

### 10th International PhD Student Workshop. Exchange in History

**Veranstalter:** Dr. Bettina Brandt, Universität Bielefeld; Prof. Dr. John Deak, University of Notre Dame

**Datum, Ort:** 06.05.2019–09.05.2019, Bielefeld

**Bericht von:** Luise Fast / Johannes Nagel, Universität Bielefeld; Rachel Ramsey, University of Notre Dame

This year the annual PhD Student Workshop Exchange met at Notre Dame for its 10th anniversary. The workshop offered a unique opportunity for international dialogue. As a bilateral transatlantic program at the doctoral level, it enabled PhD students to enhance their skills and immerse themselves in different academic cultures. A strength of the workshop was that it had no prescribed topic – instead, themes evolved out of the discussion, based on the participants' contributions.

Following an established format, the participants wrote a paper in advance, either focusing on a theoretical or methodological aspect of their dissertation project or presenting a finished dissertation chapter. This way, advanced and early stage doctoral students get in conversation with each other. Each contribution was introduced by an extensive commentary by a colleague from the other institution.

As in previous years, the papers covered a broad range of topics, approaches, regional histories and time periods. Nevertheless, several topics emerged as recurrent focal points of the discussion and allowed for a long-term perspective on historical phenomena: A number of contributions focused on the genesis of individuality, the role of intellectuals in society, and the formation and contestation of collective identities. On a methodological level, various papers touched on issues of conceptual history, transcultural approaches to history, and the application of theory in historical analyses.

One topic that workshop participants repeatedly came back to was the historical genesis of individuality and practices of self-fashioning. In a paper on the construction of individuality in medieval autobiographical texts, LENA GUMPERT (Bielefeld) exam-

ined how 12th century writers Peter Abelard, Gerald of Wales and Guibert of Nugent engaged in self-comparing with biblical figures. Adapting Niklas Luhmann's concept of „inclusion individuality“ to the pre-modern era, Gumpert avoids following modern notions of the autonomous and unique individual. Instead, she investigates how writers create and reinforce relations by positioning themselves within certain frameworks through the use of analogies. Analogizing and comparing, Gumpert argues, are two forms of self-positioning in relation to the divine salvation plan as well as to other figures and social groups in their proximity to God.

Combining the study of theological thought with political historical contextualization, MIHOW MCKENNY (Notre Dame) analyzed the *Book of Contemplation* of 13th century Catalan mystic and missionary Ramon Llull. According to McKenny, Llull's work had both theological and political relevance. Llull's theology was an attempt to reconcile Aristotelian and Platonic Christian philosophy by bridging Augustinian Neoplatonism with Islamic Aristotelianism. The hybridity of his approach made Llull an ideal representative of Christian expansion in the Western Mediterranean as the kingdom of Aragón sought to establish authority over communities of different ethnicities and religions. Focusing on the theologian's education and politics, McKenny placed Llull in his historical context.

SIMON SIEMIANOWSKI's (Bielefeld) paper on generational succession in 15th and 16th century Italian family book writing focused on pre-modern individuality. Arguing against the common perception that individuality only emerged with the modern world, he showed how late medieval practices of recording patrilineal continuities contributed to the constitution of individuality as a „social space“. Italian *libri di famiglia* focused particularly on the relationship between father and son as household leader and heir, and can be read as „snapshots“ into changing practices of self-assertion and self-display of the individual.

Discussions on these papers questioned the exclusively Euro-modern origins of individuality and debated the usefulness of the con-

---

cept as a heuristic device. John Nelson's (Notre Dame) study of Native American individual authority as well as various contributions on the topic of intellectuality (see below) further enriched this thread of the conversation.

Closely related to the topic of individuality were contributions dealing with the historical role of intellectuals in society. The papers by TOMÁS VALLE (Notre Dame) and THERESA HORNISCHER (Bielefeld) touched on the issue in different ways. Valle's contribution focused on „un-orthodox“ Lutheran intellectual culture in early modern Europe, arguing that Lutheran universities were not the closed-minded, stagnant vehicles of confessionalization they often have been portrayed as. Investigating two major groups of 16th and 17th century „un-orthodox“ professors, Valle showed how such thinkers not only survived but also thrived through modifying and reframing existing structures of knowledge, supplying an insight into how the confessional climate of Lutheranism reacted and influenced early modern thought.

In her paper on the French intellectual Léo Wanner, Hornischer examined the intervention strategies female intellectuals employed in the early 20th century in order to intervene in socio-political developments. Following Pierre Bourdieu's and Gisèle Sapiro's concepts of „intellectuality“, Hornischer defines the intellectual as participating in a form of social criticism by utilizing symbolic capital as well as autonomy against political demands. As a woman, Hornischer argues, Wanner was endowed with less symbolic capital than her male contemporaries, and does not fit the typical mold of a universal, critical intellectual. However, through her writings she was able to create moments of intellectual intervention in- and outside of institutional constraints. Like these contributions, Julian Gärtner and Eve Wolynes (see below) also analyzed particular individuals in their historical context, demonstrating that this ideographic approach is still a powerful heuristic in the study of history.

Another emerging topic was the contestation and formation of collective identities. EVE WOLYNES (Notre Dame) discussed the 14th century Venetian merchant and crusade

propagandist Marino Sanudo Torsello, who developed a concept of Christendom based on both religion and commercial exchange. In his letters to prominent political figures and members of the Church, he urged Christian leaders to revitalize the crusades and retake the Holy Land. Sanudo laid out an image of Christendom as a community constituted by economic interdependence as much as faith. His own social position as a merchant, as well as the preoccupation of the diasporic merchant communities of the late Middle Ages, are reflected in Sanudo's construction of a common Christian identity.

DANIELE TORO's (Bielefeld) contribution on transnational fascism in the 1920s sought to highlight the role of brokers in fascist „dark networks“ across Europe. The transnational networking process, Toro argues, reveals the crucial role of personal relationships between actors (rather than just institutions) operating in alternative epistemic systems, in carving out a transnational fascist *weltanschauung*. Fascist brokers often operated within clubs that officially aimed at fostering international and intercultural understanding in the interwar period, practically hegemonizing their activities from the right, and thereby offering an operating and support base for their transnational brokering. Heather Stanfiel's paper on the formation of Irish nationalism and Gladys Vasquez's contribution on concepts of sovereignty in post-independence Latin America (see below) likewise spoke to the historical construction and contestation of collective identities.

Various contributions dealt with *conceptual history* and the relationship between historical and analytical concepts. In her contribution on the 1826 Congress of Panama, GLADYS VASQUEZ (Bielefeld) focused on concepts of Sovereignty and Representation of Space after the Hispano-American Independence. At the Congress, Latin American leaders „presented arguments to reorder their nascent states as well as the relations among them.“ The struggle between different competing political entities – most importantly, between cities and provinces – was reflected by competing concepts of sovereignty. Whereas national sovereignty was invoked to argue for the subjugation of provinces

to centralist rule, the notion of provincial sovereignty was used to defend their autonomy and make the case for a confederal system of government. The ambivalence of sovereignty concepts would remain and shape the political struggles to come. Vasquez' contribution demonstrated that this conceptual history approach can be useful to identify indicators of social conflicts.

JOHN NELSON's (Notre Dame) paper contributed both to the debates on individuality as well as on conceptual history. Focusing on the politics of Anishinaabe leader Sigenauk, Nelson provided a case study of Native American leadership in the Great Lakes borderlands around the time of the U.S. War of Independence. Sigenauk's rise within the society of Anishinaabewaki was interrelated with his activities as negotiator with the American and European powers. His activities showed that the North American „balance of power“ after the 1763 Treaty of Paris provided opportunities for Native peoples such as the Anishinaabeg and individuals like Sigenauk. Pointing to differences between European conceptions of leadership and Native practices, Nelson's case study highlighted difficulties with the intercultural translation of Native concepts for analytical purposes. Other contributions, such as GIULIA NARDINI's (Bielefeld) paper on 17th century Jesuit mission in South India and JULIAN GÄRTNER's (Bielefeld) on Alexis de Tocqueville's Political Anthropology (see below), likewise touched on conceptual history. The discussion illustrated the utility of conceptual history, while also highlighting the necessity and pitfalls in distinguishing actors' language from analytical concepts.

Transcultural approaches have become increasingly important to analyzing and writing history, and various workshop contributions reflected this broader development in the discipline. Since Giulia Nardini was unable to participate, Antje Flüchter read her paper. It discussed 17th century Italian Jesuit missionary Robert Nobili, who translated Catholic theology into the Tamil language when working in South India. Nobili's translation was no one-way process, however – instead, he exemplified Catholic theology by drawing on Tamil mythology and folklore, especially in

his most important book, *Ñana Upadesam* (The Teaching of [Religious] Knowledge). Going beyond simplistic notions of missionary activity, Nardini's contribution showed how cultural translation was often a reciprocal process of exchange.

MELISSA COLES' (Notre Dame) paper on 20th century interfaith and intercultural pilgrimages outlined her research on shared sacred spaces and cultural dialogue. Pilgrimages, Coles argues, are embodied spiritual journeys experienced at particular sites of sacredness, entangling the experiential, the religious, and the spatial dimension. At the center of her investigations are the pilgrimage sites of Chimayó, New Mexico, and Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta – both considered as sacred by various Christian denominations (mainly the Catholic) as well as Native communities, providing insight into Catholic-Indigenous interactions. Other contributions also demonstrated the importance of transnational perspectives: Daniele Toro analyzed the emerging fascist movement as a transnational network, whereas Mihow McKenny (see above) contextualized 13th century theological developments in relation to Aragonese transcultural expansion. These multifarious examples underline the importance of overcoming methodological nationalisms in the analysis of historical phenomena.

Another methodological theme, which had already been discussed controversially by the previous Bielefeld/Notre Dame workshop, was the application of theory to historical research. In his paper on property valuation and pricing in the 18th and 19th centuries, STEPHAN FASOLD (Bielefeld) utilized the toolbox prepared by Bielefeld University's interdisciplinary Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) on practices of comparing. Fasold outlined the role of comparisons in auctions and how they served as a device for valuing real estate for market transactions in Great Britain and Germany. The European „auction boom“ between the 17th and 19th centuries, Fasold argues, created a preliminary stage to a larger property market based on known „comparables“.

HEATHER STANFIEL (Notre Dame) adapted Michael Rothberg's theory of multi-directional memory on competing com-

memorations in mid-19th century Ireland. Stanfiel showed how multiple memorial traditions entered the public space with the rise of Irish nationalism. Rather than leading to an exclusionary conflict, debates over monument sites instead catalyzed a multiplicity of monuments. Following Rothberg's suggestion that memorial traditions never operate in isolation, but rather develop as a discourse of public memory that includes the varied interactions, challenges, and strategies deployed by competing commemorative interests, Stanfiel argues that nationalist memorial impulses overlapped with imperial memorial culture, ushering in a productive dialogue that generated more commemoration. Like Hornischer's adaptation of Bourdieuan concepts, Coles's application of the „history of emotions“, and Nardini's case study in „cultural translation“ (see above), these contributions demonstrated that the outcomes of historical analysis depend not simply on the source material itself, but also on the researchers' theoretical perspectives.

Given the richness of these diverse topics, it may seem surprising how many common themes could arise during the course of the two-day workshop. Just like in 2018, this open format allowed a fruitful discussion to emerge out of the interests of the participants. Beyond debates on scholarship, the workshop contributed to the professional development of its participants by bringing different institutional and national academic cultures together.

#### **Conference overview:**

##### *Session 1*

Chair: MARGARET MESERVE (Notre Dame)

LENA GUMPERT (Bielefeld): *Me, Myself and Jerome: Practices of Self-Comparing in the 12th Century*

MIHOW MCKENNY (Notre Dame): *Empire of Eden: Ramon Llull's Book of Contemplation in God and Its Genesis in the 13th Century Crown of Aragon*

GIULIA NARDINI (Bielefeld): *Ñana Upadesam by Roberto Nobili (S.J., 1577–1656): A Tamil Catechism for Brahmins?*

##### *Session 2*

Chair: ANTJE FLÜCHTER (Bielefeld)

EVE WOLYNES (Notre Dame): *Marino Sanudo Torsello and the Universe: A Trecento Merchant's View of Communities, Connections and the World*

SIMON SIEMIANOWSKI (Bielefeld): *Like Father, Like Son? Generational Succession in 15th/16th Century Italian Family Book Writing*

TOMÁS VALLE (Notre Dame): *Confessional Unorthodoxy in Early Modern Lutheran Intellectual Culture (c.1560–1621)*

STEPHAN FASOLD (Bielefeld): *Auctions as Practices of Property Valuation in Great Britain and German Territories Between 1750 and 1900*

##### *Session 3*

Chair: ALEX MARTIN (Notre Dame)

JULIAN GÄRTNER (Bielefeld): *Practices of Comparing in Non-Fictional and Fictional French Narratives of Travel to and About North America From the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century*

JOHN NELSON (Notre Dame): *Signe's War of Independence: Native Politics, Individual Ambition, and Anishinaabeg Resurgence in a Revolutionary Era*

GLADYS VÁSQUEZ ZEVALLOS (Bielefeld): *The Creation of American Regional Integration and the Origination of the Inter-American System after Independence: The Congress of Panama (1826)*

##### *Session 4*

Chair: BETTINA BRANDT (Bielefeld) / STEPHAN MERL (Bielefeld)

MELISSA COLES (Notre Dame), Chimayó and Lac Ste. Anne: *Interfaith Places of Pilgrimage*

THERESA HORNISCHER (Bielefeld): *„I am Nonsense“: Maneuver and Intervention Strategies of Female Intellectuals – The Case of Léo Wanner*

HEATHER STANFIEL (Notre Dame): *„These Pompous Images“: Nationalism and Commemorative Conflict in the Mid-Nineteenth Century Ireland*

DANIELE TORO (Bielefeld): The Complexity of Transnational Fascism: Empirical Challenges and Theoretical-Methodological Responses

EMILY SMITH (Notre Dame): „How to Have a Baby“: Women and the Sacralization of Maternity in Post-WWII America

Tagungsbericht *10th International PhD Student Workshop. Exchange in History*. 06.05.2019–09.05.2019, Bielefeld, in: H-Soz-Kult 16.09.2019.