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Summaries

Kerstin Hitzbleck

Introduction: Alterity in Transformation in Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Time

Thinking about alterity has a long tradition in the scholarly work of the last decades. This paper tries to give an introduction to the diverging articles on the construction of alterity in medieval and early modern times given in a section of the Schweizerische Geschichtstage, which took place in Fribourg in 2013. The article applies the recently created paradigm of transformation that is invented and applied in the SFB 644 in Berlin on the reception of ancient culture in the times of humanism and renaissance. It points especially on the reciprocal process of change: The reception of the ancient culture changes antiquity as well as the receiving renaissance culture. The humanistic experience of general alterity of the ancient relics encouraged the attempt to transfer the paradigm to the medieval and early modern European ways of dealing with newly discovered and unknown cultures in Asia and the New World. The European conceptions of the non-christian world are altered by the contact with the existing cultures: New information is integrated in older funds of knowledge and thus changes the European, receiving culture as well as the perception of the other.

Gerda Brunnlechner

Expansion of the World: Cartographic Reactions on the example of the Genoese World Map of 1457

The Cartography in the Middle of the 15th century was challenged by the need to process increasing experiential knowledge and the realisation, that the world is larger than primarily expected on the basis of authoritative works. The *Genoese World Map* serves as an example to show, how the new findings were integrated in the habitual image of maps and what conclusions can be drawn about conceptions of the world and of the alien. The mapmakers, while striving for accuracy and actuality of their maps, had to digest second hand findings, stemming from spatial and temporal distance. In this article, the work of the mapmakers is understood as complex succession of transformational processes, which allows to unravel how the mapmakers, depending on their initial basis of knowledge, transformed the new information, thereby changing their own conceptions of the world and those of their contemporaries.

Thomas Schwitter

The Ignorance towards the New. France and the New World 1492–1600

The 16th century began with a quick expansion of trade networks from northern French coastal cities into the New World and beyond. This development in turn caused friction between French traders and the Portuguese crown. Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, too, watched France's overseas expansion with envy and tried variously to undermine it. The hostility of foreign governments should have prompted King Francis I to support his subjects, but instead he opted for non-involvement. The present article seeks to elucidate the reasons for this momentous decision. It argues that France's colonial projects were never more than a bargaining chip for the king to improve his political position in Europe. The divergence of objectives between the burgeoning colonial periphery and the court resulted in the bifurcation of the publishing market.

The article will show that aside from political considerations the colonies' marginal status in public discourse was also due to the traditional pre-occupations of French historiography. These were dominated by the triangular power struggle between the pope, the Holy Roman emperor, and the French monarchy, which alone held out the promise of fame and glory for the winner. The New World could not be integrated into this intellectual frame of reference without dissolving the latter. The reluctance of metropolitan printers to engage with the colonial periphery therefore became emblematic of an emerging rift between the rising merchant class and the court in their visions for France's future.

Matthieu Bernhardt

Western Perception and Representations of China during the Renaissance

During the second half of the 16th century, the geographic literature on China appears to be part of a vast intertextual network. The ethnographic descriptions produced by diplomats, businessmen, seamen, missionaries or historians are comparable and they draw a rather similar picture of the Empire of the Middle. As a result, an idealized image of China is created, which eventually finds its best expression in Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza's *l'Historia de la cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reino de China*. Printed almost at the same time in Rome and Valencia in 1585, the book by the Spanish author is published 46 times and translated into 7 languages (Spanish, Italian, English, Latin, Dutch, and German) by the end of the century. A bestseller, distributed across Europe, its success was due to the growing interest that China raised in the Western imagination and to the lack of information about this country available in Renaissance Europe.

Mendoza's *Historia* provided rich and varied knowledge that was much needed for several decades. But he himself never travelled to the Far East and first hand testimonies accessible in Europe at that time were very rare since Chinese officials had denied Europeans access to their Empire up to the year 1582 – three years before the publication of the *Historia* – when the Jesuits founded their first residence in the provincial town of Zhaoqing.

By analyzing Mendoza's sources, this article describes and assesses the process through which the text constructs an image that will influence the Western representation of China at the end of the Renaissance. From the first Western eyewitness accounts written by the "Portuguese prisoners" around 1520, and the letters sent by the Jesuits to Europe at the beginning of their mission, to the Chinese books translated by the Philippino *Sangleys*, almost all knowledge on China available to the Europeans in the year 1585 is at work in Mendoza's *Historia*. However, the comparison between the *Historia* and its numerous sources unveils multiple instances of textual distortion, selective information, as well as dissimulation. Thus, although the Western representation of China at the end of the Renaissance conveys a great deal of valuable information, it is nonetheless the result of various processes of textual construction that Mendoza pieced together (as did his less renowned predecessors Bernardino de Escalante and Alessandro Valignano). Obviously, these authors intended to satisfy the curiosity of their readers about an unknown country, but they wanted above all to influence the political decisions of their authorities towards China. Mendoza clearly tries to prevent Phillip II to launch the military conquest that Philippine authorities requested, when Alessandro Valignano intends to encourage the development of the Jesuit mission. Based on many textual examples, this article intends to shed a light on the extraordinary circulation of the information about China in the 16th century, and to demonstrate that this same information has been partially falsified in the major publications of the end of the century in order to promote precise geopolitical agendas.

Joël Graf

Herejes versus plantas nuevas: Early Colonial Inquisitorial Practices against Indigenes in Spanish America

The conquest of America and the Christianisation of its population represented a huge challenge for the Spanish Inquisition. Should it treat the indigenes with restraint, considering their status as *nuevas plantas*, new plants of the faith? Or should it act severely against any kind of religious offence, such as for example idolatry?

In this context, the present article focuses on the inquisitorial practices against indigenes in early colonial Spanish-America. It will be discussed how the Inquisition harked back to established patterns of perception to legitimate its procedures. As will be shown, there were great differences in strategy between actors in the centre of the Spanish Empire (the Council of Inquisition) and in its periphery (inquisitors of the mendicant orders).

Igor Pérez Tostado

The globalisation of fear: massacre and otherness in the Spanish and British empires in the first half of the 17th century

The first half of the 17th century witnessed an increase in episodes of extreme violence, mass killings and collective punishment on the “peripheries” of Europe and in the margins of its empires in Asia and America. Instead of looking at them as isolated outbursts, this article proposes to look at the common elements shared by the different cases and the interconnectedness among them. The first common element is that the explosions of violence occurred when and where the dominant group is in the minority and develops a fear of subversion and, above all, as a self-fulfilling prophecy, that of being massacred. The second is that the episodes of violence are connected by a flow of ideas and models for the treatment of minorities in the early modern era. The long-term effect of fear to mass violence in Europe and elsewhere was to serve as an engine of otherness global scale processes.