies and were subject to the conditions of their time. Here is where textuality is important. The issue of double-subjectivity also needs to be borne in mind when thinking on the issue. The subjectivity of the original author and of the analyst has an effect on any work done on the subject. A phenomenological approach to the matter could also prove fruitful, as would the use of post-structural anthropology and semiotics. The use of literary theory could also prove productive. The debate so far has proven quite interesting and thought provoking, but is still a field in which much more work can be done, with new approaches to be tried.

Notes:

1. In his book The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History (1984). The essay here will only concern itself with the essay in the book of the same name.
2. No anthropological discussion is without its case study, and this essay is no exception.
4. See Jenkins, 1991, pp. 1-32 for more on this.
6. Ibid., p. 7.
7. See the writings of Binford, Flannery et al for examples of this, or the critiques by Renfrew & Bahn, 2004 (Chapter 12), and Hodder & Hudson 2003.
8. Not in the Nixonian sense of the term though!
9. See La Capra, p. 106 on this.
11. The term is Darnton’s, used throughout his two items in the bibliography.
12. For the full text of the story see Darnton, 1984, pp. 102-104.
15. Chartier, 1985, p. 691. He and LaCapra point out that it was written in the third person, rather than the first, hardly standard practice for an autobiography. However, Caesar also wrote in the third person, and it may have been that his book was for audiences that would have the stories read out to them.
17. LaCapra, 1988, p. 102.
18. See any text on the materialist process of change by Marx or where Marx is quoted or invoked on the matter.
19. Darnton, 1984, p. 104. It could be that the term ‘pussy’ was translated as such to illustrate the sexual emphasis that Darnton places on the symbology of the cat throughout his essay.
20. LaCapra 1988, p. 103.
23. Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind,1966, as quoted by Darnton, 1986,
To test this, I actually recounted the details of the story to former work acquaintances and family members still engaged in ‘working class’ employment. It was found to be hilarious by all three people asked. Having spent a large portion of my life working on building sites and factories I have encountered many who would find this story very funny.

This is a very simplified version of what appears in Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle Paper, 1927.

Bibliography


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Globalising Non-Simultaneities: Relations Between “Core” and “Periphery” in World Historical Perspective

By Volker Prott
Berlin

When the two planes crashed into the Twin Towers of the New York World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, covering the entire globe with an infinite video loop of the moment of attack, even the most optimistic observer had to admit that history was finally coming back to the heart of the “civilised” world. In an act of symbolic subversion the “tuumoi at the periphery reached the shores of the world’s lone superpower” (Picciotto / Olonisakin / Clarke 2007: 3).

Twelve years earlier, only months before the disintegration of the Soviet Union set in, American political scientist Francis Fukuyama still had speculated in an article for the journal The National Interest about history coming to an end. Ideologies and conflict, he had argued, would be banned to the outskirts of the developed world, while the historical victory of liberalism would have left an ever growing part of the globe in dull posthistoire. However, this “does not by any means imply the end of international conflict per se. For the world at that point would be divided between a part that was historical and a part that was post-historical. Conflict between states still in history, and between those states and those at the end of history, would still be possible. [...] terrorism and wars of national liberation will continue to be an important item on the international agenda” (Fukuyama 1989: 16). What is new about the 9/11 attacks is that they transcended the clear-cut segregation of the “developed” and the “developing” world.

The attacks on the World Trade Center indicate that contemporary reality is characterized by two distinctive and contradictory traits: the global dimension of interactions and their striking asymmetry in terms of power (for the latter see Münkler 2005). Both are a heritage of globalisation on the one hand and Western based colonialism and imperialism on the other. Since the end of the 19th century there has been a vivid debate about the interconnections of
Western domination and deepening global interactions, oscillating between the poles of imperialism as the “highest stage of capitalism”, as Lenin described it, and the universal benefits of a completely liberal and Westernised “flat world” – as globalisation is referred to by American journalist Thomas L. Friedman.²

The most striking feature of contemporary global reality resides in the globalisation of non-simultaneities.³ This notion is crucial to a deeper, historically informed grasp to many conflicts and frictions in present time. In his brilliant study on development policy Paul Collier argues that since the 1980s a further differentiation in the “developing” world has occurred, with a large number of countries, mainly in Asia, more or less quickly converging to the levels of wealth of the OECD countries, and 58 other, mainly African countries falling behind (Collier 2007). Collier refers to the people living in these countries as the “bottom billion”, caught in one or more of the four “development traps” – the “conflict trap”, the “natural resources trap”, the trap of being “landlocked with bad neighbours”, and the “bad governance trap” (Collier 2007: 5) – keeping them in limbo at best. Describing the desperate state these countries are in, Collier writes that the “countries at the bottom coexist with the twenty-first century, but their reality is the fourteenth century: civil war, plague, ignorance” (Collier 2007: 3).

Although this may be slightly exaggerated it correctly points at the first major trait of global non-simultaneity: in the process of globalisation peoples and civilisations of extremely divergent economic, political, and cultural complexity and organisation get into an ever intensifying contact with each other, entangled in problems of transfer, exchange, and confinement. While a sudden opening of either side to the other – as in the unconditional redirection of local production to the logic of global markets in poor countries or the complete suspension of all trade barriers, subsidies, and borders in richer countries⁴ – almost invariably leads to frictions and harmful effects, a complete closure will not only reinforce extreme inequalities and hinder major parts of the world from development, leaving them to misery, it would also produce “large islands of chaos” (Collier 2007: 4), potentially destabilising the whole global system.

The increasing interactions between diverse civilisations and cultures are complicated by the second trait of globalising non-simultaneities, which is the permanent difference in inner complexity between smaller territorial units such as nation-states or, to an already lesser extent, the European Union

Volker Prött

Victory of liberalism would have left an ever growing par of the globe in dull posthistoire
or the OECD countries on the one and global relations on the other hand.\textsuperscript{5} Since Columbus the colonial has been lagging behind the national sphere in complexity on the level of discourse, law, or economic and political organisation. Mass murder, social segregation, arbitrary drawing of borders, slavery, simple ideas of transfer, support of corrupt local elites, bribery and avoidance of tax payments by international companies – all of these occurred and partially still occur outside the Western realm, while inside more complex and balanced modes of interaction prevail.\textsuperscript{6}

This permanent ‘complexity gap’ of global relations is intertwined with issues of power and short term incentives to abuse greater strength, but it is also a simple function of the “core” having less contact to the “outside” compared to the degree of interaction between countries in the “inside”. Under favourable conditions non-simultaneities can have beneficial effects for all parties concerned and present a major driving force in global progress and the levelling of global inequalities, making global interactions more open and flexible. At the same time, however, as past centuries have abundantly proved, the relations between stronger and weaker parts of the world can also become highly destructive.

Of central concern in a careful analysis of the harmful or beneficial functioning of global interactions is the concept of borders.\textsuperscript{7} It comprises physical barriers to migration as well as local processes of exclusion, like Ferguson describes them for the African context: “the ‘global’ we see in recent studies of Africa has sharp, jagged edges; rich and dangerous traffic amid zones of generalized abjection; razor-wired enclaves next to abandoned hinterland. […] It is a global not of planetary communion, but of disconnection, segmentation, and segregation – not a seamless world without borders, but a patchwork of discontinuous and hierarchically ranked spaces, whose edges are carefully delimited, guarded, and enforced” (Ferguson 2006: 48-49). The way border transgressions between richer and poorer parts of the world are regulated tells a lot about the character of global interactions and can serve as an analytical approach for historical as well as contemporary studies.

\textbf{Since Columbus the colonial has been lagging behind the national sphere in complexity}

Today, relations between a globalising “core” and an equally globalising “periphery” do not show an unequivocal trend towards a somewhat “better” globalisation or deterioration. Ferguson draws a gloomy picture of a thinkable postmodern “non progressive temporalisation” in which hope for improvement and convergence has been disillusioned to the point at which “degeneration” sets in and freezes the world at current levels of global inequlai-
ties with ever growing fences and security measures in the richer parts of the world and chaos in the poorer rest, subsequently breaking through the barriers and finally spreading the apocalypse to the whole globe (Ferguson 2006: 190-192). On the other end of the scale we find genuinely positive visions of a “flat” and prosperous world awaiting us or being already in existence (Friedman 2007, see also Dehesa 2007, whose predictions are a bit more sceptical).

The contemporary situation resembles the situation in 1913, when a highly globalised world could not find efficient ways to cope with nationalist challenges and slid into a period of war, autarchy, and global recession that lasted, in terms of global capital flows, but in a way also politically, until the early 1970s. The afore mentioned globalising non-simultaneities, if not balanced, will lead to growing pressures at the periphery of the rich parts of the world. More people, especially from the desperate “bottom billion”, will try to migrate to the rich “core” and attack borders depriving them from social advancement. A key question concerning the course of this development, then, will reside in the degree to which national, international, and global actors and organisations are able to adequately reduce barriers, democratise global relations, and realise the crucial need to better manage and level the emerging but highly uneven global reality in order to avoid a global recession with unforeseeable consequence.

Notes:

1. I am indebted to Henning Baucke, Bevis Fedder, and my parents for their helpful and compelling advices and corrections.
3. See e.g. Koselleck 2002: 8, who speaks of “the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous”.
4. The far from perfect process of German reunification is a case in point.
5. This direction of thought, though in a different and somewhat cruder shape, is already formulated in Wallerstein’s concept of “core”, “semi-core” and “periphery” resembling the national upper-class, middle-class, and working-class on a global scale (see also Kerbo 2006: 442-449, alluding to the fact that the comparison of poor countries to a global “proletariat” go back to communist thinkers of the time around 1900).
6. As has been argued before, the separation of “inside” and “outside” can never be perfect, and abusive global relations tend to have negative backlash effects on both sides.
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