

16th Annual International Graduate Student Conference on Transatlantic History

Veranstalter: Christopher Malmberg / Isabelle Rispler / Cory Wells, Transatlantic History Student Organization

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The Sixteenth Annual International Graduate Student on Transatlantic History took place in Arlington, Texas on September 17-19, 2015. The conference was organized by Christopher Malmberg, The University of Texas at Arlington, Isabelle Rispler, The University of Texas at Arlington/ Université Paris Diderot and Cory Wells, The University of Texas at Arlington and was financed by The Transatlantic History Student Organization, The Barksdale Lecture Series, The History Department and The College of Liberal Arts at The University of Texas at Arlington.

The Sixteenth Annual International Graduate Student Conference on Transatlantic History assembled emerging and established scholars from various European, North and South American universities. The opening and closing roundtables provided an avenue for all conference participants to enter into direct dialogue with one another, and debate concepts and methodologies employed by transatlantic scholars. The panel presentations and discussions centered on more specific topics, including: the staging, shifting and constructions of (national) identities, civil rights, transnational perspectives on revolutions, civil war and civil rights, and the role of historic mapping.

Under the topic of „Constructing Transatlantic Spaces“ ISABELLE RISPLER (Arlington/ Paris) opened the 2015 deliberations with a look back at the growth of the conference over the past fifteen years, including the role that students, and the increasingly international collection of presenters, have played in defining transatlantic history. Subsequent presenters considered how the field

relates overall to history as practice, as well as other interdisciplinary approaches to the past. ROBERT CALDWELL (Arlington) discussed transatlantic history as a counterbalance to the exceptionalism of nation-centered narratives and the unfortunately persistent racial and ethnic hierarchical interpretations of the past. KENYON ZIMMER (Arlington) spoke on the need to identify transatlantic history as a component of the larger historical project: as part of a set of concentric rings, overlapping both world history and transnational approaches. THOMAS ADAM (Arlington) defined transatlantic history as a category of broader transnational history. As cultural historians, those practicing the transatlantic narrative should read the state out of the past, and follow the circulation of ideas in re-creating a transnational space. The roundtable participants initiated a lively conversation that included many of the approximately thirty roundtable attendees.

DONNA GABACCIA (Scarborough) delivered the opening keynote address on Thursday evening. Her talk, entitled „From Immigration History to Mobility Studies,“ traced her own journey through migration history to demonstrate how present-day scholars might approach and utilize the work of those practicing before them. Donna Gabaccia first discussed what she terms the „Oedipal“ approach to migration history, in which young researchers position themselves by seeking to correct and often negate the work of previous academics, an approach akin to destroying a series of straw men. Gabaccia asked us to consider another approach in which we consult and nurture „alternate genealogies“ to inform our work. Instead of focusing on the errors of previous scholarship, we might instead build upon the work of others who exemplify our own goals in academic pursuits.

The presenters of the first and second panel analyzed how national identities were staged in different parts of the Atlantic world. MARIA ELENA BEDOYA (Barcelona) discussed the donation of gold from Colombia to Spain, in the form of the „Quimbaya Treasure,“ in 1892. 400 years after the „discovery“ of the Americas, the arrival of Christopher Columbus was interpreted in a positive manner and this ensured the establish-

ment of diplomatic relations between Spain and Columbia in the „regeneración,” the reappraisal of „hispanidad.” Inspired by Pierre Nora’s concept „lieux de mémoire,” JOEL D. KITCHENS (College Town, Texas) studied the mission San José, Texas as a site of symbolic heritage. He analyzed the transformation of the missions (the Alamo) from a local into a national (Anglo-American) symbol, and thus into a tourist destination and object of mass culture. In an effort to broaden international history, ELISABETH MARIE PILLER (Trondheim) pleaded for the reevaluation of German-American relief work (money and clothes) during the First World War. She identified the tensions between ethnic disappearance within U.S. society and humanitarian aid and the creation of a transnational ethnic community.

The third panel discussed the politics of identity constructions in the „New World.” JULIAN ZUR LAGE (München) outlined the competing historiographical traditions of Enlightenment Europe and America. Continental European philosophers lauded intellect over traveller narratives that they perceived to be untrustworthy exaggerations. Conversely, American Enlightenment thinkers pragmatically championed empiricism over so-called regurgitation of false recountings. Later transatlantic figures, including Alexander von Humboldt, stood as a synthesis of the two visions by verifying sources through practice. ISABELLE RISPLER (Arlington / Paris) discussed German-speaking diasporic projects in the South Atlantic. Distinguishing between diaspora as analytical category and category of practice, she illustrated how colonization and diasporic projects were intertwined on both sides of the South Atlantic in practice, in spite of the historiographical traditions that maintain them as wholly separate and distinct.

Panel four placed the American Civil War in a transnational perspective. PATRICK GAUL (Frankfurt am Main, Germany) discussed the substantial socio-economic connections between the United States and German-speaking Europe. Gaul is particularly interested in the cities of Hamburg and Bremen, who were major suppliers of arms during the conflict. ALAIN EL YOUSSEF

(São Paulo, Brazil) analyzed how the Civil War and early Reconstruction in the United States affected debates over slavery in Brazil. His particular focus was the adoption of the Free Womb Law within the context of „second slavery.” NEIL CHATELAIN (Houston) used the story of the CSS *Stonewall*, the only ironclad warship built for the Confederacy outside of its own boundaries, as a locus through which to illustrate the complex international diplomatic problems of the Civil War in Europe. Because the ship’s construction in France violated international law, its path to America was wayward. It never reached the Confederacy, but was instead passed from Denmark to Bermuda, and finally to Cuba, where it was captured by Spanish authorities.

STEVEN PINCUS (New Haven) gave Friday’s lunch keynote address, entitled „The Stamp Act Crisis in Global Context.” Steven Pincus framed the Stamp Act Crisis within a larger global crisis of political economy and empire. In his discussion that speaks to the present as well as the past, Pincus outlined the debates between the British proponents of austerity versus those espousing stimulus as the savior of the empire. Imperial debates played out in the periphery just as they did in the metropolis, each contributing to a discursive unfolding of policies aimed at preventing the empire from succumbing to economic collapse. The British case was not an isolated series of events, but overlapped with the experiences of other transatlantic empires, each borrowing from, and, sharing with one another notions aimed at staving off economic despair in an age of imperial unrest and revolution.

BEN HUSEMAN (Arlington) gave the participants of the conference a tour of University of Texas at Arlington’s substantial special collection holdings on Friday afternoon. The map collection, housed in the Virginia Garrett Cartographic History Library, contains documents from over five centuries, with an emphasis on the Greater Southwest and Texas. Some of the authors of these maps include Martin Waldseemüller, Abraham Ortelius, and Vincenzo Coronelli, and many of the collection’s most prized items were on display.

The participants of Panel 5 examined civil rights movements in relation to the Cold War. JAMES JONES (Oxford) diverged from pre-

vious national histories of the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. to detail how British newspapers portrayed the movement abroad. He argued that while British journalists initially viewed the problem of civil rights as a uniquely American one, they later came to realize that equal rights issues would eventually need to be dealt with in Britain, as well. ETHAN ILNYUN KIM (Columbus) delivered a fascinating talk that explained how a group of American liberals, like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., sought to present social democracy and the welfare state as an alternative to Soviet Communism. They promoted the revival of New Deal-era policies through participation in organizations including the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which was the focus of Kim's research.

Looking at the early colonial times, the sixth panel highlighted the shifting nature of identities. BENNETT R. KIMBELL (Lubbock) traced the life of Pedro Miñón, an eighteenth-century private French-born soldier in Spanish Texas. Portraying how Miñón forged his identity and reinvented himself, Kimbell argued that he was an „ordinary“ individual of his time. DAN DEGGES (Arlington) proposed to study filibusters as part of the story of America's Manifest Destiny. However, filibusters had no allegiance to a state. As such, Francisco Miranda acted as an external agent in the invasion of Spanish America, with British support. RUSSELL PATRICK BROWN's (Limerick, Ireland) project traced eighteenth-century transatlantic migration through the popular expression of dance. His use of historical ethnography allowed for identifying racial, ethnic or nationalistic models of culture that objectified dance into a unit that may be traced among peoples, much like cargo. Brown ultimately concluded that everyday people created the jig style within the nexus of transatlantic movements rather than any one fixed place or time.

Panel 7 provided room for further analysis of the connections between colonialism and cartography. LYDIA TOWNS (Arlington) combined the subfields of privateering and piracy exemplified by the personality of Sir Francis Drake. Analyzing the role of secrecy and rumors she concluded that much

of Drake's work was cartographic propaganda. BRIANNA DEWITT (Cape Girardeau) deconstructed Spanish Colonial categories of thought and confronted them with indigenous memories of space through an analysis of indigenous contributions to European map-making in sixteenth century America.

The final panel focused on Cuba and Latin America during the Revolutionary Era. PRISCILLA FERRER (São Paulo) analyzed the revolutionary efforts of Joaquín Infante, who escaped Cuba in 1810 after participating in a revolutionary conspiracy. While in hiding in Venezuela, he drafted a Cuban constitution that sought to create a state in opposition to absolutist monarchism. FERNANDA BRETONES LANE (Nashville) explored the connections between Cuba and Jamaica in the Age of Revolutions. Specifically, Bretones Lane focused on the experiences of Irish-born abolitionist Richard Robert Madden and how his time in Jamaica influenced his views, and, subsequent actions concerning slavery and emancipation. RICK ALLEN (Cape Girardeau) argued that the tumult in Latin America in the last three quarters of the nineteenth century could be attributed, in part, to the shortsightedness of U.S. and British foreign policy in 1826. In that year, representatives from all over the region held the Panama Congress to unite against Spanish rule. Anglophone leaders declined to send representatives, let alone assume a position of leadership, a position that Allen argues would have been beneficial to the region.

The main outcome of Saturday's closing roundtable discussion, in accord with Gabaccia's earlier challenge, was an open proposal to write an alternative genealogy for transatlantic history, without further institutionalizing the subfield as a rigid formula for analyzing the past. Practicing transatlantic history remains as challenging as it is fruitful for new insights. While some form of physical framework is needed for the exchange of ideas, institutionalization usually goes along with the construction of boundaries, which transatlantic and transnational history attempt to scrutinize and overcome in the first place. Linked to this challenge is the difficulty of tracing people versus tracing ideas. Overall, the three conference days provided the

ground for rich scholarly debate and possible avenues for further development.

Conference Overview:

opening Roundtable

Panelists: Thomas Adam (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA), Robert Caldwell (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA), Isabelle Rispler (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA/ Université Paris Diderot, France), and Kenyon Zimmer, PhD (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA) „Constructing Transatlantic Spaces“

Keynote Address

Donna Gabaccia (The University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada) „From Immigration History to Mobility Studies“

Panel 1 and 2: Staging National Identity in the Atlantic World

Commentators: Christopher Conway (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA) and Pawel Goral, The University of Texas at Arlington, USA

Joel D. Kitchens (Texas A&M University, USA): „Building Missions, Building Memories: San Antonio's Old Spanish Missions as Lieux de Mémoire“

María Elena Bedoya (University of Barcelona, Spain): „Gold Vestiges and Exposed Nation: The Construction of the Discourse about the Past in the Andean Region at the End of the XIX Century“

Elisabeth Marie Piller (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway): „To Aid the Fatherland – German-American Relief Work and Transatlantic Politics in the Era of the Great War, 1914-1924“

Panel 3: Political Constructions of New World Identities

Commentator: John Garrigus, The University of Texas at Arlington, USA

Julian zur Lage (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany): „Scholarly Practices of Transatlantic Historiography: Histories of the Americas in the Late Enlightenment“

Isabelle Rispler (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA/ Université Paris Diderot,

France): „Conceptualizing a German South Atlantic: German-speaking Diasporic Projects in Argentina and Namibia, 1820s-1920s“

Panel 4: The American Civil War in Transnational Perspective

Commentator: Michael Landis (Tarleton State University, USA)

Patrick Gaul (Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main, Germany): „Hamburg, Bremen, and the American Civil War, 1861-1865: Transatlantic Seaports as Transmitters of a Global Conflict“

Alain El Youssef (University of São Paulo, Brazil): „The American Civil War and the Crisis of Slavery in the Empire of Brazil: The Case of the Free Womb Law“

Neil Chatelain (University of Houston, USA): „A Series of International Incidents: The Transatlantic Odyssey of the Confederacy's Only Sea-Going Ironclad Warship“

Keynote Address

Steven Pincus (Yale University, USA): „The Stamp Act Crisis in Global Context“

Tour Of Special Collections

Ben Huseman, Cartographic Archivist (The University of Texas Arlington, USA): Cartography Collection

Panel 5: Civil Rights and the Cold War

Commentator: Kenyon Zimmer (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA)

James Jones (Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom): „The British Reaction to the Civil Rights Movement in America, 1955-1968“

Ethan Ilnyun Kim (Ohio State University, USA): „Intellectuals and Intelligence: The CIA, the Congress for Cultural Freedom and American Liberals, 1950-1956“

Panel 6: Shifting Identities in the Colonial Project

Commentator: David Narrett (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA)

Bennett R. Kimbell (Texas Tech University, USA): „From Beaufort to Bexar: The Transatlantic Life and Shifting Identity of Pedro Miñón“

Dan Degges (The University of Texas Arlington, USA): „Fenian Filibusterers: A Plot by Irish Immigrants to Conquer Spanish America“

Russell Patrick Brown (University of Limerick's Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, Ireland): „The Lone Dancer: The Origins of Late Modern Solo Performance Identity in the 18th Century Jig“

Panel 7: Cartography and Exploration

Commentator: Mylynka Kilgore Cardona (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA)

Lydia Towns (The University of Texas Arlington, USA): „Cartographic Secrecy and Drake's Circumnavigation“

Brianna DeWitt (Southeast Missouri State University, USA): „The Land Encounter: Indigenous Mesoamerica and Spain“

Panel 8: Cuba and Latin America in the Age of Revolutions

Commentator: Christina Salinas (The University of Texas at Arlington, USA)

Priscila Ferrer (Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil): „Joaquín Infante y la Conspiración Cubana de 1810“

Fernanda Bretones Lane (Vanderbilt University, USA): „Empire and Liberation in Cuba and Jamaica in the Age of Revolutions“

Rick Allen (Southeast Missouri State University, USA): „The Panama Congress of 1826: Lost Anglophone Opportunities within the Atlantic World“

Closing Roundtable Discussion

Tagungsbericht *16th Annual International Graduate Student Conference on Transatlantic History*. 17.09.2015–19.09.2015, Arlington, in: H-Soz-Kult 03.03.2016.