

PREAMBLE TOLERATION AND TOLERANCE

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Am Anfang des ersten Satzes der europäischen Überlieferung, im Eingangswort der *Ilias*, taucht das Wort »Zorn« auf, fatal und feierlich wie ein Apell, der keinen Widerspruch duldet.

Peter Sloterdijk

Coincidentia oppositorum, - la coïncidence des contrastes; l'unité de ce qui a été désuni, c'est ainsi que Dieu est défini par Nicolas de Cusa, le philosophe le plus profond du quinzième siècle, qui fut un précurseur de Copernic et du sens moderne de l'individualité, car il enseigna qu'aucune chose ne pouvait être remplacée par une autre et que, bien qu'elle ne puisse être comparée à aucune autre, elle représentait cependant l'univers à la place qu'elle occupait.

Georg Simmel

1.

It certainly is not the task of the historian of ideas to use his own ideas or opinions to interpret and outline the past in terms valid for the current time. Quite the contrary: The historian must determine the leading lines of development of ideas—understood as representations, thoughts or purposes—and sketch their forms and functions over time as simple words of common language or as notions rooted in specific historical or cultural reality. We can observe not only the change of their semantic range within the initial linguistic context in which the idea gained its linguistic form, but also the dynamics of later developments in other languages or cultures. Over time, words become well definable concepts, and in different ways increase the processes of social communication.

It might be worth mentioning here that historical research itself is not the space for the historian's personal opinions or points of view. Rather, but by looking at the past, the study of the enhancement of ideas must develop not only appropriate methodological frameworks that help reduce researcher bias, but also historiographical analysis tools with which he/she can work. Some such instruments are already ready for use, including: André Lalande's *Vocabulaire technique et critique de philosophie* (1902–1903), *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas* (ed. by Philip P. Wiener in 1973–1974), *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (ed. by Maryanne Cline Horowitz in 2005), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online resource since 1995), Otto Brunner's, Werner Conze's, and Reinhart Koselleck's *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (1974–2004), Joachim Ritter's, Karlfried Gründer's, and Gottfried Gabriel's *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (1971–2007), Barbara Cassin's *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* (2004), and the supplemented and enlarged English-version by translation editors: Steven Rendall, Christian Hubert, Jeffrey Mehlman, Nathanael Stein, and Michael Syrotinski: *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon* (2014).

More than thirty years ago, Dominick LaCapra, in his study devoted to the history of ideas, lobbied to update our thinking on this sort of historical inquiry: *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (1983). Researchers, both in America and Europe, are recently wondering: How to examine the past from the point of view of the history of ideas in the 21st century? Recently published American projects have already begun to bear fruit in this regard: Samuel Moyn's and Andrew Sartori's *Global Intellectual History* (2013) and Darrin M. McMahon's and Samuel Moyn's *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (2014) indicate the need to adapt existing methods and tools of the theory of ideas for the new challenges of our times and to explore the inter- or trans- disciplinary nature of the undertaking.

Andreas Mahler and Martin Mulsow compiled an anthology of basic texts on the theory of the history of ideas (*Texte zur Theorie der Ideengeschichte*, 2014). Here we find references to the traditional German school of the history of ideas, which began with Wilhelm Dilthey (*Archive der Literatur*, 1889; *Die Typen der Weltanschauung und ihre Ausbildung in den metaphysischen Systemen*, 1911), Max Weber (*Die Objektivität sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis*, 1904), Ernst Cassirer (*Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, 1906), and Karl Mannheim (*Ideologische und soziologische Interpretation der geistigen Gebilde*, 1926). In this anthology, we also find, of course, Arthur O. Lovejoy's flagship text (*The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*, 1936), and the groundbreaking texts of the late sixties of the last century: Quentin Skinner's ("Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas", 1969), as well as Michel Foucault's (*Archéologie du savoir*, 1969).

The debate launched by Reinhart Koselleck on the history of concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte und Sozialgeschichte*, 1972), and renewed by Hans Blumenberg (*Ausblick auf eine Theorie der Unbegrifflichkeit*, 1979), was closed by Niklas Luhmann (*Gesellschaftliche Struktur und semantische Tradition*, 1980).

Certainly, the way of practicing the history of ideas was for the long time determined by the writings of the Anglo-Saxon scholars of the eighties: Richard Rorty's *The Historiography of Philosophy. Four Genres* (1984), or John G. A. Pocock's *The Concept of a Language and the métier d'historien: Some Considerations on Practice* (1987), as well as the theoretical considerations of Roger Chartier, published in the late eighties and in the nineties (*Lectures et lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Régime, Les Origines culturelles de la Révolution française*, 1987; *L'ordre des livres*, 1992).

For a new turn in the manner of writing about the history of ideas one can look to the so-called School of Cambridge, for example, especially the study Mark Bevir's (*The Logic of the History of Ideas*, 1999), or North American enterprises: by Ian Hacking (*Historical Ontology*, 2002), Christopher Bayly (*The Birth of the Modern World. Global Connections and Comparisons, 1780–1914*, 2004), or Peter Burke (*What is Cultural History?*, 2008). In search of a translinguistic and transnational methodological consensus, at the end of the nineties, the Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte in Göttingen—due to Hans Erich Bödeker—organized an academic debate on widespread forms of the history of ideas (*Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, 2002).

2.

It seems that in examining such topics as “tolerance” we must enroll our research in methodological trends that are currently en vogue. There are several schools of thought that should be taken into consideration: the Anglo-Saxon, German, Italian and French approaches. Choosing a methodological line also requires a statement of research. It is an essential element within research projects within the history of ideas. Words and concepts have dynamic histories that can be primarily traced through close readings of texts (or other documents of the past considered by Jacques Derrida as text and nothing *hors du texte*), which provide a window onto the development and evolution of human thought. Of course, certain thoughts that are well articulated in some cultures may be markedly less so, or even absent, in other cultures.

Today, the word “tolerance”, though often invoked in public forums, refers to multiple concepts in a variety of fields: in engineering (tolerance analysis or coning), in biology, medicine, and physiology (as preceded by such adjectives as desiccation, drug or physiological, immune, frustration, pain or shade), and in

mathematics or statistics (we can draw out tolerance as a measure of multicollinearity or identify a tolerance interval as a type of statistical probability or tolerant sequence in mathematical logic). But if we talk about tolerance as an issue in everyday life, we don't refer to the concepts of tolerance as the amount by which the measurement of a value can vary without problems. Rather, we are thinking about the ability or willingness to accept or "suffer" opinions or behaviours with which we may not agree, or people who are not like us; ideas, people or things that are somehow different, strange, distinct or apart.

The Western world has certainly witnessed intensive and, all too often, turbulent clashes with what could generally be called "otherness". Within Western tradition, there is a long history of discovering otherness, diversity, strangeness, and yet also individuality. But this history is lined with thorns and measured in cycles of wars, pogroms, gallows and stakes. The blood-soaked confrontation of major collective identities has been accompanied by brutal histories of exclusion of minority groups and those bearing particular stigmas. The religious identity of the Western world (*res publica christiana*) is a field that has been especially fertile for such confrontations; reinforced institutionally and linguistically in the Middle Ages.

However we could also enumerate many cases of tolerance in the face of the havoc brought about by religious wars, such as conciliatory pursuits and theoretical models that developed and gained popularity after 1648. The English (and also the Germans) were the leaders in this field, pointing to certain subtle but important differences between the notions of "toleration" (*Duldung*) and "tolerance" (*Toleranz*). It is interesting to note however, that the French generally don't make this linguistic difference and use only the notion of "tolerance" for both attitudes. Thanks to the theoreticians of the Enlightenment, *Lumières*, and *Aufklärung*, "tolerance" became something more than just a slogan; it became a foundation for the Enlightenment.

With time, tolerance grew into a central and largely unquestioned "value" in the culture of the Western world. However, the problem of "otherness" returned with the national and territorial rapaciousness in the 18th century and with the period's racial and cultural violence. As postulated by Locke, Spinoza, Bayle, and Voltaire, in this period the culture of tolerance would therefore be at times cherished, at times contested, and at times rejected.

Neither the word "toleration" nor "tolerance" is a discovery of early Modern Times or of vernacular languages. Both concepts are derived from Latin, where the attitudes encapsulated in the notions of toleration and tolerance were embodied in the word *tolerantia*. That's the word used by John Locke in 1689, as he wrote his *Epistola de Tolerantia*, which was translated by William Popple the same year as *A Letter Concerning Toleration*.

It is important to highlight that while the Enlightenment played a fundamentally important roll in promoting the notion of tolerance, this idea began to gain

momentum even earlier. Already in the early 15th century, at the end of the Middle Ages, the Polish scholar and Rector of the Krakow Academy, Paweł Włodkowic (Paulus Vladimiri) proposed an early version of tolerance in his *Tractatus de potestate papae et imperatoris respectu infidelium*. This notion of tolerance would become a “value” not only for the Enlightenment, but also for what we proudly refer to as “the culture of the Western world”.

Of course, Paulus Vladimiri was not the first to use the Latin word *tolerantia*. Numerous examples of earlier uses of the word are to be found within classical Latin texts. The concordance in Gaffiot’s *Latin-French Dictionary* (1934) contains references to the classical authors: Cicero, Quintilian, Seneca. The word directly related to the verb *tolerare*, means on the one hand to carry, to bear, to endure, to resist (e.g. something harmful, such as cold or hunger) and on the other hand an indulgence (within certain limits) with respect to behavior, wrongdoing, or attitudes. We can find references to *tolerantia* in the principal texts of the Fathers of the Church, as well as in the translation of the Bible by St. Jerome. We can follow the development of the word, which was already important in the Middle Ages, and became increasingly significant as a concept in the early Modern Times.

The importance of Paulus Vladimiri’s writings lies not in his particular theory of *tolerantia*, or in a clearly defined concept of modernity. He is important within our historical understanding of the concept because of his early use of the word *tolerantia* within one of the first proposals of legal regulations calling not only for forbearance in the face of “otherness”, but also for “respect” towards that which is other. Vladimiri not only expects this tolerance to be shown by the authorities of the Church, but also by those secular authorities present at the Council of Constance (1414–1418), which occurred just after the union between Christian Poland and pagan Lithuania, and Lithuania’s subsequent peaceful conversion to Christianity. The Polish formula to persuade Lithuania to convert to Christianity, which was founded on respect and not on violence, differed radically from the practices cultivated by the Teutonic Order in East Prussia. This had become a bone of contention between the Polish Crown and the Order of Holy Mary. Vladimiri, who had been a student of the great masters of Prague and Padua and influenced by the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham, was well versed in canon law and Scripture. He managed to present the conflict not so much as one between Poland, Lithuania and the Teutonic Knights, but as a deliberation concerning Church and secular authority regarding Infidels and the broader issue of “otherness”.

This line of reasoning is presented in four of the main texts that arose during the Council of Constance: *Saevientibus*, or *Tractatus de potestate papae et imperatoris respectu infidelium* (1415), *Ad aperendam* (1416), *Iste Tractatus* (1417), *Quoniam error* (1417).

Vladimiri’s legal suggestions are perhaps one of the most important breakthroughs in the history of the Church, confronted soon after with massive emerg-

ing currents of Reformation.¹ Since most of the widely recognized tools of encyclopaedic reference of the history of ideas fail to mention the importance of Vladimiri's proposals or even cites his texts (even within his native Poland), let us provide you with two important excerpts that are closely related to the issue of tolerance. The first is from *Saevientibus* and the second from *Ad aperendiam*:

The Facts

At one time, when the Pruthenians, then infidels, and others, were raging against the Poles who were Christian, princes of Poland admitted to Poland, to help, the Crucifers who are called Brothers of Saint Mary of the Jerusalem Hospital of the House of the Teutons, and certain possessions were assigned and given to them by princes of Poland near the boundaries of the said infidels. From these possessions, in the times which followed, they, with the help of Poles and of other Christians, subjugated the cruel race of Pruthenians, then infidels, and assumed dominion, and are therefore called lords from Prussia; and there were built, now regular and very well secured cities, now very strong castles, and their whole dominion has been so strengthened by most powerful fortifications that it became unconquerable by a more than tenfold force.²

Toleration towards peaceful infidels in the country

As to the first question it must be said that when infidels want to live peacefully among Christians, they should not be molested in persons and property [...]. Hence it is that they can benefit from prescription against Christians [...]. Hence a ruler sins if he despoils them without cause, and not even the Pope should take away from them their goods, nay, he should tolerate them as long as he can [...]. And the reason of the aforesaid is that by dealing with them we could make them of use to the Lord [...]. And in particular the Jews should be tolerated because we prove our truth and faith by their books; for since they do not want to believe our books, let them believe those, as St. Augustine says on Psalm 40. St. Jerome points out another reason: because the law has it that

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- ¹ Cf. e.g.: *Toleranz als Ordnungsprinzip? Die moderne Bürgergesellschaft zwischen Offenheit und Selbstaufgabe* (fundamenta iuris 6), ed. by Ch. Enders / M. Kahlo, Paderborn: mentis 2007; *Diversität und Toleranz. Toleranz als Ordnungsprinzip?* (fundamenta iuris 9), ed. by *id.*, Paderborn: mentis 2010.
- ² Cf. P. Vladimiri: *Saevientibus* (1415). In: *Pisma wybrane Pawła Włodkowica / Works of Paul Vladimiri (a Selection)*, ed. and trans. by L. Ehrlich, Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax 1968, t. 1, p. 2f.: "THEMA: Saevientibus olim Prutenis tunc infidelibus et alijs contra Polonos Christianos admittuntur in Polonia per principes Polonie Cruciferi in subsidium qui fratres Sancte Marie Hospitalis Ierosolimitani de domo Theutonicorum appellantur et eis per principes Polonie constituuntur et donantur certe possessiones versus limites dictorum infidelium. de quibus possessionibus cum adiutorio Polonorum et aliorum Christianorum successivis temporibus gentem crudelem Prutenorum tunc infidelium sibi subiugarunt et dominium occuparunt. et domini de Prussia ideo appellantur. ibique iam edificantur civitates solempnes et munitissime iam castra fortissima totumque eorum dominium fortissimis municionibus sic firmatur quod plus quam decuple potencie redditur inexpugnabile."

in the end of time the remnants of Israel will be enlightened and will be saved, and this could not happen if it were permitted to expel them from the whole world. And to says Jerome in his Homily Innocentum. And this is true where Christians are not threatened by danger or scandal [...]. Because for these latter reasons they can be expelled and deprived of goods. For since they are tolerated by the Church through piety and out of grace [...], if they abuse it they deserve to lose the privilege, as being ungrateful. There is the example of the slave and her son. For when she was ungrateful and troubled her mistress, by whom the Church is represented, it was said against her: 'Throw out the slave and her son' [...]. For through the death of Christ they have been made slaves [...]. And the Archdeacon says that for this reason the ruler who is their lord can sell them [...] and also take away their goods [...]. All the more can he expel them [...]. And these things are true, as I have said, where they would not live quietly or where scandal would threaten; otherwise the Pope must not order, or recommend this to princes [...]. For it is not his 'to judge them that are without'. And Oldradus relies on this in his question.³

Besides, since infidels are not to be compelled to the Faith but are to be tolerated and are to be induced by salutatory exhortations [...], what toleration would this be and what wholesome exhortation to the Faith, if it took away from them dominions and honours? Surely this would be hard compulsion, which is prohibited, for without these temporalities man's life can not last long [...]. Therefore, it must not be permitted in a different way [...].⁴

³ Cf. *id.*: *Ad aperiendam* (1416), *pars II*, *cf.*: *ibid.*, t. 2 (1969), p. 9f: "AD PRIMAM QUESTIONEM est discendum quod postquam infideles inter Christianos volunt vivere pacifice nulla molestia in personis et rebus est eis inferenda [...]. Hinc est quod contra Christianos prescribunt [...]. Peccat ergo dominus si sine causa eos spoliat ymmo nec papa debet eis bona auferre, quin ymmo debet eos quam diu potest eos (!) tollerare [...]. Et est ratio predictorum ut per eorum commercium eos lucri Domino facere possemus [...]. Et Iudei maxime tollerandi sunt quia per eorum codices veritatem et fidem nostram probamus. Postquam enim nostris codicibus nolunt credere credant illis ut dicit beatus Augustinus (psalmo XL). Beatus Jeronimus assignat aliam rationem quia in lege habetur quod in fine seculi illuminabuntur reliquie Israel et reliquie Israel salve erunt et hoc fieri non posset si licitum esset eos expellere de toto orbe terrarum. Et ita Jeronimus in Omelia Innocentum dicit. Et hec vera sunt ubi Christianis non iminet periculum vel scandalum [...]. Ex causis enim predictis expelli possunt et privari bonis. Quia postquam pietate et ex gracia ab Ecclesia tollerantur (ut dicit textus in dicto capitulo Etsi Iudeos) si ea abutuntur privilegium merentur amittere tamquam ingrati ut ibi exemplo ancille et filij eius. Cum enim esset ingrata et molesta domine sue per quam Ecclesia figuratur dictum fuit contra eam: 'Eice ancillam et filium eius [...]'. Nam per mortem Christi effecti sunt servi [...]. Et propter hoc dicit Archidiaconus quod princeps qui eorum dominus est potest eos vendere [...] et eciam auferre bona [...], multo magis forcius eos expellere [...]. Et hec vera ut dixi ubi non viverent quiete vel imineret scandalum; alias non debet papa precipere vel persuadere principibus hoc [...]. Et nichil ad eum de hijs qui foris sunt [...]. Et in hoc residet Aldradus [...]."

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 79: "Preterea ex quo infideles non sunt ad fidem cogendi sed tolerandi et sanctis exhortationibus inducendi [...] que tolerancia esset et que salubris exhortacio ad fidem si auferret eis bona dominia et honores. Certe ista esset dura coaccio que est prohibita, cum sine istis temporalibus non potest diu vita hominis durare [...]. Ideo non debet per aliam viam admitti [...]."

The texts quoted above are not only valuable from the point of view of the development of tolerance itself, but they were also decisive for the future of the Church in Poland, how the Holy See looks at the Polish Crown, and the subsequent pragmatic treatment of different religious practices on Polish soil in 16th century.

We ought to consider Vladimiri's proposal as a turning point in the history of Europe; as a fundamental change in thinking about, and treatment of, the rights of individuals, tribes, nations, and state that do not share the cultural values or beliefs of *res publica christiana*. It is therefore the first attempt to regulate international relations in Europe, and also a seminal step towards the notion of (universal) human rights.

With time, Vladimiri's proposition became the policy of the Polish Crown. Tolerance as a political doctrine was seen in Poland, particularly in the 16th century, curing the country's so-called "Golden Age" of economic and military prosperity. It is important for our understanding of the European university to note that the aforementioned texts were written while Vladimiri was the former rector of the Krakow Academy, which coincided with the decision, at the end of 14th century, of King Jagiełło and Queen Jadwiga to renew the impoverished academia. The model of this new academy was of course to follow the famous Faculty of Law at the University of Padua. Vladimiri also certainly contributed to the increased profile of the renewed academy in the international arena, particularly those of Eastern Europe that followed the Padua model, in contrast with the universities in Prague and Vienna that followed the model of Paris.

3.

It was only the totalitarian experiences of the 20th century that brought about the rediscovery of the significance of tolerance on a larger scale. Its increased role on the global scale was clearly expressed in 1995 with the United Nations' *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance*. The culture of tolerance introduced global standards of civil and political attitudes, and at the same time built new social models organised around the idea of understanding and respecting "otherness".

Faced with increasing social, economic, and financial tensions, the International Day for Tolerance established by the United Nations is becoming—as never before—a challenge for the entire globalised world. The challenge is more significant as further values within the culture of the Western world are also at stake. These values, which remain at odds, are put to the test in an economic and political race against other cultural models, which do not share such values and that find the very notion of tolerance alien.

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In appreciation of the on-going importance of discussing the history of “tolerance” in the Western world, the History of Ideas Research Centre at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow had the pleasure, in October 2012, to host scholars from different disciplines at Villa Decius, as part of the conference entitled: *Toleration and Tolerance. Models, Metamorphoses, Implications*. A wider spectrum of problems was discussed in an interdisciplinary manner: from case studies set within particular conceptual frameworks, to the definitions of new adaptive solutions in the face of challenges of global economy and politics. We now have the pleasure of presenting you with a handful of the presentations from that conference, plus a few additional pieces that were written especially for this issue of *Orbis Idearum*. We believe this collection to be especially important for the study of the history of this important concept, a concept that lies at the core of Western culture.

We are deeply convinced that it is worth critically examining the history of the ideas, words and concepts surrounding the notion of tolerance, especially in our current time of rising intolerance not only in the Middle East, but also in other parts of the globe. At the same time there remains the age-old question of the limits of tolerance, what used to be called a denial of tolerance, or briefly “intolerance”. How far we have succeeded, you can judge for yourself.

on United Nations’ International Day for Tolerance,
November 16th, 2014