

A collection of essays based on the papers delivered at the final conference of the Miur-Interlink 2006-2008 research project "EUO-European Culture and the Understanding of Otherness: Historiography, Politics and the Sciences of Man in the Birth of the Modern World (Sixteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)", directed by Guido Abbattista

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Encountering
Otherness.
Diversities
and Transcultural
Experiences in Early
Modern European
Culture

edited by
Guido Abbattista

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Introduction

GUIDO ABBATTISTA

This volume brings together a large choice of essays in representation of some of the most significant research lines developed by the international project “EUO-European Culture and the Understanding of Otherness: Historiography, Politics and the Sciences of Man in the Birth of the Modern World (Sixteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)”. Funded by the Italian Ministry of Education University and Research in the context of the Interlink program for 2006-2008, the project linked five Italian universities (Firenze, Pisa, Piemonte Orientale, Napoli “L’Orientale” and Trieste) and six European institutions (Central European University, Budapest, University of Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint Denis, University of Zaragoza, University of Saarland at Saarbrücken, London School of Economics and Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan) over a three years period, providing both organizing and financial support as acknowledged below. The project was directed by the author of the present lines and had its coordinating and administrative seat at the University of Trieste, Department of History and Art History. These essays were first delivered as papers at the final project conference, held in Trieste in October 2008. Discussions during the three-days conference and subsequent re-elaboration over the next year and a half have produced the results which we offer to specialists and fellow researchers in the disciplines of cultural history, social history of ideas and intellectual history. We think nevertheless that the interest of these contributions lies not only in what they offer to academic

scholars for the novelty of the research topics and the originality in method and conceptualization, but also in their capacity to suggest perspectives and disclose the complexity of a research field to younger scholars and students. Although they form part of wider individual researches, dealing with themes which each author has been elaborating for some time, and pursuing objectives well beyond the limits of this volume, all of these essays are published here for the first time.

It would not be entirely correct to talk of a set of shared principles consciously posited at the outset of this project, as if we had actually moved from clearly formulated common assumptions in accurately planned directions. Such may be the modality of a research project in the natural sciences, involving collaborative procedures, a succession of strictly pre-ordained steps and a division of the experimental tasks leading to common general conclusions. Research methodologies in the human sciences are inevitably less strictly defined and expressed by protocols; above all, they are less conducive to step-by-step or final 'deliverables' (I am afraid that such a label risks overrating the practical applicability of this volume). Nonetheless, while respecting the autonomy of inspiration of each partner, some methodological considerations emerged during the course of our project and were refined during our discussions: I would like to recall them very briefly from my personal viewpoint.

The first consideration concerns the concept of 'diversity', of which our researches tried to explore several expressions and implications. We assumed that 'diversity' denotes a perpetual problematic dimension of human collective existence. In any human agglomerate the intellectual apprehension of diversities, or of the self and the 'other', is the necessary cultural passage for producing an orderly coexistence at the level of a single society or of groups of societies or nations, where the centrifugal forces and the defense of the particular and the specific tend continually to resurface and check the potential for integration. It has been clearly said by ethnologists and anthropologists that such realities we describe as 'ethnic groups', 'tribes', 'peoples', 'nations', but also 'class', 'orders', 'ranks', 'estates' or just "the circle of the 'we'" and the 'others', are all based on forms of identity which are not laid down in nature once and forever. They are not 'natural', 'objective' facts which the scientist's eye 'discovers', 'describes' and catalogues in an archive. There is no such thing as an 'archive' of diversities and differences, because it is precisely part of the latter's nature to be modified by historical circumstances and contexts and by human (not necessarily rational or willing) agency. Such identities and such ethnic groups, tribes, peoples, nations, 'we' and 'they', and so on, are cultural artifacts, crafted through complex processes depending on all those factors which affect and mould perception. The way in which 'identity' and 'diversity' are perceived and conceptualized in historical societies is a dramatic and highly unstable intellectual and political enterprise. It belongs to those founding acts and performatory discourses recognizable in any social construct at different moments of their historical life. The work of historians and social scientists consists in identifying, interpreting

and explaining these founding acts and discourses, their genesis and the way they circulate through languages, discursive acts, symbols, signs and rites. If then 'diversity' and 'identity' are inherently dependent upon 'perception' and upon the tools perception makes use of in giving expression to its findings, then what has to be taken into consideration are precisely the historical processes, the forms and the multiple factors which combine in generating and affecting perception (and description and expression) of 'diversity' or 'identity' and how such perception is related to other socio-cultural factors of an intellectual or practical nature, first of all 'power' and those activities which derive from the possession of power, that is to say, the exercise of authority, the agency of government, the control of access to material resources. The character and the content of such perceptions and conceptualizations of 'diversity', their complexity or restrictive outlook, are of crucial importance for understanding if and to what extent a given society is affected by the so-called "cultural poverty", with its unfailing consequences, namely, a militant sense of identity and a corresponding, strongly exclusive idea of 'otherness'.

Following on from the perception of the multiple forms of historical and cultural diversities, our second consideration concerns the problem of handling diversities in a variety of contexts involving single individual biographies and the life of communities and groups. Confronting human diversities concerns not just anthropological or ethnological diversities, but also political, cultural, religious, economic, social, institutional and juridical differences. These are the deep, sometimes radical differences which oppose groups, peoples or nations when encountering each other, together perhaps with lesser differences which persist within the same social or political and institutional structures. This is not just an epistemological problem for ethno-anthropologists. It is also, and perhaps quintessentially, a practical, political problem for agents involved in devising the way of securing an orderly coexistence for human societies. Dealing with diversities occurs not only in overseas experiences when travelers, explorers, colonizers, conquerors, missionaries, scientists, merchants, officials, ethnologists and anthropologists are involved in 'encounters' with alien and exotic peoples which they want to visit, submit, study, convert, rule, trade with or understand. Differences are also continually faced within fully developed modern Western European states and societies by politicians, rulers, administrators, reformers, diplomats, traders, priests, teachers, whose task should be to find out a common language and a shared systems of ideas and symbols for communicating with and harmonizing human differences of interests, outlooks, stands, beliefs, opinions, wills, languages, customs: all together these latter define historical contexts in which they represent complex legacies and directly condition human agency. All human societies at any stage of their historical existence have to face the challenge of coping with difference. At the level of political institutions, of social intercourse, of cultural and intellectual life, what is needed is a way of turning 'difference' from

a cause of disintegration into a resource for integration; and consequently to make of it a condition for survival and continuity, not of permanent conflict and trauma leading to collapse. The possible reaction to this challenge can be seen as located between the two opposite extremes of what might be called the 'identity spectrum': at one end we find assimilation, when the perception of difference is intellectually elaborated in such a way as to result in complete identification; at the opposite end, we find the perception of an irreducible reality confined in the field of 'otherness' or what is also called an 'othering' process; and otherness, for its own part, can either be admitted and tolerated in forms of co-existence or refused altogether when deemed irreconcilable and just deserving submission, discrimination or utter extinction. The choice of the first, second or third strategy – assimilation, toleration or partial or total suppression – depends on how great the rate of difference is perceived to be and on the cultural and political cost of bridging the gap between competing identities.

These reflections have led to the third consideration, on the basis of which we decided to foster variety in methods, explore multiplicity, and leave thematic freedom rather than favoring one exclusive approach, such as anthropological rather than political, and religious rather than historiographical or sociological, in any particular historical epoch. This decision seemed to us the most compatible with the long chronological span we intended to cover, from the early modern age to well into the nineteenth century. The three and a half centuries of the early modern age clearly presented themselves as one of the historical periods when the process of discovery and encounters with diversities and of societal development had greatly increased Europe's opportunities to confront itself with realities outside its traditional experience, both in a material and in an intellectual sense. Still, it proved possible to divide up the general issues into some very general areas, and this division has given the volume its final tripartite structure. In the first section we grouped analysis concerning the early phase of modern European confrontation with 'otherness', in the so-called age of discovery and encounters. Anthropology, ethnology and religion represent the main aspects and standpoints which suggested the inclusion of the essays by Rubiés, Felici and by myself, illustrating how European secular and religious cultures faced those kinds of 'otherness' and elaborated intellectual frameworks, practices and conceptual strategies for making them recognizable and acceptable. The second section focuses mainly on the eighteenth century and faces the problem of what has been called 'governmentality'. This Foucaultian category – originally framed in an analysis devoted specifically to eighteenth-century political and administrative culture in Europe – may be conveniently recalled when dealing with problems both of domestic (identity, administrative and economic) policy and of colonial and imperial policy, that is to say of relationships with subject non-European peoples in America, Africa and Asia. We sensed that in both areas, that is to say both in European countries and in overseas imperial or colonial contexts, the working out of governing and

reforming schemes, models and instruments for the exercise of power, authority and dominance, was characterized by the prior imperative to describe, interpret and handle diversity, or 'otherness', and accordingly to contrive a rationality and a series of practical and realistic solutions, exploring all possibilities, from assimilation/imitation (of models, paradigms, languages, cultures) to rejection/subjugation. The intellectual debate on European and non-European economies is a particularly interesting case in point. Such a debate, as the essays by Astigarraga, Usoz-Zabalza and Millar show, involved the diagnosis – sometimes highly problematic, as in the case of Qing China – of given economic realities in the light of theoretically alternative or reforming models, and the exploration of the conditions under which the latter might have led to desirable outcomes. The other essays in the section (by Cohen, Lüsebrink, Thomson, Platania and Guasti) mainly move in or relate to colonial contexts and explore different ways of European representation of and relationship to 'otherness' in view of the building of Western domination, intellectual apprehension, religious hegemony or intercultural coexistence. Kontler analyzes the construction of historical images of primordial peoples in the context of elaborated philosophical-historical views of contemporary identity, showing with particular emphasis the nature of the 'othering' process at the foundation of modernity. Török investigates the role of the sciences of government and administration as technical and statistical tools for handling differences by means of mapping, surveying and reducing them to comprehensible quantified entities.

Finally the third section comprises essays on the nineteenth century, mostly regarding the relationship of its intellectual history with one of the most important historical factors in that century, namely nationalism and the nation-building. These essays tackle, first, the conceptual basis of nation-building in some paradigmatic, differently 'peripheral' cases (Hungary, Mexico, respectively dealt with by Trencsényi and Wehrheim), and the way in which visions of ethnic origins and of the history of the civilization process accompanied the emergence of new ideas of nation; secondly (Hary) how domestic and international politics directly affected scientific paradigms and discourses regarding the description of historical and political realities within an imperial framework and involved in the latter's political evolution in a highly conflictual international context; and lastly, Gaddo examines how an intellectual, artistic profile belonging to an imperialist and nationalist country like England in the Victorian age was led to elaborate by different means the perception of 'otherness' or, vice versa, how the experience of 'otherness' affected the construction of an intellectual biography and sensibility.

Each single theme is original and derives from the individual research line of each contributor, mirroring his/her understanding and way of coping with the problem of 'otherness'. If I am allowed a final reflection on the basis of our cooperative research experience, I would say that our notion of 'Europe' and of 'European culture' in the early modern age is strictly related to and influenced by this approach. It is impossible to define a 'European identity' in the early modern

age without a perception of its mobile boundaries, and such boundaries are not physical or geographical, but cultural and intellectual; not settled and definite, but evolving and continuously modified by cultural experiences and intellectual processes revolving around the notion of 'otherness'. This outlook, among other consequences, has had that of positing a close relationship between the experience of otherness and the weakening, rather than the reinforcing of identities of any kind; and therefore to suggest a strict link between the perception of 'otherness' and the development of skeptical cultural attitudes. Some recent publications of a different nature and origins, but devoted to the same set of problems – *Facing Each Other. The World's Perception of Europe and Europe's Perception of the World*, edited by Anthony Pagden (Ashgate Variorum, 2000, 2 vols.), *Europe and the Other and Europe As the Other*, edited by Bo Strath (Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang, 2000) and *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, edited by Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007) – have reinforced our ideas and helped in better defining our attitudes.

On the whole, we are certainly more convinced by the heuristic value of a bit-by-bit approach than by the pursuit of an implausible completeness, by multiple than by single-dimensioned analysis, by multiplicity of methods and standpoints than by an accurately balanced and homogeneous structure, by experiments more than by incautious theorizing. Our ambition is to offer a richer and more problematic point of view on the possible, often unexpected directions taken by the unending challenge of facing 'otherness' which modern European culture had to manage in an age of discoveries of and encounters with not only outside, faraway, alien, but also proximate, next-door and apparently more familiar realities or even with forms of historical difference rooted in and rescued from the past but still contributing to identity through memory and tradition.

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If I am permitted to conclude with a dedication, even if unusual in a collective research volume of this kind, I would like to inscribe this work to our colleagues junior researchers from several countries, who joined the project and gave it the support of their intelligence, energy and brightness, with my best wishes that they may deservedly find the right opportunities to continue their respective academic careers under the only auspices of their scientific merits.

Trieste, September 2010

I. Perspectives on human, religious and political 'otherness' in the early modern age

Trophying human ‘otherness’. From Christopher Columbus to contemporary ethno-ecology (fifteenth-twenty first centuries)

GUIDO ABBATTISTA

I.

In the history of the European perception of human otherness there is a phenomenon, or perhaps it would be more appropriate to speak of a multifaceted category of phenomena, which can go under the description of ‘live human exhibitions’, ‘ethno-exhibitions’, ‘ethnic shows’ or simply ‘human zoos’. Over the last ten years this category has attracted a considerable quantity of research, albeit more from the standpoint of social history and of the history of collective representations or *mentalités* than from that of intellectual history, exploring its manifold manifestations, forms, meanings and persistence into the present day. The aim of this essay is to delineate a wider historical and scientific context within which to place – and hence also to redefine – this reality. While none of these descriptions adequately synthesizes all their features, these phenomena undoubtedly share one basic characteristic: they have represented in European societies and culture a particularly widespread form of viewing, dealing with and ‘spectacularizing’ the human ‘Other’. Specialized literature tends to consider them as a typical product of the age of mature colonialism and imperialism, starting from the central decades of the nineteenth century and persisting up to the eve of World

War II. Mainstream interpretation maintains that these phenomena played a fundamental role in the shift from 'scientific' to 'popular' racism – to use two highly controversial notions – reinforcing those racial stereotypes which contributed to the construction of national and racial identities in many European countries. I would argue that, even if this approach to nineteenth- and twentieth-century 'live ethno-exhibitions' does admit the existence of much older precedents, they can only be fully appreciated if they are viewed over a considerably longer period of time and against the background of a more varied series of historical phenomena. In other words, I advocate a deeper, retrograde historical enquiry. The lack of an adequate historical perspective surely makes it harder to understand the deepest motives and their relationship with a whole set of precursors – attitudes, impulses, performances, undertakings – which provided them with a behavioral pattern, a common language and a symbolic framework. Moreover, this approach can also reveal its utility in elucidating other phenomena that have taken place over the last few years, removing them from the realm of newspaper reporting and connecting them to a much more significant and compound narrative.

By 'live ethno-exhibitions' I mean the practice of capturing or alluring human beings – individuals, but more usually small contingents or families – belonging to non European ethnic groups (typically but not exclusively aboriginals of Africa, the Americas or Australasia), transporting them to Europe and exhibiting them in public spectacles designed to parade human diversity, often accompanied by objects, practices and occasionally recreated 'natural' environments. These were in fact anthropological and ethnographic shows contrived to reproduce the thrill of the encounter with human otherness for Europeans who could not otherwise experience the natural world overseas. Their actual effect was to depersonalize the protagonists, reducing them, on the one hand, to mere components of the natural world, 'types' or 'specimens' of its infinite variety; and on the other, to ingredients, raw materials, merchandise of the transnational show business. In this form live ethno-exhibitions reached the peak of their commercial success and organizational refinement in the second half of the nineteenth century, when they were no doubt the product of interaction between capitalism, the rise of leisure and mass entertainment and the ideologies of imperial colonialism and racism. While such a description is entirely acceptable, it is surely not inappropriate to gain a better understanding of some of the possible historical backgrounds for these phenomena. Rather than seeking, as historians generally do, to identify the specificity of individual facts in particular historical moments, I shall try to highlight fundamental, structural recurrences in the long term. This will involve taking three specific approaches: first I go back to the beginning of European expansion overseas

¹ The standard reference book is the international collection of essays *Human Zoos: From the Hottentot Venus to Reality Shows*, eds. Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, Gilles Boetsch, Eric Deroo, Sandrine Lemaire, Charles Forsdick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009, 1st French edition, Paris: La Découverte, 2002).

and related anthropological and cultural encounters; then I go further back to ancient Rome; and thirdly I come up to the present, drawing on news reporting to lay bare the nature of some contemporary cases and the language of scandal and protest which they provoked.

II.

From the first Portuguese expeditions to the coast of Guinea, Spanish voyages to the Canary Islands and above all Columbus's first ventures overseas, European encounters with human beings in the New World were regularly accompanied by acts of seizure in which the European newcomers sought to lay hands on, get physical possession of, capture and abduct members of the African and American peoples. This description may be considered as just a euphemism for the time-honored practice best known as enslavement. And certainly from the mid-fifteenth century onwards the prime motive for bringing home foreigners, 'Moorish captives' from Africa and later natives of America, was to exploit forced labor of male and female slaves². However, undue focus on this aspect leads one to lose sight of other motives for the 'abduction practices' – an expression which can usefully distinguish a whole category of actions from 'enslavement' proper. With regard to slavery, it should be remembered in the first place that the Spanish carried out actual mass enslavement of native populations on American territory, while importing Indian slaves into Europe remained a relatively small-scale phenomenon; and secondly that, while this importation of slaves was an immediate sequel to discovery and settlement, the Spanish monarchy sought to check the *conquistadores'* power by limiting this practice and in general Amerindian slavery, especially after the *Nuevas leyes* (1542) entitled American natives with the same rights as Spanish subjects. Even before 1542 the *conquistadores* were instructed not to disturb pacific, especially female natives, and a distinction was soon introduced between *indios* who were to be considered Spanish subjects, and thus could not be taken into slavery, and enemy *indios* who refused 'commerce', religion and civilization and were to be killed or taken captives in just wars. Different provisions were made in royal instructions for one category of *indios*: natives could be abducted for use as interpreters, but only temporarily – and I shall return to this point shortly. It was felt advisable to let natives return to their communities fully fed and clad, because this helped good relations with local populations. Distinct kinds of actions concerning the physical location and 'use' of American natives were envisaged, and it made a substantial – although certainly ambiguous – difference whether the natives were intentional or unintentional participants, voluntary or forced, aware or unaware.

² See for example Gomes Eanes De Zurara, *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1896, 2 vols., 1st ed. about 1453), vol. I, 61, 100, 115.

I am referring to the particular symbolic meaning of what I call ‘abduction practices’ (in French ‘enlèvement’), which were the immediate outcome of a sense of superiority, awareness of greater strength and the ability to seize and appropriate human ‘others’. Not of course that capturing strangers and making them captives for many purposes were exclusive prerogatives of evil Europeans. Nor perhaps such was the practice of parading a captive in front of one’s own ‘tribe’ in order to reinforce one’s authority and prestige as a warrior and chief. As a matter of fact all the European navigators, without exception, took pains to seize and carry off American Indians, just as the Spanish conquerors had done with the native Guanches at the time of the conquest of the Canary islands. The impulse to take physical possession of ‘other’ human beings has given rise to various interpretations. Tzvetan Todorov attributed the European acts of seizure of savages to two conflicting reactions: one involving assimilation – you seize somebody different in order to cancel out the difference and render them your equal, teaching them your language and your religion on the assumption of their capacity to become fully your like; the other involving confinement in extreme alterity – you seize the ‘other’ as a slave in order to keep him/her irreducibly diverse from you on the assumption of his/her incapacity for civilization and of his/her irredeemable diversity as the precondition of his/her employment as an enslaved worker³. Stephen Greenblatt, while accepting the contradictory European tendency to consider the *indios* as both alike and different at the same time, views the act of seizing the ‘diverse’ as dictated by the need to fill a communication gap: “kidnapping language” means that cancelling physical distance can lead to reciprocal understanding⁴. Both these scholars and still others⁵ have also pointed to a third motive (or series of motives) for capturing the savage. The act of seizing *per se* is tantamount to declaring the possessor’s own (superior) identity, his capacity to offer his compatriots back home a very special present: both a gift, as symbolic acknowledgement of the receiver’s authority, and the tangibly exhibited evidence of the amazingly different nature of the discovered object and of the truthfulness and uniqueness of the donor’s endeavor.

Travel literature in the age of the European discoveries in the New World abounds with evidence of recurrent abductions, frequently, of course, (since the

3 T. Todorov, *La conquête de l’Amérique La question de l’Autre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982), 50-55.

4 S. Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1991), 86 ff.

5 M. T. Hogden, *Early Anthropology in the 16th and 17th centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 111 ff., P. Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World: 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), A. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), *Indians and Europe: an interdisciplinary collection of essays*, ed. Christian F. Feest (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999, 1st German edition, 1987), Dagmar Wernitznig, *Europe’s Indians, Indians in Europe: European perceptions and appropriations of American native cultures from Pocahontas to the present* (Lanham, MD: The University Press of America, 2007).

explorers were exclusively male), of women, with an aura of sexual license and absence of restraint on acts perpetrated far from the reach of European morals and religion. In fact sex, involving body and language, acts as a third level of communication capable of bridging the gap between difference and similarity. Michele da Cuneo (1448-1503), a companion of Columbus on his second voyage, left a famous description of one episode in which male physical violence seems to transform the appropriated “camballa” (‘cannibal’) into nothing less than a well-trained “bagassa” (Italian vernacular vulgar for ‘whore’)⁶.

In the first two decades of its discovery natives were repeatedly carried off from the New World in one form or another – as slaves, interpreters, informants, negotiators, guides – mostly but not exclusively to Europe. Columbus, Vespucci, Sebastian Cabot, Magellan, Thomas Aubert, Ponce de Leon, Fernando de Soto, Panfilo de Narvaez, Hernan Cortéz, Francisco Pizarro, Jacques Cartier, Walter Raleigh – to name just a few – are all reported to have abducted natives for reasons which did not necessarily have anything to do with procuring forced labor. The physical presence of natives among Europeans came to fulfil an evolving list of functional roles, connected in one way or another to multi-direction communication requirements: they acted as guides, informants, interpreters, mediators, catechumens, apprentices, hostages, witnesses, specimens, natural objects, living advertisements, skilled or artistic performers, actors or figureheads, symbols, prey and trophies. Their undertaking the role of diplomatic envoys in later times falls under quite a different category in which the full, conscious participation of willing exotic travelers or visitors invalidates the very concept of ‘abduction’. Abductions for these purposes continued at an increasing rhythm and in ever more diversified forms, as the European presence, settlement and colonization developed not only in the Americas, but also in Asia, Oceania and finally in Africa. As far as the New World is concerned, some recent studies on “transatlantic visitors” in Europe, dating mainly from the early 1990⁵ and regarding England in particular, have started to place a range of case-studies in a broader framework, rendering a previously neglected subject more comprehensible and at the same time opening up a more general perspective for re-interpreting later phenomena that have emerged over the last two centuries.

There was a close connection between seizing on the spot and taking physical control of aliens (whether temporarily or not) and the subsequent act of abduction, removing them from their native context and transporting them to distant countries, which involved transferring eastwards both the ‘encountered’ people and the fact of ‘encountering’ itself. Here again difference and similarity represent the dual poles of the overseas experience. Savages have to reside in Europe for a while if the purpose is to teach them language, religion and the

6 Michele da Cuneo, *Lettera 15-28 ottobre 1495 a Gerolamo Annari*, in *Nuovo Mondo. Documenti della storia della scoperta e dei primi insediamenti europei in America, 1492-1640*, serie diretta da Paolo Collo e Pier Luigi Crovetto (Torino: Einaudi, 1990-1992), 3 voll., vol. II, *Gli Italiani, 1492-1565*, a cura di Paolo Collo e Pier Luigi Crovetto, 1991.

fundamentals of civilization, that is to say, to explore their capacity for similarity. But they must also be kept in Europe if the purpose is to exhibit them as an embodiment of alterity or otherness. Their difference can be interpreted as an addition to the catalogue of the natural, in this case anthropological varieties: it belongs to the collection of wonders and curiosities assembled by the natural scientist, the antiquary and the amateur collector. But at the other extreme it was radicalized in freakery, a concept which is worth dwelling upon briefly.

In ancient and medieval Europe freaks were phenomena representing monstrous deviations from the regular course of the natural world. Curiosity, bizarre entertainment, commercial purposes, the appeal of anomalies, and medical interest in anatomical rarities and human deformities made human freaks collecting and exhibiting established practices in different environments of late medieval and early modern Europe, featuring in markets, fairs (in England St. Bartholomew's and Greenwich fairs), taverns, scientific cabinets and the printed book (for instance in Ulisse Aldrovandi's *Monstrorum Historia*, 1642 or Thomas Bartholin's *Historiarum Anatomicarum Rariorum Centuria*, 1654)⁷. These practices stretched from the Renaissance to the age of the scientific revolution, from the Enlightenment to the Victorian era and the *belle époque*. A vivid illustration for the eighteenth century can be seen in Sir Henry Sloane's collection of handbills on "natural prodigies which interest London from the days of Charles the Second to those of Queen Anne" and on the "strange and wonderful creatures from most parts of the world, all alive"; and in John Evanion and John Johnson's collections of printed ephemerals, for later periods⁸. The extraordinary gallery of human freaks on display included, in early modern England alone, the "Northumberland Monster", the "Siamese Twins", the "Indian prince", the "Black Prince", the "Little woman from Prester John's Country", the "Beautiful Spotted Negro Boy", "The Tyrolese Minstrels", Daniel Lambert the "Human Colossus", and the "pretended Mermaid"⁹. From the dwarfs and buffoons of the Renaissance courts and the "sauvage gentilhomme" Pedro Gonzales (ca. 1537-ca. 1618)¹⁰ to the "sauvages de la Louisiane", the "Maure blanc" and the African albinos of Voltaire, the "nègres blancs" of Maupertuis,

7 Nadja Durbach, *The Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), Ricky Jay, *Journal of Anomalies* (New York: The Quantuck Press, 2003).

8 Henry Sloane's and John Evanion's collections are in the British Library; John Johnson's *Collection of Printed Ephemera regarding everyday life in Britain in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries* is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and a digital selection of it is available online by subscription at the address <<http://johnjohnson.chadwyck.co.uk/marketing/index.jsp>>.

9 *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. R. Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), R. Bogdan, *Freak Shows. Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).

10 Roberto Zapperi, *Il selvaggio gentiluomo. L'incredibile storia di Pedro Gonzales e dei suoi figli* (Roma: Donzelli, 2005).

the “negresse Geneviève” of Buffon, the Tahitians Aoutourou in Diderot’s Paris and Omai in Dr. Johnson’s London, the “Hottentot Venus”, as well as, much later, John C. Merrick the “Elephant Man” (1862-1890), recounted, among others, by the anthropologist Ashley Montague¹¹, there was a whole succession of embodiments of the European taste for the monstrous, extraordinary and exotic. At the turn of the eighteenth century in England they provided the material for exhibitions in London locations ranging from inns, coffee houses and pubs to dedicated halls like the Albert Palace and that “sort of Ark of exhibitions”, the Egyptian Hall, or, later on, the Crystal Palace at Sydenham¹².

Beside whetting the European public appetite for exotic human ‘others’ over at least three centuries before the golden age of the ‘human zoos’, these “cultural spectacles of the extraordinary body” represented a profitable sector for entrepreneurship¹³. Profit and amusement stepped in very soon alongside scientific curiosity, collecting and a relish for the marvelous. The very early appearance of these phenomena in European literary works from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, from Ben Jonson and Shakespeare to Jonathan Swift, Wordsworth and Chateaubriand, is evidence of their role in the history of society, culture and customs in the early modern epoch. To give just one instance: when Gulliver is described as a midget on display among the inhabitants of Brobdingnag (*Gulliver’s Travels*, pt. II, ch. 1-3), to be transported in a box to a nearby market town and exhibited on an inn table and then taken on tour specifically to make money “in eighteen large towns, besides many villages, and private families”, Swift is obviously referring to a particular type of the social practices here alluded to.

I have mentioned one more specific motivation for exotic abductions which is now worth further consideration. Seizing, taking away and bringing back to Europe representatives of alien peoples could serve to exhibit them as witnesses, evidence, prey or trophies. Live exotic strangers, in other words, can become signs, metaphors, symbols or non verbal, visual translations of acts such as discovering something or someone new (never previously seen or heard of), succeeding in an arduous enterprise and demonstrating one’s superior abilities. Columbus was particularly explicit about this. In his journals he makes frequent reference to the Indians, although they are not mentioned at all in the documents preceding the voyage: in the prior negotiations that took place between the navigator and the Spanish monarchs the Indians merely figure as potential converts. Columbus is well known for bringing back seven Indians and presenting them to the Spanish monarchs in 1493 – an episode we shall return to – and subsequently he often

11 A. Montague, *The Elephant Man. A Study in Human Dignity* (Lafayette, LA.: Acadian House Publishing, 2008, 1st ed. 1971).

12 R. D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978).

13 *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Garland Thomson, and Bogdan, *Freak Shows*.

resorted to captives but also to volunteers as native interpreters, as shown by his later journals and letters. During his first voyage he talks alternatively of “his Indians”, his “captives”, his “interpreters”, the people who “accompanied” or “followed” him, who “were with him”, who “were on board his ship”, whom he “took with him” and, more explicitly, as the “seven [Indians] whom I had seized in order to take them with me, teach them our language and then let them go back home”¹⁴. Later on, writing to a high-ranking Spanish official on his way back to Europe, Columbus spoke explicitly of the Indians he had “captured” and “seized by force” in order to teach them Spanish and obtain information from them. He adds that it will be easy in the future to send back more of them as “slaves”, and he finally refers to them as “witnesses”: “porto meco *indios* in guisa di testimoni” (I take *indios* with me as witnesses)¹⁵. We find confirmation of this in Pietro Martire d’Anghiera’s account: Columbus took objects and men with him on his return voyage as “evidence of the new land that had been discovered”, adding that thanks to the captured Indians, “it became clear that the language spoken in all those islands can be written without difficulty in our Latin letters”¹⁶. Captured, abducted and exhibited savages, or strangers, then, constitute much stronger evidence than a written report. On his arrival back from the New World, in March 1493, Columbus must have been struck by the powerful effect of his alien witnesses when “many people convened today from Lisbon to see him and to see those *indios* [...] and everybody expressed their astonishment [...] today numberless people came to the caravel and many knights and among them the Kings’ ministers”¹⁷. We know of one very utilitarian way in which the Indians were called to act as witnesses. In March 1493, in front of King Joao II of Portugal, they were seen to look very unlike the people of Africa, thereby dashing the Portuguese monarch’s hopes of laying claim to Columbus’s discoveries on the basis of a treaty and papal bull¹⁸. Herrera and subsequent authors were very clear in this respect: “the Admiral [...] ordered some Indians to be taken to be carry’d into Spain, from several parts, that every one might give an account of his own country, as witnesses of the discovery”¹⁹. It may be noted that Columbus in his

14 Colombo, *Gli Scritti* (Torino: Einaudi, 1992), 28 (my translation); previous citations from 35, 39, 41, 52, 67, 71, 79, 80, 90, 91, 115.

15 Letter to Luis de Santangel [Finance Minister of the Aragonese court], 4 March 1493, *ivi*, 139 sgg.; last quotation at 145. Likewise, in his “Relazione del quarto viaggio”, addressed to the Spanish monarchs on 7 July 1503, Columbus will refer again to the *indios* as witnesses of what he was saying (*ivi*, 339).

16 Pietro Martire d’Anghiera, *De Orbe Novo Decades*, I, 1 (Genova: 2005), 49.

17 *Scritti*, 135 (my translation).

18 Rui de Pina, *Crónica D. João II*, in *Colecção de livros inéditos da historia portugueza dos reinados de D. João I, D. Duarte, D. Affonso V e D. João II*, publicados de ordem da *Academia de Ciências*, ed. José Corrêa da Serra (Lisboa: na Ofic. da Academia Real das Sciencias, 1790-1824), 5 vols., now re-edited as *Crónica de El-Rei D. João II. Nova edição com prefácio e notas de Alberto Martins de Carvalho* (Coimbra: Atlantida, 1950).

19 Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, *Historia de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Mas y Tierra Firme del Mar Oceano que llaman Indias Occidentales* (Madrid: 1601-1615, 4 vols.): I am quoting from *The*

subsequent voyages continued to kidnap and abduct Indians for many different reasons, predictably earning the stern censure of Las Casas²⁰.

Thereafter the usefulness of exotic witnesses was clear to a great number of voyagers of many nationalities who brought back members of the different ethnic groups they encountered. Just one single instance will suffice: the chronicler of the first voyage of Martin Frobisher – the late sixteenth-century English explorer of the Northwest Passage – reports the captain's desire “to bring some token from thence of his being there” and his consequent effort to capture an Inuit alive, whom he explicitly defines a “witness” as well as a “prey”²¹. The accounts of Frobisher's and indeed of all the explorers' expeditions provide most interesting details of the practice of alien abductions, including the stratagems, traps, allurements, negotiations and open acts of violence. Irrespective of the different behavioral strategies suggested by the kind of relationships entered into or desired with the native populations, one constant objective was to take possession of live captives. These were then subjected to the “initiation experience” of the Ocean crossing, assuming the new role of witnesses and prey in exhibition ceremonies. Columbus himself, whose exhibition of the seven Indians taken to Spain was the first of its kind after the discovery of the New World, was in fact following a well established practice among Portuguese and Spanish explorers and merchants who for decades had been returning home from Africa or the Canary islands.

Witnesses of diversity and, correspondingly, of a specific identity, the abducted exotic humans could also be valuable gifts or objects of homage. Their bodies exhibited overseas were a testimony not only of who they were but also of what they were able to do. Thus the Indian boy servant brought to Spain by Juan de Ribera, Hernan Cortés's secretary, performed a dancing and ritual pantomime before high-ranking guests in Pietro Martire's house in 1523; a contingent of Aztec acrobats and jugglers transported by Cortés himself

General History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America, commonly call'd, the West-Indies, from the First Discovery thereof [...] Collected from the original relations sent to the kings of Spain [...] Translated into English by Capt. John Stevens (London: printed for Jer. Batley, 1725-26, 6 vols.), vol. I, chapt. XV, 57 ff.; this passage is rendered thus by Prévost: “dans le dessein qu'il [Columbus] avoit d'en [the indios] transporter plusieurs en Espagne, il vouloit qu'ils fussent de divers Païs, pour rendre un témoignage plus certain du nombre & de la variété de ses découvertes. Il en prit douze, d'âge & de sexe différens”, *Histoire générale des voyages, ou Nouvelle collection de toutes les relations de voyages par mer et par terre* (Paris: Didot, 1746-1761, 20 vols.), XII, 17.

20 “The Admiral did this unscrupulously, as did he many other times during his first voyage, it not appearing to him that it was an offense to God and his neighbors to take free men against their will, separating fathers from sons and wives from husbands [...] a mortal sin of which the Admiral was the efficient cause”, English quote in S. E. Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea. A Life of Christopher Columbus* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1942), 545.

21 “with this newe pray (which was a sufficient wnesse of the captaines farre and tedious travell towards the unknowne parts of the world, as did well appeare by this strange Infidel [...]) the saide Captaine Frobisher returned homeward” (*The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher*, London: The Hakluyt Society, 1867, 74).

some years later performed at Charles the Fifth's court and were presented as a homage to Pope Clemens VII in 1526; Tupi Indians staged an inter-tribal conflict in 1550 in Rouen; and Inuits displayed their rowing and harpooning skills in Bristol in 1577²². Examples like these, which could be multiplied, are direct progenitors of the ethno-shows staged by professional impresarios in the nineteenth century and at the turn of the twentieth century in exhibitions and theatres all over Europe and North America.

In conclusion, a long sequence of abductions and exhibitions since the early phases of discovery, with a great variety of motives, intentions and purposes – ranging from the merely utilitarian to cognitive or symbolic – gradually accumulated and made available to the European public a repository of conventional behavior and a rich archive of signs, actions, attitudes invariably based on and pointing to the reification of the human 'other', forming an extremely rich historical background ready to be exploited and transformed in those particular later performances we refer to as 'live ethno-exhibitions'. Within such a repository of practices, habits, ceremonies and symbols I have not yet mentioned another distinct tradition of public ceremonial which, as the definition of the abducted captives as 'prey' mentioned above suggests (alluding also to the term 'trophy'), provided later ethno-exhibitions with a framework of reference which is seldom recalled but should not be underestimated: the triumph.

III.

The direct connection between what has been called the "Roman triumphal culture" and early modern forms both of exotic ethno-exhibitions and of public political ceremonials has been recently suggested by Mary Beard, the historian who has best analyzed the Roman triumph in terms not only of its political interpretation but also of its symbolic meanings and its forms, actors and effects²³. This is particularly interesting as previous scholars of the Roman triumph and of modern public ceremonials and triumphal rites²⁴ have barely taken notice of the

22 Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *De Orbe Novo Decades*, V, 10, vol. II, 693 sgg.; Howard F. Cline, "Hernando Cortes and the Aztec Indians in Spain", *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, 26 (1969): 70-90; *C'est la déduction du sumptueux ordre plaisantz spectacles et magnifiques theatres dressés et exhibés par les citoyens de Rouen ville Metropolitaine du pays de Normandie à la sacrée Maiesté du Treschristian Roy de France, Henry second...Entrée. 1550, 1-2 octobre, à Rouen, chez Robert Le Hoy, Robert et Jehan dictz du Gord, 1551, in quarto*; Ferdinand Denis, *Une Fête brésilienne célébrée à Rouen en 1550; suivie d'un fragment du XVIe siècle roulant sur la théogonie des anciens peuples du Brésil, et des poésies en langue tupique de Christovam Valente* (Paris: J. Techener, 1850); A. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters*, 6-7.

23 Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, Mass.-London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

24 Henry Versnel, *Triumphus. An Enquiry into the Origin, Development, and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), Tanja Itgenshorst, *Tota illa pompa. Der Triumph in der römischen Republik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), David M. Bergeron, *English Civic*

exotic component – particularly the participation of exotic human beings. Even scholars of ethno-exhibitions have failed to recognize the classical triumph as one of the sources of the symbolic language of specific aspects of modern ethno-exhibitions. Both ancient triumphs and modern exotic exhibitions involved, in Beard's words, "displays of success and success of display" and re-enactments of victory which "brought the margins of the Empire to its centre". The analysis of the forms and protagonists of the Roman triumph, with their different roles, pays attention to the viewers of a mass spectacle but also to the captives: their "foreignness" or barbarism, figuring among the triumphal spoils of victory, with ambiguous identities that tended to shift from victim to victor and from strangers to Romans. All these elements can foster a better understanding of modern ethno-exhibitions, providing analytical clues and revealing their classic ascendancy²⁵. The close affinity Beard herself suggests between Roman triumphs and the French King Henry II's solemn entry into Rouen in 1550 draws on the "recognizable Roman style" of the latter, reinforcing the awareness of the survival of classical paradigms in the early modern representation of power and authority. Henry II's entry was the occasion for an open air theatrical display involving fifty Brazilian savages expressly imported to animate the reconstruction of a Tupinamba village on the banks of the Seine and taking part (with 250 whites disguised as Tupinambas) in a spectacular battle staging the triumph of civilization over savagery. The celebration of exoticism, spectacular ferocity and the successful beginning of French overseas ventures surely all go to corroborate Beard's intuition²⁶.

If the "Roman triumphal culture" can help to interpret not only medieval and early modern celebrations and rites but also features of later ethno-exhibitions, it is also true that the ceremonies celebrating geographical discoveries, a safe return home, success and final victorious apotheosis overtly adopted triumphal forms and incorporated the abducted savages as trophies and characters on display. Columbus and Cortés are two cases in point.

The returns of both men to Spain were greeted in distinctly triumphal forms and on both occasions the display of Indian savages as trophies was of central importance, even if more as objects of curiosity, witnesses and 'spoils' in the broadest sense than as prisoners of war, symbolizing conquest and military victory. The descriptions of these returns given by chroniclers, historians and biographers, whether contemporary or recent, leave no doubt as to the sources of

Pageantry: 1558-1642 (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), Barbara Wisch and Susan Munshower, eds., *"All the World's a Stage": Pageantry and Spectacle in the Renaissance and Baroque* (University Park, 1990); Anthony Miller, *Roman Triumphs and Early Modern English Culture* (Basingstoke-New York: Palgrave, 2001).

25 *The Roman Triumph*, 31-32, 53-61, 328-330.

26 Michael Wintroub, "Civilizing the Savage and Making a King: The Royal Entry Festival of Henri II (Rouen, 1550)", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 29, n. 2, (Summer, 1998): 465-494, and by the same author, more recently, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), esp. 142 ff.

inspiration and ritual paradigms, which were explicitly referred to as “triumphs”. A converging representation has been transmitted by the historiography of the New World’s discovery and conquest and by Columbian scholarship, ranging from Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, “testigo de vista” and “primer cronista del Nuevo Mundo”²⁷, Bartolomé de Las Casas, another eyewitness, and then Pietro Martire d’Anghiera, López de Gómara, Antonio de Herrera and Girolamo Benzoni²⁸, Pierre-Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix and William Robertson, to such nineteenth- and twentieth-century biographers as Washington Irving, William Prescott, Salvador de Madariaga and Samuel E. Morison²⁹. All these writers have contributed to perpetuating the image of the Admiral’s triumphal reception along the road from Portugal to Palos, “recibido en Palos con grande procesión y negocijo de toda la villa”, his progress to Seville making a sensational entrance in grand parade, the cortege’s cavalcade to Barcelona preceded by “his Indians, his gold and his parrots”, with people rushing to see the “hombres de nueva forma, color y traje”³⁰, and finally the solemn ceremony in the presence of Fernando and Isabella immortalized in Lazzaro Tavarone’s seventeenth-century Genoese frescos. This is, for example, how Las Casas narrates the Admiral’s departure from Seville for Barcelona:

Tomó comienzo la fama á volar por Castilla, que se habian descubierto tierras que se llamaban las Indias, y gentes tantas y tan diversas, y cosas novísimas, y que por tal camino venia el que las descubrió, y traía consigo de aquella gente; no solamente de los pueblos por donde pasaba salia el mundo á lo ver, pero muchos de los pueblos, del camino por donde venia, remotos, se vaciaban, y se hinchian los caminos para irlo á ver, y adelantarse á los pueblos á recibirlo³¹.

Las Casas’s report on Columbus’s reception at the royal court in Barcelona, although imbued with religious elements ranging from praise of the “miraculous” discovery and the blessing of the divine Providence to the performance of the *Te*

27 Gonzalo Fernández Oviedo y Valdez, *Historia general y natural de las Indias, islas y Tierra-Firme del mar Oceano* [1535] (Madrid: Impr. de la Real academia de la historia, 1851-1852, 3 vols.), I, 27-29: “è ví allí venir al almirante, Don Chripstobal Colom, con los primeros indios que destas partes allá fueron en el primero viaje é descubrimiento [...] no hablo de oydas en ninguna destas quatro cosas, sino de vista”.

28 B. de Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* (Madrid: Imprenta de Miguel Ginesta, 1875, 2 voll.), I, 455-495; Girolamo Benzoni, *La historia del mondo nuovo* [...]: *laqual tratta delle isole et mari nuovamente ritrovati, et delle nuove citta da lui proprio vedute, per acqua, et per terra in quattordeci anni* (Venetia: Pietro et Francesco Tini, fratelli, 1572, 1st ed. 1565), 16 e 16v.; López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias* [1552] (Madrid: Calpe, 1922), 45, Herrera, *General History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America*, I, 92-93.

29 Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire de l’Isle Espagnole ou de Saint-Domingue* (Amsterdam: chez François L’Honoré, 1730-1733, 1st ed. Paris: J. Guérin, 1730-1731, 2 vols.), Washington Irving, *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1841, 2 vols.), I, 173-177, Salvador de Madariaga, *Christopher Columbus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1939, 1st transl., Milano, 1966, 249, 252-255), Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, 357-358.

30 López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias*, I, 45.

31 Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, I, 477.

Deum and the Indians' baptism, portrays scenes of rejoicing, pomp and solemnity which also resonate with Roman reminiscences:

mandáronle hacer un solemne y muy hermoso recibimiento, para el cuál salió toda la gente y toda la ciudad, que no cabían por las calles, admirados todos de ver aquella veneranda persona ser de la que se decía haber descubierto otro mundo, de ver los indios y los papagayos, y mucca piezas y joyas, y cosas que llevaba, descubiertas, de oro, y que jamás no se habían visto ni oído. Para le recibir los Reyes, con mas solemnidad y pompa, mandaron poner en público su estrado y solio real, donde estaban sentados, y, junto con ellos, el Príncipe D. Juan, en grande manera alegres, acompañados de muchos grandes señores, castellanos, catalanes, valencianos y aragoneses, todos aspirando y deseosos que ya llegase aquel que tan grande y naucha hazaña, y que á toda la cristiandad era causa de alegría, habia hecho. Entró, pues, en la cuadra donde los Reyes estaban acompañados de multitud de caballeros y gente nobilísima, entre todos los cuales, *como tenia grande y autorizada persona, que parecía un Senador del pueblo romano*, señalaba su cara veneranda, llena de canas y de modesta risa, mostrando bien el gozo y gloria con qué venia.

The final christening of the Indians under the monarchs' supervision can perhaps be seen as corresponding to the Romanization of the captive barbarians following on the triumph (capital executions were not so frequent as is often supposed), just as the capacity for receiving Christ's word may correspond to the attainment of Roman citizenship as another way of achieving full human dignity. In both cases we are dealing with a rite of passage³².

Las Casas's final lines – “en muchos de los tiempos pasados, cosas tan nuevas y diversas festivas, ni de tanta solemnidad, nunca fueron imaginadas” – may have inspired the French Jesuit Charlevoix in 1730. Nobody has given a more explicit evocation of the Roman classical model:

On n'avoit encore rien vû en Espagne [...] qui représentât mieux le triomphe des anciens Romains que son entrée dans cette grande ville [Barcelona]³³.

The Jesuit's account is particularly interesting for his remarks on the Amerindians' part in Columbus's triumph. They figured in procession together with the profusion of riches the Admiral exhibited, not just as the booty of the conquerors' avidity but as a true show of novelties and wonders. They certainly played a much more dynamic role than their unfortunate counterparts, the chained Roman captives:

Les sept Indiens paroissoient les premiers. Ils ornoient d'autant mieux son triomphe, qu'ils y prenoient part; au lieu que les Triomphateurs Romains fondoient une partie de leur gloire sur le malheur de ceux qu'ils traînoient après leur char³⁴.

³² Beard, *Roman Triumph*, 140-141.

³³ Charlevoix, *Histoire de l'Isle Espagnole*, I, 140.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

It must be said that Charlevoix had little to say about what happened to the seven Columbian *caciques* during their stay in Spain, and never seriously questioned whether it was all as pleasant as he made out. We actually know that the seven Indians were the survivors of a contingent of ten, three of whom died during the crossing and two more within two years of their arrival in Spain, while of the five who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage, only two completed the journey alive³⁵.

William Robertson's account recalls Plutarch's description of Pompey's triumph in 61 BCE and depicts an elaborate procession exhibiting the Admiral himself. It merits extensive quotation for its emphasis on the display of human otherness:

When the prosperous issue of it [Columbus's enterprise] was known [in Palos, March 1493], when they [Palos inhabitants] beheld the strange people, the unknown animals, and singular productions brought from the countries which had been discovered, the effusion of joy was general and unbounded. The bells were rung, the cannon fired; Columbus was received at landing with royal honours and all the people in solemn procession accompanied him and his crew to the church, where they returned thanks to Heaven [...] During his journey to Barcelona, the people crowded from the adjacent country, following him everywhere with admiration and applause. His entrance into the city was conducted, by order of Ferdinand and Isabella, with pomp suitable to the great event, which added such distinguishing lustre to their reign. The people whom he brought along with him from the countries which he had discovered, marched first, and by their singular complexion, the wild peculiarities of their features, and uncouth finery, appeared like men of another species. Next to them were carried the ornaments of gold, fashioned by the rude art of the natives, the grains of gold found in the mountains and dust of the same metal gathered in the rivers. After these appeared the various commodities of the new discovered countries, together with their curious productions. Columbus himself closed the procession and attracted the eyes of all the spectators, who gazed with admiration on the extraordinary man, whose superior sagacity and fortitude had conducted their countrymen, by a route concealed from past ages, to the knowledge of a new world. Ferdinand and Isabella received him clad in their royal robes and seated upon a throne, under a magnificent canopy³⁶.

Certainly not everything in Columbus's return to Spain and reception at the royal court would fit neatly into a classic triumphal pattern. After all, in Roman practice the triumph, although formally awarded by the Senate, was an act of self-celebration claimed, accurately planned and staged by ambitious generals and governors pursuing a political career³⁷. This was not the case for Columbus, whose subsequent troubles undoubtedly derived from the envy he attracted for the unprecedented honors and favors loaded on him by the monarchs. Nonetheless the perceptions of contemporaries and later historians invariably

35 Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, 422.

36 W. Robertson, *History of America* (London: Strahan, Cadell and Balfour, 1783, 3 vols., 1st ed. 1777) book II, I, 155-156.

37 Beard, *Roman Triumph*, 190-194, Miller, *Roman Triumphs*, 2-15.

refer the Admiral's glorification back to ancient Roman models, in a mental association that the presence of the alien human trophies may have encouraged.

As "Roman triumphal culture" continued to thrive in imperial Spain and elsewhere in Europe, it is not surprising that, some years after Columbus's enterprise, Hernan Cortés underwent a similar experience, interesting as an evidence both of the triumphal use of exotic human trophies and of ethno-shows, or, as it has been described, of "Indians playing Indian"³⁸.

In 1520 Cortés sent four male Indians and two females to Spain, as we know from several testimonies³⁹. Of much greater significance with regard to the persistence of a "triumphal discourse" and the live exotic component in it – through which the court discovered the New World⁴⁰ – is Cortés' return to Spain in 1528, when "he came like a mighty Lord"⁴¹. On this occasion he brought with him a much richer booty than before, including some Aztec Indians selected not just for their 'otherness' but for their peculiar abilities in dances, games and tricks which made them suitable for public display. These Indians – the same who were subsequently transported *en tournée* to Rome as an imperial homage to Clemens VII – figured in the triumphal processions ordained by Charles V himself in celebration of the *conquistador*. As in a Roman triumph, these alien human figures were paraded as live exhibits together with a profusion of natural products, treasures, animals and a whole assortment of marvels from the New World. William Robertson gives a description redolent with allusions to ceremonial devices, political apprehensions about the victor's ambitions and speculations about the value and allocation of the booty, which Mary Beard identifies as descriptive features common to many written accounts of Roman triumphs:

Cortes appeared in his native country with the splendor that suited the conqueror of a mighty kingdom. He brought with him a great part of his wealth, many jewels and ornaments of great value, several curious productions of the country, and was attended by some Mexicans of the first rank [...] His arrival in Spain removed at once every suspicion and fear that had been entertained with respect to his intentions⁴².

38 Rayna Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee: Playing Indian in America and Europe", *Folklore*, 99, 1 (1988): 30-55.

39 Informations are given by Pietro Martire (V, 10), López de Gómara (*Historia general de las Indias*, chapt. 39), Díaz del Castillo (chapt. 54) and Herrera (III, 1-3), on Ruffo see Marcel Bataillon, "Les premiers Méxicains envoyés en Espagne par Cortès", in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, n. s., 48 (1959): 135-140. On the following expedition, in 1528, see Howard F. Cline, "Hernando Cortes and the Aztec Indians in Spain", *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, 26 (1969): 70-90.

40 Marcel Bataillon, "Plus outre: la Cour découvre le Nouveau Monde", in *Les fêtes de la Renaissance. II. Fêtes et cérémonies au temps de Charles Quint* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1975), 13-27.

41 Herrera, *General History of America*, IV, 21-22 (Decade III, book IV, ch. III), Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The True History of the conquest of Mexico, by Captain Bernal Diaz del Castillo [...] Written in the year 1568. Translated from the original Spanish, by Maurice Keatinge Esq.* (London: printed for J. Wright, 1800), 455 ff.

42 *History of America*, book V, II, 449-451; on booty allocation see note XCVI, vol. II, 540.

William Prescott's later narrative (1843) presents an elaboration on the theme of the triumph with particular insistence on the display of the Indians:

The houses and the streets of the great towns and villages were thronged with spectators, eager to look on the hero, who, with his single arm, as it were, had won an empire for Castile, and who, to borrow the language of an old historian, "came in the pomp and glory, not so much of a great vassal, as of an independent monarch" [...] His train was now swelled by the Indian chieftains, who, by the splendours of their barbaric finery, gave additional brilliancy, as well as novelty, to the pageant⁴³.

The Indians were indeed part of the treasure of wonders brought back from across the Atlantic and mention of them was made while presenting the catalogue of the trophies of the *conquista*, unusual animate and inanimate objects intended to be admired. Bernal Díaz del Castillo recounts how, in preparing his return to Spain, Cortés collected a great quantity of multicolored birds unknown in Castile, together with casks of *liquidambar* and other kinds of balms, two tigers and

cuatro indios maestros de jugar el palo con los pies, que en Castilla y en todas partes es cosa de ver; y otros indios grandes bailadores que suelen hazer una manera de ingenio, que al parecer como que buelan por alto estando bailando, y llebó tres indios corcobados de tal manera que era cosa mostruosa, porqu'estavan quebrados por el cuerpo y eran muy enanos; y también llebó indios e indias muy blancos que con el gran blancor no vían bien [...] ⁴⁴.

Cortés was therefore assembling items for a true ethno-exhibition staging a whole variety of 'otherness': the unknown, the extraordinary, the monstrous, the abnormal, the skilful and remarkable, the precious and glittering, and the representative. And, again on Castillo's testimony, once in Spain he did indeed manage to provoke "the astonishment of the spectators" and to impress both the Castilian and Papal courts. Prescott successfully rendered the full import of the display:

He also took with him several Aztec and Tlascalcan chiefs, and among them a son of Montezuma, and another of Maxixca, the friendly old Tlascalcan lord, both of whom were desirous to accompany the general to Castile. He carried home a large collection of plants and minerals, as specimens of the natural resources of the country; several wild animals and birds of gaudy plumage; various fabrics of delicate workmanship, especially the gorgeous feather-work; and a number of jugglers, dancers, and buffoons, who greatly astonished the Europeans by the marvellous facility of their performances, and were thought a suitable present for his Holiness, the Pope. Lastly, Cortes displayed his magnificence in a rich treasure of jewels, among which were emeralds of

43 William H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico, with a Preliminary View of Ancient Mexican Civilization, and the Life of the Conqueror* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1843), digital online edition University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 2000, book VII, chap. 4. The "old historian" is Vincencio Blasco de Lanuza's *Historias Eclesiásticas y seculares del Reino de Aragon* (Zaragoza: 1622), book III, ch. 14.

44 Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (Manuscrito Guatemala). Edición crítica de José Antonio Barbón Rodríguez (México: El Colegio de México, 2005), 721.

extraordinary size and lustre, gold to the amount of two hundred thousand pesos de oro, and fifteen hundred marks of Silver⁴⁵.

But Cortés' Aztecs, as we recalled above, were much more than just figureheads or human trophies in a triumphal *cortège*. Like Ribera's young Aztec servant performing dances and pantomimes in the presence of Pietro Martire's distinguished guests, they were displaying ethnic abilities as protagonists of the "rehearsal of cultures"⁴⁶. As a homage to Pope Clemens VII, they repeated the "spectacle of strangeness" in Rome in the presence of cardinals and other dignitaries; the effect of their 'otherness' was amplified by the drawings made by Christoph Weiditz (1500-1559), the talented portraitist of scenes of European daily life and of exotic customs.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries public celebrations such as royal weddings, *entrées royales*, receptions of regal foreign guests, births of princely male heirs, *fasti sollemnes* and thanksgiving for military victories and the conclusion of peaces, and again the return of victorious generals, soldiers or explorers, and even carnivals, continued to be inspired by the "triumphal discourse" of classic, Roman derivation. It is true that triumphal processions, parades or festivities did not always exhibit enemy captives, absent for example from the "Armada triumphs" in 1588⁴⁷. But we know that the exhibition of alien individuals whether as prisoners of war or specimens of exotic 'otherness' was standard practice, for instance in Central Italy in the Renaissance, where Turkish captives figured in parades with a triumphal and an apotropaic function: the terrible but defeated arch-enemies of Christianity were exposed to the view of onlookers, ensuring a frisson of awe, curiosity and fear⁴⁸. It would undoubtedly be worth studying just what part was played in these circumstances by the exhibition of exotic human 'otherness', especially in the case of the numerous "Triumphes, grandes bravetes et magnificences"⁴⁹, mock battles and *naumachiaë* staged in Tudor and Stuart England, the Palatinate court, the Mantua Gonzaga dukedom, the Papal court in Rome, and monarchical France from Henri II to Louis XIV. Here I can only refer to a few examples.

45 William H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico, with a Preliminary View of Ancient Mexican Civilization, and the Life of the Conqueror* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1843), digital online edition University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 2000, book VII, chapt. 4 ("Disturbances in Mexico- Return of Cortes- Distrust of the court- His return to Spain- Death of Sandoval- Brilliant reception of Cortes- Honours conferred on him").

46 Stephen Mullaney, "Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance", *Representations*, 3 (Summer 1983): 40-67.

47 For instance in the "Armada triumphs" in Elizabethan England, see Miller, *Roman Triumphs*, 71.

48 G. Ricci, *Ossessione turca. In una retrovia cristiana dell'Europa moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), Bonner Mitchell, *Italian Civic Pageantry in the High Renaissance: a descriptive bibliography of triumphal entries and selected other festivals for state occasions* (Firenze: Olschki, 1979).

49 *Les Triomphes, grandes bravetes et magnificences pour l'Entrée de [...] Charles IX [...] en sa ville de Troyes* (Lyon: Pierre Merant, 1564).

On the occasion of the great festivities held in 1613 in England and Germany for the royal wedding of a Palatine Elector to an English Princess, a spectacular naumachy between Christians and Ottomans culminated as the English naval commander “emmena l’Admiral Turque et plusieurs Baschas en triumphe pour les presenter au Roy et à son Gendre”⁵⁰. The entry of Ann of Austria into Burgos in 1571 featured triumphal chariots, one of which exhibited a *cacique* accompanied by six male and six female Indians and preceded by 24 more Indians in colorful dress, wearing masks overlaid with gemstones⁵¹. Something similar had already been seen in Troyes in 1564 on the occasion of the royal entry of Charles IX. The parade of the city’s representatives and militia “au devant du Roy” was accompanied by a perfectly organized triumphal ethno-exhibition under the armed control of two companies of “l’enfanterie del la Ville” and conceived to celebrate the kingly power in an evocation of the imperial figure of Alexander the Great. Even if we do not know whether it involved real or fake savages, its symbolic meaning was beyond any doubt:

Entre lesquelles marchoient un grand nombre de Sauvages proprement accoustrez, desquels le Capitaine estoit monté sur une Licorne bardée tout à l’entour de l’yerre, avec une hausse de mesme, et un armeur faicte en escaille, tout fort bien approprié. Les Tambourines sonnoient, les Sauvages en bon ordre, les uns montez sur Asnes, les autres sur Chevres et boucs, chose fort plaisante à voir [...] deux Sauvages portoient un Escusson hault eslevé en un rond de l’yerre, dans lequel estoient escript cez mots: ‘Non seulement la France en paix tiendras/Mais accroistras aussi bien qu’Alexandre,/Tant que Sauvages ains que mourir verras/O Puissant Roy, soubz ton pouvoir se rendre/France’ Suivoient deux Sauvages portantz l’enseigne de Taffetas bleu, tenant chacun un baston où elle estoit attaché, au milieu de laquelle estoit un Soleil fait d’or, apres laquelle suyvoient encore quelque bon nombre de Sauvages bravement accoustrez avec leurs arcs, et flesches, et masses fort bien factes⁵².

IV.

Live human exhibitions, in their manifold variants, continued to be a regular part of the European perception and representation of human ‘otherness’, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when their function was reinforced as a permanent form of celebrating European accomplishments and Europe’s

⁵⁰ *Les triomphes, entrees, cartels, tournois, ceremonies, et aultres magnificences, faites en Angleterre, [et] au Palatinat, pour le mariage & reception de Monsieur le Prince Frideric V. Comte Palatin du Rhin, Electeur du Saint Empire, Duc de Baviere &c. et de Madame Elizabeth, fille unique et princesse de la Grande Bretagne, Electrice Palatine du Rhin &c. son espouse* (Heidelberg, 1613), pages not numbered [but 35-36].

⁵¹ *Relación verdadera del recibimiento que la [...] Ciudad de Burgos [...] hizo a la Magestad Réal de la Reyna nuestra Señora doña Anna de Austria* (Burgos, 1571), quoted in C. A. Marsden, “Entrées et fêtes espagnoles au XVI^e siècle”, in *Les fêtes de la Renaissance*, II, 401.

⁵² *Les Triomphes, grandes bravetes et magnificences pour l’Entrée de [...] Charles IX*, full text in Victor E. Graham, “The 1564 entry of Charles IX into Troyes”, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance*, 48, 1 (1986): 105-120, see 117.

dominant position in the world. In particular these later displays became a regular and integral part of the international, universal, colonial and imperial exhibitions, the great pageants of Western industrial and capitalist civilization with its religious and secular sense of mission. In these new contexts they standardized and developed occasional, scattered features which had been present in the past centuries and added new ones, especially in terms of the “aesthetic of transgression”⁵³. This became all the more the case when a sharper racial view of anthropological and ethnological differences inspired more brutal forms of exhibition of human ‘otherness’. However, all the basic elements – the reification of human beings, their employment as objects of display destined to satisfy wonder, curiosity, amusement and profit, as evidence of ideological, religious or secular, political and scientific discourses, and as trophies and spoils to be paraded in triumphal processions as symbols of power and domination – derived from an ancient tradition of which I have tried to recall the early modern manifestations.

From this standpoint, later, especially nineteenth-century exhibitions of live human trophies re-enacted and systematized early modern practices in a double way. First, they became a more and more important ingredient of such authentic triumphs of modern industrial economy and Western civilization as the national, international and world exhibitions, in which they staged the living contrast between ‘how we were’ (and ‘they continued to be) and ‘what we attained at’, thus serving the triumph of complacency and self-celebration. Second, they took on new commercial, marketable forms which gave them such a popularity and amazing frequency as to make them a regular part of the urban social life of the great European capital cities (London most of all) and to stimulate both the protests of religious and philanthropic circles and the competing claims of ethnological inquiry of utilitarian and scientific inspiration against the use of human beings not as specimen at the “fruitful” service of public information and instruction and the progress of knowledge, but just as “zoological curiosities”, “inanimate objects in a museum”, “objects of curiosity or of unfruitful wonder”, “stimulants” for livening up “deceptive shows”⁵⁴.

This demonstrates how live human exhibitions were variously adapted to the mass public of European capitalist, leisured societies but also to several, new and evolving ideological priorities as these reached a dominant position in the Western market of ideas and attitudes. This was the case of the ideology of scientific progress and of European technological, material and civilizational superiority during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This is also at the present time the case of what I call the ideology of ‘ethno-ecology’, which, often raising the standard of political correctness, has unhesitatingly appropriated

53 Volker Mergenthaler, *Volkerschau-Kannibalismus-Fremdenlegion: Zur Ästhetik der Transgression (1897-1936)* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005).

54 John Connolly, *The Ethnological Exhibitions of London. Read at a Meeting of the Ethnological Society* (London: John Churchill, 1855), 6-7, 11-12, 44.

methods of alien, exotic human exhibitions on behalf of the natural environment preservation and the safeguarding of ethnic minorities.

In so doing, 'ethno-ecology' has rendered human beings symbols, trophies and objects of display, making them again hostages to ideologies, even while loudly repudiating racism and making much of its own mission to counter racism in the name of humanitarianism and ecological concerns.

I define as 'ethno-ecological' those movements, attitudes and specialized competences expressed mainly by the Western scientific, natural and anthropological conservation and heritage culture which combine the protection of the natural environment with the defense of threatened minority peoples belonging to and depending for their survival on those environments. Recent current affairs reporting has offered some astonishing cases of small groups of individuals, generally from Africa or South America, transported to Europe and placed in reconstructed 'natural' environments testifying to Western ecological concern and commitment to preservation. Both humans and nature have been reified and functionalized to support an ideological stance, itself an expression of the claim to exercise control over the non-Western world. Just a few examples will suffice, bearing in mind a fundamental diversity with respect to early modern history: women, men and children involved in contemporary ethno-ecological displays may not be in complete control of all the practical aspects of taking part in the exhibitions, but they are certainly not victims of abduction and forced displacement.

In July 2002 Baaka pygmies from Cameroon were exhibited at Yvoire, in Belgium, in a park usually used for animal expositions. Their presentation as a threatened ethnic group was ostensibly motivated by the humanitarian concern for safeguarding their rights. However, their material conditions were judged unacceptable by an outraged public opinion, finding expression in a press campaign⁵⁵. Both the event and the reaction evoke past experiences of subjection and reification of human aliens, with human dignity being trampled underfoot by Western mass spectacle managers in charge of publicly funded humanitarian projects.

In another example of enduring bad practices, with aims which were certainly less noble, a human live exhibition was put on as part of an ethno-artistic multicultural festival. This at least had the merit of stirring up "a wave of controversy that received widespread media coverage: a global protest

55 Jean-Philippe Petit, "Peut-on exposer des Pygmées ?", *Le Soir en ligne*, 27 juillet 2002, Xavier Van Der Stappen, "Pygmées "exhibés" et débat manqué", *La Libre Belgique*, 16/08/2002, <http://www.cobelco.org/Library/pygmees_debatmanque.htm>; Nzogan Fomo, "L'affaire des Baka en Belgique", *Le Messenger*, Douala, Cameroun, 23 aout 2002, <http://www.wagne.net/messenger/messenger/1404/drame_baka.htm>; "L'affaire des Baka du Cameroun en Belgique", by Berhuse S. Thursday September 12, 2002, *Belgium Independent Media Center*, <<http://www.indymedia.be/news/2002/09/31136.php>>; Hugues Bertin Seumo, "Que sont devenus les pygmées Baka exposés dans un parc animalier en Belgique en été 2002 ?" (*Le Gabonais.com* 18/03/2005) <http://www.africatime.com/afrique/nouv_pana.asp?no_nouvelle=1793136-no_categorie=2>; Nadia Geerts, "Honte sur nous ! des pygmées exposés dans un parc animalier de Belgique !", *Résistances.be*, aout 2002, <http://www.resistances.be/nadia06.html>.

developed”, fuelled by the rapidity of mass media and “e-mail communication, with concern voiced by African-German organizations, rights organizations, academic associations, a Nobel Prize winner, and concerned individuals from many countries”. In July 2005, in a festival of African culture at the Augsburg zoo, several individuals brought from all over Africa were put on show in a fake native village in order to give the public a “taste of Africa”. Not only anti-racist campaigners, as in the Yvoire case, protested against what was readily perceived as a revival of the notorious *Volkerschau* so popular in nineteenth-century Germany⁵⁶, but anthropologists from the Max Planck Institute actively intervened in the debate and, after a four-days visit, drafted a detailed report analyzing the event in all its complexities. Their conclusion was that the initiative, irrespective of the organizers’ intentions, replicated practices dating back to the times of German colonialism and repropounded

images dating from those times [which] contribute to contemporary exoticizing, eroticizing, or stereotyping of Africans and are sometimes promoted as multiculturalism.

The Max Planck Institute researchers concluded that they had identified forms of “marketing of cultural difference” which could be considered “incentives toward racialization”; and ended their report with words of clear condemnation:

The racialization processes facilitated by the Augsburg zoo and other zoos are not benign because they can lay the groundwork for discrimination, barriers to social mobility, persecution, and repression⁵⁷.

A curious variation on the theme took place at the London Zoo in August 2005. This time the purpose was didactic or, better, provocative. Paradoxically, the exhibition set out to display not otherness but common origins and identity. The protagonists were not exotic, colored savages. “Caged and barely clothed in a rocky enclosure, eight British men and women were on display beginning Friday behind a sign reading ‘Warning: Humans in their Natural Environment’”. According to the Zoo spokesman, live – white – humans were exhibited to teach zoo-goers that “the human is just another primate”.

Even more recent examples could be cited. At the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, the “Maasai Journey” exhibit, which opened in May 2007, was constructed around the zoo’s permanent “African Savanna” featuring animals indigenous to the East African grasslands, and an “African Village” including four Maasai men as “cultural interpreters”. In this case too academics entered

56 Eike Reichardt, *Health, ‘Race’ and Empire: Popular-Scientific Spectacles and National Identity in Imperial Germany, 1871-1914* (no place of publication: Lulu.com, 2008).

57 Nina Glick Schiller, Data Dea, Markus Höhne, *African Culture and the Zoo in the 21st Century: The “African Village” in the Augsburg Zoo and Its Wider Implications. Report to the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology*, 4 July 2005, full text at < <http://www.eth.mpg.de/events/current/pdf/1120750934-01.pdf>>. A discussion on the Augsburg case took place in 2007 on H-Africa.

into a discussion of the initiative, relating it directly to the Augsburg precedent and keeping alive a debate on 21st century live human ethno-exhibitions, most remarkably with the direct participation of Maasai cultural representatives and the men taking part in the show⁵⁸. A still more recent case took place at the Zoological Gardens Eberswalde, Berlin, in June 2010. Organized by a humanitarian association, “This event is supposed to support the ethnic group of the San, the ‘last first people’, helping them to help themselves, in terms of a gentle integration into our modern age”⁵⁹. Dancing and drumming, exhibiting handicrafts, drawings by San children, bonfires, barbecues and baking original African food are all on offer, with Namibian protagonists who are intended to benefit from the initiative. Time will tell if here too public opinion will manifest reservations and criticisms.

Are these sorts of exhibitions of live human aliens as trophies to be considered as a typical prerogative of evil white European or American imperialists? Some contemporary reporting suggests a negative answer and reveals an even darker reality. In Thailand, November 2007, the women of a Northern Thai ethnic group known as the Padaung Hill Tribe, refugees from Burma in the 1980s, were put on commercial show by Thai businessmen. The visitors, attracted by tour operators, may have been mostly, although not exclusively, Europeans, but the organizers and profit makers were undoubtedly Thai. Protesters against the exploitation of the Padaung women spoke of people being held captive in villages and evoked the notorious models of the past we have been exploring. “The long-necked women of a popular Thai tourist destination have spoken out about the prison-like conditions they are forced to endure as inmates of what they describe as ‘a human zoo’”⁶⁰. Despite public outcry, press campaigns and the concern showed by the United Nations refugee agency, the long-necked women exhibition has continued in 2009 and 2010, probably on account of its central role in the local tourism industry. Then again at a pan-African Music Festival in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, July 2007, a group of 20 pygmy artists, including 10 women and a three-month-old baby, were given one tent to share in the city’s zoo, instead of being provided with hotel accommodation like the other guest artists. Here they became a visitor attraction as they went about preparing fires and cooking their meals. “They are used to living in close contact with nature” was the official reply to the protests of civil rights militants, and “the organizers say the grounds

58 Karen Furnweger, “The exhibit triangle: animals, habitats, peoples”, 2007, Itohan Osayimwese, “African Village on Display in Seattle Zoo”, *Africa Resource*, 2007 < http://www.africaresource.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=421:african-village-on-display-in-seattle-zoo&catid=136:race&Itemid=351>.

59 Bernd Hensch, Frauke von Versen, “African Zoo-Night ‘Awake the Lions!’”, original in German: <<http://blog.derbraunemob.info/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Zoo1.pdf>>.

60 “Thailand’s ‘human zoos’”, Associated Press, *Sunday Times*, Nov. 2007 <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/travel/article2837081.ece>>.

of Brazzaville zoo are closer to the pygmies' natural habitat"⁶¹. In fact a pan-African cultural event had failed to safeguard minority ethnic groups against exactly the kind of abuse they suffered at the hands of Western science and show business.

There is also a paradoxical side to these stories. Recent reports (May 2008) from the African independent news agency "Afrol News" have spoken of initiatives by some African national park administrators in Congo, Cameroon and the Central Africa Republic. Supplementary revenue sources have been provided for the most marginalized human groups like Baaka pygmies by inducing them to appear in the context of successful ecotourism projects. Income-generating activities as tourist guides and performers have apparently empowered natives, involving them in nature conservation schemes. In short, in a clear persistence of ancient models, "professional savages" have been recruited (just as they were in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) by African impresarios and managers intent on putting human beings, whose indigence begs the question of consent, on display in an ethno-show of pristine nature⁶².

61 "Pygmy artists housed in Congo zoo", *BBC News*, Friday, 13 July 2007, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6898241.stm>>.

62 "Central Africa's 'Pygmies' gain from ecotourism", *Afrol News*, 23 May 2008, <<http://www.afrol.com/articles/29052>>. For a detailed treatment of the phenomenon of "professional savages", see Roslyn Poignant, *Professional Savages: Captive Lives and Western Spectacle* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

Una nuova immagine dell'Islam (e del cristianesimo) nell'Europa del XVI secolo

LUCIA FELICI

I.

La nuova immagine dell'islam che si diffuse nell'Europa riformata del Cinquecento segnò una svolta fondamentale nel rapporto con l'Altro nell'età moderna. Le iniziative e le riflessioni culturali di dotti e riformatori protestanti mirarono a trasformare il ruolo religioso e politico del Turco: da nemico per eccellenza della società cristiana, da personificazione stessa del Male, esso divenne oggetto di conoscenza, di confronto, di studio¹. Questa trasformazione del paradigma tradizionale si basò, per alcune di queste figure, su una nuova

¹ V. Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme. Études sur l'attitude des réformateurs zurichois envers l'Islam 1510-1550* (San Francisco-London [etc.]: International Scholars Publications, 1998; I ed. Ginevra, 1978); J. W. Bohnstedt, "The Infidel Scourge of God: The Turkish Menace as Seen by German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 58 (1968): 9; M. J. Heat, *Crusading Commonplaces: La Noue, Lucinge and Rhetoric against the Turks* (Genève: Droz, 1986); Id., "Islamic Themes in religious polemic", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 50 (1988): 289-315; R. B. Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis. Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford: California, Stanford University Press, 1988); A. Rotondò, *Anticristo e Chiesa romana. Diffusione e metamorfosi d'un libello antiromano del Cinquecento*, in Id., *Studi di storia ereticale del Cinquecento*, I (Firenze: Olschki, 2008), 45-199; L. Felici, *Il papa Diavolo. Il paradigma dell'Anticristo nella pubblicistica europea del Cinquecento*, in *La Papauté à la Renaissance*, eds. F. Alazard et F. La Brasca (Paris: Champion, 2007), 533-569.

visione del cristianesimo e del futuro della società, universalistica e irenica. Benché la loro prospettiva restasse cristiana e lontana da un'accettazione della diversità quale si affermerà nel secolo dei Lumi² – il fine della conoscenza dell'Altro restava la sua riconduzione nell'alveo della 'vera' religione –, pure essi posero le premesse per lo sviluppo di una moderna concezione dell'alterità³. Se è indubbio che essa troverà piena espressione nel XVIII secolo, i suoi prodromi si collocano nel Cinquecento: cosa che, da un lato, conferma ancora una volta la fondatezza di una prospettiva storica che unisce il Rinascimento all'Illuminismo⁴, e dall'altro induce a rintracciare le origini, per quanto incerte e contraddittorie, del processo storico di affermazione della tolleranza religiosa. Un processo che, come osservava Antonio Rotondò, è stato caratterizzato da ambiguità, incoerenze, oscillazioni tra fughe in avanti e ritorni indietro, sulle quali non si può sovrapporre la nostra attuale concezione, frutto di una precisa evoluzione, pena la distorsione della prospettiva storica e l'incomprensione del nuovo che si insinua in idee e linguaggi tradizionali, modificandoli lentamente⁵.

Il rapporto con l'islam è un problema fondamentale nella storia della tolleranza. In ragione della natura, attribuitagli per secoli, di antitesi totale della civiltà cristiana, l'islam ha rappresentato il punto di riferimento fondamentale per la definizione dell'identità occidentale – in un processo di definizione a contrario – e per l'elaborazione di un'idea moderna dell'Altro e dei rapporti con esso. Con una felice espressione, Marina Formica ha definito l'islam lo "specchio" dei pregi e dei difetti della cristianità occidentale, delle sue speranze e delle sue angosce: e, come tale, ha giocato un ruolo chiave nel processo di costruzione identitaria dell'Occidente⁶. Nel caso dell'Italia, di una "embrionale italianità"⁷. La definizione dell'appartenenza comune trova difatti, è noto, nell'individuazione

2 R. Minuti, *Orientalismo e idee di tolleranza nella cultura francese del primo Settecento* (Firenze: Olschki, 2006); L. Scuccimarra, *I confini del mondo. Storia del cosmopolitismo dall'Antichità al Settecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006).

3 Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme*, 175.

4 D. Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento*, in *Eretici italiani e altri scritti*, a c. A. Prosperi (Torino: Einaudi, 1992); Id., *La periodizzazione dell'età del Rinascimento*, in Id., *Studi di storia* (Torino: Einaudi, 1959), 340-365; E. Garin, *Dal Rinascimento all'Illuminismo* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1970); H. Trevor-Roper, "Le origini religiose dell'Illuminismo", in Id., *Protestantesimo e trasformazione sociale* (Bari: Laterza, 1977), 241-282; G. H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Kirkville, Miss.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publisher, 1992³); A. Rotondò, "Tolleranza", in *L'Illuminismo. Dizionario storico*, a c. V. Ferrone e D. Roche (Bari: Laterza, 1997), 62-78 (ma la prospettiva è presente nei suoi scritti e nelle collane da lui fondate); J. I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

5 Rotondò, "Tolleranza", 62.

6 M. Formica, "Giochi di specchi. Dinamiche identitarie e rappresentazioni del Turco nella cultura italiana del Cinquecento", *Rivista storica italiana*, 120 (2008): 5-53, 8 (con bibliografia).

7 Formica, "Giochi di specchi", 52.

dell'estraneo da sé un momento cruciale⁸. E l'islam, come mostrano i recenti eventi storici, continua ancora oggi a svolgere tale funzione, malgrado i cambiamenti avvenuti⁹. Peraltro, riferendosi al più generale conflitto tra mondo orientale e occidentale, Anthony Pagden rileva che a opporli è “una divisione spesso artificiale, sempre metaforica, eppure immensamente forte”¹⁰.

Il mutato atteggiamento dei riformatori cinquecenteschi acquista un valore peculiare sia in questo quadro sia considerando i cambiamenti contemporaneamente avvenuti nel mondo cattolico, dove alla demonizzazione religiosa del Turco fu sostituita la sua rappresentazione minacciosa sul piano politico: esso divenne la potenza militare antagonista, da affrontare in quello che fu sempre più presentato come un vero e proprio scontro di civiltà, con funzioni palinogenetiche della società cristiana e con effetti mitologizzanti del papato impegnato nella “guerra santa”¹¹.

La revisione dell'immagine tradizionale dell'islam fu inizialmente opera dei riformatori “magisteriali”¹², primo fra tutti Lutero. Lutero ruppe, già nel 1521, il paradigma tradizionale che identificava l'Anticristo con il Turco e lo sostituì con il papato, reo della corruzione della cristianità sin dalle origini: il vero avversario della *societas Christiana* non fu più una realtà esterna a essa, ma collocata nel suo cuore, Roma. Il bersaglio principale della lotta religiosa divenne la chiesa cattolica e la ‘guerra santa’ contro i turchi apparve illegittima. Anche se l'islam era ancora considerato un'eresia da sconfiggere, in un quadro interpretativo che restava apocalittico, questa concezione determinò comunque la diffusione di un atteggiamento conoscitivo e missionario in luogo dello spirito di crociata – il sepolcro da liberare era, secondo Lutero, la Sacra Scrittura, non Gerusalemme. Da allora, nei paesi protestanti furono prese numerose iniziative per conoscere il mondo musulmano¹³.

8 A. D. Smith, *Le origini etniche delle nazioni* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998); A. M. Thiesse, *La creazione delle identità nazionali in Europa* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001); *L'invenzione della tradizione*, a c. E. Hobsbawm e T. Ranger (Torino: Einaudi, 2002); A. Prosperi, “L'Europa e le altre civiltà, le altre civiltà e l'Europa”, in *Le radici storiche dell'Europa*, a c. M. A. Visceglia (Roma: Viella, 2007).

9 Per un ampio studio del problema, dove tuttavia non si fa riferimento al dibattito intellettuale, vedi A. Wheatcroft, *Infedeli. 638-2003. Il lungo conflitto fra cristianesimo e islam* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2003).

10 A. Pagden, *Mondi in guerra. 2500 anni di conflitto tra Oriente e Occidente* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2009), X.

11 Formica, “Giochi di specchi”.

12 Uso questo termine nell'accezione di G. H. Williams.

13 H. Preuss, *Die Vorstellungen vom Antichrist im späteren Mittelalter, bei Luther und in der konfessionellen Polemik. Ein Beitrag zur Theologie Luthers und zur Geschichte der christlichen Frömmigkeit* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1906); Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme, passim*; H. Bobzin, “Luther und der Islam, Anweisung zu Konfrontation oder Dialog?”, in *Erziehung zur Kulturbegegnung, Modelle für das Zusammenleben von Menschen verschiedenen Glaubens, Schwerpunkt Christentum-Islam* (Rissen, 1985), 117-131 e Id., *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa* (Beirut-Stuttgart:

Le più rilevanti furono quelle di intellettuali indipendenti, ‘spiriti liberi’ che furono ai margini o fuori dalla Riforma ‘magisteriale’ a causa del loro atteggiamento critico verso i dogmatismi, vecchi e nuovi. Essi pubblicarono opere che permisero la conoscenza della cultura e della religione musulmana: in primo luogo il Corano, in traduzione latina, e poi storie, grammatiche, resoconti di viaggi. Oppure cercarono di apprendere le lingue orientali, viaggiando in qualche caso nell’Impero ottomano. Ma a essere innovativo fu soprattutto il loro modo di guardare all’islam, come a tutte le religioni. Questi “quêteurs de l’universel”, come li definì Lucien Febvre¹⁴, mirarono a fondare una religione universale, al fine di stabilire la pace universale. Erasmo, sulla scia di Cusano, fu il loro capostipite. Guillaume Postel, Theodor Bibliander, Giovanni Leonardo Sartori, Iacopo Paleologo, e per altri versi Sebastiano Castellione, Celio Secondo Curione, Theodor Zwinger, ne furono alcune delle figure più significative nel mondo riformato del Cinquecento. Il loro scopo fu quello di costruire un’ecumene globale, che riunisse tutti i popoli della terra superando le divisioni religiose e politiche, fonti di distruzione della società cristiana e dell’idea stessa di cristianesimo. Questo mirabile edificio aveva le sue fondamenta in una religione povera di dogmi ma ricca di principi etici, capace di accomunare tutti gli uomini perché basata su pochissimi *fundamentalia fidei* e sulle nozioni del buono e del giusto iscritte nella ragione umana, e non necessariamente legate, quindi, alla rivelazione. Questa religione era ancora il cristianesimo, considerato la fede superiore e vera: ma un cristianesimo completamente rinnovato, etico, quasi adogmatico e con aperture relativiste. Il dialogo interreligioso che quegli uomini cercarono d’instaurare si iscrisse in questo straordinario disegno universalistico e irenico.

Malgrado la loro importanza per lo sviluppo culturale del mondo moderno, questi personaggi sono poco studiati. Anche nel bel libro recentemente pubblicato da Luca Scuccimarra, in cui si analizza il problema del cosmopolitismo dall’antica Grecia all’Illuminismo, le numerose pagine dedicate a Erasmo mirano a mettere in luce soprattutto i limiti del suo cosmopolitismo, anche se ritenuti quelli propri del suo tempo. Ossia di un contesto culturale che, ancora largamente ancorato alla tradizione greco-romana-giudaica e aristotelica nell’interpretazione della storia e nella valutazione della natura degli uomini, vedeva i primi, difficili tentativi di dialogo interculturale. Pur riconoscendo il contributo di Erasmo nell’elaborazione dell’idea dell’ecumene globale, nella creazione di un progetto di concordia esteso all’intera umanità e nella nascita di un nuovo atteggiamento verso i turchi, Scuccimarra sottolinea che l’umanista olandese restò

Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), cap. I. Già Erasmo aveva preso posizione contro la “guerra santa” nell’ambito della sua riflessione antibellicista: vedi, a esempio, il *Dulce bellum inexpertis*, in Erasmo da Rotterdam, *Adagia, Sei saggi politici in forma di proverbi*, a c. S. Seidel Menchi (Torino: Einaudi, 1980), 274 sgg.

14 L. Febvre, *Il problema dell’incredulità nel secolo XVI. La religione di Rabelais* (Torino: Einaudi, 1978), 108.

“europocentrico e cristocentrico”¹⁵. Erasmo intese in effetti ricondurre gli ‘altri’ al cristianesimo – un cristianesimo ‘largo’, ma sempre religione ‘superiore’ – e considerò la civiltà europea la sola possibile, in confronto a quella turca o a quella americana. Ma Scuccimarra non considera la strada nuova che l’umanista aprì con la sua riflessione, né menziona i suoi ‘eredi’; i quali, percorrendo tale strada, getteranno le basi per una valutazione diversa delle altre civiltà.

Mettere in luce tutti gli attori possibili dell’universalismo del XVI secolo risulta essenziale anche sotto un altro aspetto. Il reperimento di voci sconosciute o marginali consente di ricostruire sia una storia più completa della tolleranza religiosa – dato che sovente da esse provenne il maggiore contributo¹⁶ – sia un’immagine dell’Europa più realistica e sfaccettata di quella definita dalla categoria della confessionalizzazione, impiegata da molti storici nell’analisi storica del mondo moderno. Limitare l’indagine alle pratiche di coesistenza o all’azione delle istituzioni statali ed ecclesiastiche, con i loro funzionari, nello spazio ‘confessionalizzato’, significa infatti escludere le idee, le teorizzazioni, le persone che ruppero con la tradizione e che consentirono la nascita e lo sviluppo dei paradigmi culturali della modernità¹⁷.

II.

La prima figura che si staglia in questo orizzonte universalistico ancora sfuocato è quella di Theodor Bibliander¹⁸. Theodor Buchmann, detto Bibliander (1505-1564)

¹⁵ Scuccimarra, *I confini del mondo*, 179, 189 sgg. e passim su Erasmo.

¹⁶ Rotondò, “Tolleranza”, 63.

¹⁷ Sulla confessionalizzazione vedi *Disciplina dell’anima, disciplina del corpo, disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna*, a c. P. Prodi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994) e *Il Concilio di Trento e il moderno*, a c. P. Prodi e W. Reinhard (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996); *Coexister dans l’intolérance. L’édit de Nantes (1598)*, études rassemblées par M. Grandjean et B. Roussel (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1998), soprattutto la presentazione di M. Grandjean; *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700. Essays in Honour and Memory of Bodo Nishan*, eds. J. M. Headley, H. J. Hillerbrand and A. J. Papalas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). Per la critica di questa idea vedi G. Fragnito, “Istituzioni ecclesiastiche e costruzione dello Stato. Riflessioni e spunti”, in *Origini dello Stato. Processi di formazione statale in Italia fra medioevo ed età moderna*, a c. G. Chittolini, A. Molho e P. Schiera (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 531-550; G. Alessi, “Discipline. I nuovi orizzonti del disciplinamento sociale”, *Storica*, II (1996): 7-37; M. Firpo, *Vittore Soranzo. Vescovo ed eretico. Riforma della Chiesa e Inquisizione nell’Italia del Cinquecento* (Bari: Laterza, 2006), 511-517; E. Brambilla, *La giustizia intollerante. Inquisizione e tribunali confessionali in Europa (secoli IV-XVIII)* (Roma: Carocci, 2006); L. Felici, *Profezie di riforma e idee di concordia religiosa. Visioni e speranze dell’esule piemontese Giovanni Leonardi Sartori* (Firenze: Olschki, 2009).

¹⁸ La sola monografia su Bibliander resta E. Egli, *Analecta Reformatoria*, II (Zürich: Zürcher & Furrer, 1901), 1-144, ma vedi ora *Theodor Bibliander (1505-1564). Ein Thurgauer im gelehrten Zürich der Reformationszeit*, hrsg. C. Christ-von Wedel (Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2005) e C. Christ-von Wedel, “Erasmus und die Zürcher Reformatoren. Huldrich Zwingli, Leo Jud, Konrad Pellikan, Heinrich Bullinger und Theodor Bibliander”, in *Erasmus in Zürich*, hrsg. C. Christ-von Wedel und U. B. Leu (Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2004), 77-165. Rilevanti osservazioni sul suo pensiero sono in J. V. Pollet, *Martin Bucer. Études sur la correspondance avec*

fu una personalità di primo piano nella cultura europea del Cinquecento, benché nei secoli successivi se ne sia persa la memoria. La sua attività e il suo profilo culturale lo collocano fra i primi eredi di Erasmo, che tuttavia superò per ampiezza di interessi e di concezione religiosa: Bibliander, definito da Pierre Bayle “un homme fort universel”, nonostante il suo cristocentrismo ed europocentrismo¹⁹, estese il suo sguardo ai popoli e alle lingue orientali, ricercando le radici comuni della religione universale mediante la linguistica, la filologia, la teologia. Gli studi filologici, svolti durante l'insegnamento di teologia a Zurigo, ne fecero un ‘padre fondatore’ dell'esegesi scritturistica²⁰. Il suo *De ratione communi omnium linguarum et literarum commentarius* (1548) propose un rivoluzionario progetto di unificazione linguistica e religiosa, mediante l'individuazione delle leggi comuni agli idiomi; la sua grammatica ebraica (1535), frutto di solide competenze, fu considerata la migliore del tempo; l'edizione latina del Corano, da lui pubblicata nel 1543 con grandissimo e duraturo successo, fu la prima versione a stampa del testo sacro e una vera e propria ‘enciclopedia’ dell'islam. Nelle sue intenzioni, vi era di divulgare poi la Bibbia nelle lingue orientali. Altri suoi scritti, molti dei quali ancora inediti²¹, testimoniano della sua attenzione verso l'islam e altre culture, all'interno e oltre i confini della *respublica Christiana*, nell'ambito di un grandioso disegno irenico. Ne erano pilastri le idee, care all'Umanesimo cristiano, dell'immensa bontà divina e dell'indipendenza del volere umano, inquadrare in una riflessione neoplatonica: per difenderle contro i fautori della dottrina predestinazionista, Bibliander non esitò ad abbandonare la cattedra che occupava da trent'anni con grandissima fama di teologo e di controversista. L'oblio avvolse poi la sua opera.

L'interesse di Bibliander verso l'islam non fu occasionale²². A suscitarlo in lui, come in molti altri, fu l'arrivo degli Ottomani sotto le mura di Vienna, che

de nombreux textes inédits, II (S.l.: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), 314 sgg., e in Rotondò, *Anticristo e Chiesa romana* e Id., “Guillaume Postel e Basilea”, ora in Id., *Studi di storia ereticale*, I, 45-199; II, 443-476.

19 P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, I, 1 (Rotterdam: R. Leers, 1697), 584. È applicabile anche a Bibliander il giudizio di Scuccimarra sulla posizione di Erasmo: “l'ideale di una fraternità universale [...] appare indissolubilmente legato al dogma dell'unità in Cristo, all'avvento della patria escatologica [...] è la dottrina paolina del corpo mistico [...] a dettare il ritmo di quel cosmopolitismo irenico”, che appare, così, “profondamente ancorato all'orizzonte di una forma di vita tutta interna alla peculiare vicenda della civiltà europea”. Scuccimarra, *I confini del mondo*, 189.

20 J. H. Hottinger, *Schola Tigurinorum Carolina* (Tiguri: J. H. Hamberger, 1664), 48, 72.

21 I manoscritti di Bibliander si conservano nella Zentralbibliothek di Zurigo.

22 Sulla sua opera di orientalista vedi Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme*, cap. VII e *passim*; Bobzin, *Der Koran* in particolare cap. III; L. Felici, “L'Islam in Europa. L'edizione del Corano di Theodor Bibliander (1543)”, *Cromohs*, 11 (2006): 1-12, versione a stampa in *Traduzioni e circolazione delle idee nella cultura europea tra '500 e '700. Atti del convegno internazionale, Firenze, Dipartimento di studi storici e geografici, 22-23 settembre 2006*, a c. G. Imbruglia, R. Minuti e L. Simonutti (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 2009), 35-63; Ead., *Profezie di riforma*, cap. III (con bibliografia).

impose alla sua sensibilità religiosa e politica la ‘questione islamica’ per lasciarla presente in tutta la sua vita. La sua prima risposta fu la redazione, già nel 1529, dello scritto *Ad nominis Christiani socios consultatio, quam ratione Turcarum dira potentia repelli possit ac debeat a populo Christiano. Reperies hic quoque lector, de rationibus, quibus solida certaue concordia et pax in ecclesia et republica christiana constitui possit, deque ortu et incrementis imperii Turcici, item de superstitione Mahumetana, et aliis quibusdam rebus lectu et cogitata plane dignissimis*²³. In esso venivano enunciati alcuni capisaldi della posizione di Bibliander nei confronti dell’islam: come si evinceva dal titolo, si intendeva combattere quella che veniva considerata l’eresia per eccellenza, in quanto somma delle eresie antiche, ma soltanto con mezzi incruenti, ossia con la predicazione del Vangelo, al fine di realizzare la riconciliazione religiosa.

Quattordici anni dopo, Bibliander dette alle stampe la sua famosa edizione del Corano, un’opera fondamentale per la conoscenza dell’islam in Europa e per la nascita di una nuova valutazione di esso, con il titolo *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vita, ac doctrina, ipseque Alcoran*²⁴. Nel volume veniva ripresentata la traduzione latina realizzata da Robert de Ketton nel XII secolo, con importanti annotazioni di mano di Bibliander e con il corredo di un monumentale apparato di scritti sulla civiltà musulmana, sia facenti parte del *corpus Cluniacensis* sia più recenti. Precedeva questa mole di scritti un’*Apologia*, nella quale Bibliander illustrava la sua posizione sull’islam e le ragioni che l’avevano indotto alla stampa dell’opera, malgrado le molte opposizioni che essa

23 La *Consultatio* fu edita a Basilea, nella stamperia di Nikolaus Brylinger, nel 1542. Sull’opera vedi Segesvary, *L’Islam et la Réforme*, cap. VII.

24 Il titolo completo era: *Quo velut authentico legum divinarum codice Agareni ac Turcae, aliique Christo adversantes populi reguntur quae ante annos CCCC, vir multis hominibus, Divi quoque Bernardi testimonio clarissimus, D. Petrus abbas Cluniacensis per viros eruditos, ad fidei Christianae ac sanctae matris Ecclesiae propugnationem, ex Arabica lingua in Latinam transferri curavit. His adiunctae sunt confutationes multorum et quidem probatissimorum authorum Arabum, Graecorum et Latinorum, una cum doctissimi viri Philippi Melanchtonis praemonitione. Quibus velut instructissima fidei catholicae propugnatorum acie, perversa dogmata et tota superstitio Machumetica profligantur. Adiunctae sunt etiam, Turcarum, qui non tam sectatores Machumeticae vaesaniae, quam vindices et propugnatores, nominisque Christiani acerrimos hostes aliquot iam seculis praestiterunt, res gestae maxime memorabiles, a DCCC annis ad nostra usque tempora. Haec omnia in unum volumen redacta sunt, opera et studio Theodori Bibliandri, Ecclesiae Tigurini ministri, qui collatis etiam exemplaribus Latinis et Arab. Alcorani textum emendavit, et marginib. apposuit Annotationes, quibus doctrinae Machumeticae absurditas, contradictiones, origines errorum divinaeque scripturae depravationes, atque alia id genus iudicantur. Quae quidem in lucem edidit ad gloriam Domini Iesu Christi, et multiplicem Ecclesiae utilitatem, adversus Satanam principem tenebrarum, eiusque nuncium Antichristum: quem oportet manifestari, et confici spiritu oris Christi Servatoris nostri. L’opera ebbe quattro edizioni, in parte diverse. Su di essa vedi *Luhers Werke*, LIII, 561-568; P. Manuel, “Une encyclopédie de l’Islam. Le recueil de Bibliander 1543 et 1550”, *En terre de l’Islam*, XXI (1946): 31-37; J. Pfister, “Das Türkenbüchlein Theodor Biblianders”, *Theologische Zeitschrift*, IX (1953): 438-454; H. Bobzin, “Über Theodor Bibliander Arbeit am Koran (1542/43)”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 186 (1986): 347-363; Id., *Der Koran* cit., cap. III; C. De Frede, *La prima traduzione italiana del Corano sullo sfondo dei rapporti tra Cristianità e Islam nel Cinquecento* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario orientale, 1967), 1-13 e miei scritti citati alla nota 22.*

aveva incontrato nella pur liberale Basilea²⁵. Mentre l'edizione di Bibliander è stata poi svalutata dagli islamisti a causa dei suoi limiti linguistici (Bibliander conosceva poco l'arabo), l'*Apologia* resta un *pamphlet* di grande rilievo culturale per le idee d'avanguardia che propone e per le persistenze che testimonia: è, insomma, un documento straordinario del passaggio da una concezione tradizionale a una innovativa della civiltà musulmana, che pose le basi per un rapporto diverso con l'islam e con l'Altro in generale.

A legare Bibliander alla cultura del suo tempo fu lo spirito apogetico e missionario e i motivi pratici che ispirarono la sua decisione di pubblicare il Corano. Il dotto zurighese presentò infatti la sua iniziativa come “non modo utilis, verum etiam necessaria” per provvedere di strumenti di difesa sia coloro che intrattenevano rapporti commerciali o di convivenza con i turchi sia l'intera cristianità, acquisito che la religione musulmana era un'eresia da contrastare e i suoi sostenitori fedeli da convertire alla ‘vera’ fede cristiana²⁶. La convinzione della superiorità del cristianesimo era salda in Bibliander, quanto era netta la sua opposizione all'islamismo, a causa del monoteismo, dell'ortoprassi, del miscuglio di antiche eresie, di elementi fantastici e troppo razionali presenti in quella confessione. La lettura del Corano doveva infatti soddisfare il duplice scopo di disvelare la natura ereticale del maomettanesimo e far “risplendere la dignità, l'eccellenza e la grandezza della dottrina cristiana”²⁷. Tradizionale era pure il linguaggio impiegato dal teologo: la religione musulmana veniva definita un “cancer” che devastava la società cristiana, le sue dottrine “perversa dogmata”, piene di “superstitiones”, “absurditates, contradictiones, depravationes”²⁸. I motivi politici si sommarono a quelli religiosi. A causa dell'espansionismo armato dell'Impero ottomano, il confronto con esso si profilava agli occhi di Bibliander come uno scontro fra civiltà dai caratteri apocalittici, descritto dalle

25 L'*Apologia* è ora edita in traduzione francese in *Le Coran à la Renaissance: plaidoyer pour une traduction*, Introduction, traduction et notes de H. Lamarque (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2007). Sulle opposizioni incontrate alla pubblicazione dell'opera vedi M. Steinmann, *Johannes Oporinus, ein Basler Buchdrucker um die Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Basel-Stuttgart: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1967), 20-31; Pollet, *Martin Bucer*, I, 177 sgg.; K. R. Hagenbach, “Luther und der Koran vor dem Rathe zu Basel”, *Beiträge zur vaterländischen Geschichte*, IX (1870): 291-326.

26 Bibliander, *Apologia*, b5r: “Quare mihi videtur hoc tempore lectio Alcorani non modo utilis, verum etiam necessaria, ut melius ad omnem fortunam nos parare atque instruere possimus. Sive enim abeundum nobis in captivitatem sit, quod Deus avertat, sive in patria diutius vivere permittatur, summopere conducet inspexisse in authentico libro Turcarum [...] praeeparatas habere sententias verissimas ex divinis scripturis primum, deinde ex hostium scriptis argumenta, quibus velut suo gladio iugulentur”.

27 Bibliander, *Apologia*, b4r.

28 Bibliander, *Apologia*, a5v-a6r, b4r-v. Il Corano era giudicato un testo pieno di menzogne, oscurità, eresie. Alle pp. b1v-b2r si illustravano le somiglianze fra le dottrine dell'islamismo e quelle delle antiche sette eretiche. Cfr. H. Bobzin, *Der Koran*, 231 sg. L'immagine del “cancro” è presente nell'*Apologia* (“depasta est velut cancer”), a3v.

profezie bibliche sulla fine del mondo²⁹. La vittoria finale del cristianesimo appariva comunque indubitabile ai suoi occhi.

La rottura con la tradizione avveniva subito dopo, e in maniera dirompente. Bibliander individuava la conoscenza come fondamento del rapporto con l'Altro. Il confronto con le altre civiltà poteva avvenire, secondo il dotto zurighese, solo mediante essa, perché né la violenza né l'ignoranza avevano mai favorito l'affermazione della verità. Spirito irenico, senso storico e un incipiente atteggiamento comparatistico si fondevano nella formulazione della concezione di Bibliander. Le armi cruente erano bandite in osservanza al Vangelo, la sola "arma" lecita nell'agone religioso, dato che la coercizione era contraria al cristianesimo, oltre che vana e controproducente, come dimostrava la storia delle persecuzioni contro le eresie, mai sconfitte con la distruzione dei libri o con i mezzi repressivi³⁰. La conoscenza invece, sia dei testi pagani sia ebrei, aveva reso i cristiani più consapevoli nei loro giudizi e nelle loro scelte religiose³¹. Tutte le culture, anche se diverse o antitetiche rispetto alla propria, erano reputate portatrici di elementi di verità³². Questi elementi potevano essere individuati soltanto attraverso uno studio realizzato liberamente: il raffronto tra le diverse opinioni era infatti l'unica garanzia per lo sviluppo del senso critico atto a sceverare il vero, innanzitutto nel campo teologico:

Praeterea ex instituto est omnium artium, non modo novisse virtutes, et quid recte atque ad finem propositum accomode fiat, verum etiam vitia: et tam dare praecepta quid vitandum sit, quam quid agendum [...] in theologia observatu maxime necessarium est³³.

Lo studio della storia umana diveniva un momento centrale e imprescindibile di questo percorso conoscitivo poiché consentiva di ricostruire un quadro complessivo del cammino dell'uomo e del disegno divino che in esso si esprimeva. L'ignoranza della civiltà musulmana, che tanta parte aveva nella storia globale del mondo, non appariva pertanto ammissibile, pena l'incomprensione di essa:

Porro quis nescit, quanta sit utilitas historiae, quae prudentiam et facultatem affert iudicandi de omnibus vitae humanae partibus? [...] Est autem historiae, et quidem ecclesiasticae pars expositio doctrinae et aliarum rerum Machumetis. Ut liquide perspici queat, quo auctore, qua occasione, quibus rationibus et genere doctrinae

29 Cfr. Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme*, 121 sgg., 142.

30 Bibliander, *Apologia*, b1r.

31 Bibliander, *Apologia*, a3v-a4v. Sartori chiamava a testimoniare in merito anche i Padri della chiesa.

32 Bibliander, *Apologia*, a4v. Nel suo famoso libro contro il Concilio *Amplior consideratio decreti synodali Tridentini* (1551), Bibliander individuò nell'ignoranza anche la causa dei contrasti religiosi e nella conoscenza il mezzo per il loro superamento.

33 Bibliander, *Apologia*, a4v.

Arabes primum, apud quos olim florentissimae fuerunt ecclesiae Christi, deinde tot populi Christiani abucti sint ab ecclesiae catholicae commercio, et in acerrimos hostes conversi [...]. Qui haec non legi velit in populo Christiano, eiiciat extra limina ecclesiae historiam universam ethnicorum et ecclesiasticam. Oportet ut deleat magnam partem sacrae sanctaeque historiae, ut dei verbo vim inferat, ut divinae sapientiae consilia reprehendat damnetque³⁴.

Queste posizioni di Bibliander si iscrivevano in una visione religiosa generale, che aveva nel neoplatonismo, di tradizione pichiana e ficiniana, nella nozione erasmiana di Dio e in sue concezioni originali i suoi punti di forza, sullo sfondo di una sempre più acuita e sofferente coscienza della situazione conflittuale del mondo e della volontà di porvi rimedio. Su questa visione intendo concentrare qui l'attenzione per comprendere i presupposti culturali dell'atteggiamento di Bibliander verso le culture 'altre' in generale e l'islam in particolare, data l'attenzione peculiare che mantenne nei confronti di esso³⁵. Bibliander illustrò il suo pensiero con grande chiarezza già in uno scritto del 1532, da lui redatto e declamato in occasione del suo insediamento nella cattedra di Sacra Scrittura al Grossmünster di Zurigo, l'*Oratio [...] ad enarrationem Esaiae prophetarum principis*³⁶. Il testo era dedicato all'esame della rivelazione divina e delle sue modalità di espressione: e partendo dal quel tema affrontava, in modo rivoluzionario, la questione dell'essenza e dei caratteri della religione, con evidenti ripercussioni sul problema dell'integrazione dell'Altro, turco, ebreo o pagano che fosse. L'identificazione della teologia con la profezia e l'individuazione della profezia e della *lex naturae* come principali strumenti della rivelazione, operate da Bibliander, aprivano infatti scenari del tutto nuovi nel panorama religioso e culturale dell'epoca. L'assoluta preminenza accordata al profeta, in qualità di principale portavoce della verità divina, di educatore e di giudice, comportava l'incardinamento della religione sulla comunicazione diretta e universale della rivelazione, a tutto svantaggio del monopolio ecclesiastico del sacro, nelle sue differenti versioni istituzionali³⁷. Le dichiarazioni di Bibliander in merito alla necessità della tradizione e delle funzioni ecclesiastiche non riducevano la portata della sua posizione in merito all'illimitatezza della rivelazione, e le conseguenze eversive di essa³⁸.

La rivelazione divina rappresentava per Bibliander lo strumento di comprensione del senso della realtà umana e celeste e la ragione umana il 'luogo' di tale illuminazione.

34 Bibliander, *Apologia*, a5r-v.

35 Sulla concezione irenica di Bibliander vedi L. Felici, "Ai confini della 'Respublica Christiana'. La concezione irenica di Theodor Bibliander", in corso di stampa in *La centralità del dubbio. Un progetto di Antonio Rotondò*, a c. C. Hermanin e L. Simonutti (Firenze: Olschki).

36 L'orazione, *dicta III idus Ianuarii*, fu edita in quello stesso anno da Christoph Froschauer. Felici, "Ai confini della 'Respublica Christiana'".

37 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 16r, 28r.

38 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 13v, 14r, 15r-v.

Nelle facoltà razionali erano iscritte da Dio le leggi di natura che fornivano a tutta l'umanità, di ogni tempo e di ogni luogo, le norme di vita e i principi di probità e giustizia consoni con la volontà divina (“Is igitur Deus commune bonum veritatis, hoc est, suiipsius usum fructum concessit etiam Ethnicis hominibus, et leges illis fixit [...] scriptas et impressas in corda hominibus. Quae [...] leges naturae vocantur”)³⁹. La mente umana diveniva così il punto di congiunzione del divino con l'umano nella sua forma più alta e la sede di universali principi etici⁴⁰. Mediante le facoltà razionali, divinamente illuminate, si perveniva alla conoscenza dell'ordine terrestre e divino e del principio unico che ne regolava la vita, al di là della varietà delle sue manifestazioni. La presenza divina era difatti universale, “sane omnibus temporibus ferme in omnibus nationibus”, sia pure con espressioni diverse e più o meno perspicue nei popoli⁴¹. Tutti gli aspetti della ‘città terrestre’ e della ‘città celeste’ dovevano essere ricondotti a quell'unico principio, di cui erano riflessi⁴². Molti esempi tratti dalla storia e dalla letteratura delle civiltà antiche e orientali, dalla Persia, all'India, all'Egitto, alla Grecia, a Roma, al mondo barbarico testimoniavano del sempiterno manifestarsi della verità divina in ‘portavoce di Dio’, che avevano rivelato, nei termini propri della loro cultura, “multa [...] de Deo, sacris dogmatibus consona”⁴³. La diversità delle espressioni richiedeva uno sforzo interpretativo per far emergere il nucleo di verità contenuto in esse sotto le incrostazioni prodotte da falsi profeti e falsi interpreti del messaggio divino nel corso del tempo, per ritrovare cioè quelle “gemme tra basilischi e scorpioni, oro nello sterco, argento tra metalli vili” sparsi da Dio. Tale impegno si traduceva nel pensiero di Bibliander in un compito conoscitivo delle altre civiltà di elevatissimo valore religioso e culturale⁴⁴.

La formulazione di una nozione di verità non univoca, ma inclusiva delle diversità confessionali e culturali, portava a valorizzare ogni civiltà, in quanto espressione divina. L'appropriazione dei frammenti di verità contenuti nelle diverse culture consentiva altresì l'opera di ricomposizione del quadro unitario del disegno salvifico divino, un'opera considerata da Bibliander indispensabile per la riconciliazione dell'intera umanità, nell'attesa dell'immanente instaurazione

39 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 17 r-v. Altrove Bibliander chiariva l'espressione “in corda hominum” indicando con essa le facoltà razionali: vedi p. 22v. Nell'opera intitolata significativamente *Christianismus sempiternus, verus certus et immutabilis, in quo solo possunt homines beari* (Zurigo: C. Froschauer, 1556), Bibliander dimostrava l'esistenza di una “scientia recte vivendi” presente dall'inizio dei tempi come patrimonio comune di tutti i popoli e indicava nei Vangeli il testo per risolvere le questioni dottrinali più spinose nel cristianesimo e tra le varie religioni.

40 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 22v: “Par est hunc credi esse igniculum de mente creatoris omnium Dei mortali pectori inditum, aut faciem Dei repercussam in humana mente”.

41 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 17r: “Aliis proprius, aliis velut de longiquo, aliis clare et dilucide, aliis ceu per somnium, per transennam, per nebulam, per corpus aliquod diaphanon”.

42 Bibliander, *Oratio*.

43 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 18r sgg.

44 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 21r.

del regno spirituale di Cristo sulla terra, da lui preconizzata. La prospettiva cristiana e apocalittica non depotenziava però il relativismo religioso insito nella riflessione di Bibliander, per cui il raggiungimento della verità avveniva solo attraverso un processo conoscitivo libero e razionale delle verità relative contenute nelle altre fedi e culture.

L'accesso universale alla conoscenza era postulato da Bibliander sulla base di un'idea positiva e universalistica della misericordia divina. Bibliander faceva propria la nozione della *Concio de immensa Dei misericordia* di Erasmo per sostenere la natura infinitamente buona di Dio, "commune bonum" tale da estendere la concessione della grazia e della salvezza a tutta l'umanità, senza esclusione di alcuno⁴⁵. La predestinazione divina era aliena dall'orizzonte concettuale di Bibliander, il quale già nell'*Oratio* dichiarò che Dio desiderava il raggiungimento della verità divina e della salvezza da parte di tutti gli uomini ("Quid dico [Deus] noluit excludere? Maxime cupit, ut verbum ipsius docet, omnes homines ad cognitionem veritatis magnis passibus contendere, ac salutis aeternae consortes fieri")⁴⁶. Successivamente, egli si scagliò con forza contro la dottrina predestinazionista additandola come una concezione fondamentalmente anticristiana, "falsa, pestilenziale, eversiva della pietà, contraria a Dio" e priva di fondamento nella Sacra Scrittura, poiché negava la misericordia e la giustizia del Padre e le promesse di Cristo, laddove era certo che la promessa della grazia fosse "universale e immutabile"⁴⁷. I suoi avversari ebbero buon gioco nell'accusarlo di pelagianesimo e di sinergismo.

Il dogma della predestinazione era frutto, per Bibliander, dell'ignoranza, che veniva ancora una volta individuata come la causa di concezioni e atteggiamenti erronei: in questo caso, l'ignoranza del destino di salvezza stabilito da Dio per l'umanità aveva generato la nascita dell'idea, del tutto implausibile, di una pregiudiziale selezione divina tra pii ed empi. La visione ottimistica, tutta rinascimentale ed erasmiana, che Bibliander aveva della divinità e dell'uomo lo induceva altresì a disconnettere il giudizio divino dai comportamenti umani, e a reputare questi ultimi del tutto liberi e mai oggetto di una definitiva condanna da parte di Dio. Il cedimento alla natura carnale o il tradimento del messaggio evangelico erano così derubricati da indizi della dannazione eterna

45 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 17r: "Nihil extra suam bonitatem et providentiam reliquit, omnibus prospicit et moderatur, omnia gubernat, ac ne consistere quidem aliquid potest extra ipsum".

46 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 20v.

47 T. Bibliander, *De summo bono De summo bono, et hominis felicitate summaque perfectione sive de perfecta restitutione generis humani per dei filium incarnatum. Sententia recta et concursus ipsius domini Iesu Christi, apostolorum, prophetarum, Ebraeorum veterum, Sibyllarum sapientissimorum gentilium, et theologorum Christianorum. In qua continetur et inclusa est sententia recta et concursus sanctae catholicae dei ecclesiae de fruitione spirituali et sacramentali carnis et sanguinis domini nostri Iesu Christi. Quam Theodorus Bibliander ecclesiae Tigurinae minister ex probatissimis autoribus compendiose et fide historica exposuit. Quam utilis et necessaria sit omnibus cognitio summi boni, et finis rerum humanarum. L'opera è manoscritta e priva di numerazione delle carte. Si rinvia pertanto alla trascrizione dei brani effettuata da Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme*, 236, note 44-45, 51.*

a temporanee deviazioni, sempre recuperabili con il perdono e il reintegro nel primitivo stato di grazia⁴⁸.

In alcuni testi manoscritti successivi all'*Oratio*, Bibliander precisò i contorni del *regnum Dei* e indicò la via per includervi tutti i fedeli, e in particolare i musulmani, ai quali correva sempre, come si è detto, il suo pensiero. Nel *De summo bono* Bibliander congiunse l'elezione divina alla fede in Cristo e alla sua opera redentrice, ma dimostrò anche la comunione da parte di cristiani, ebrei, musulmani, pagani nella fruizione "spirituale e sacramentale" del corpo di Cristo, ossia l'estensione dei benefici della croce a tutti i popoli della terra e la sostanziale condivisibilità del messaggio evangelico⁴⁹. Nell'*Ad nominis Christiani socios consultatio* postulò l'esistenza di una "ecclesia primitivorum", una chiesa invisibile e universale, composta da tutti i fedeli, "turchi, saraceni, tartari, ebrei" sino agli ultimi popoli del mondo, in cui si erano sviluppati la fede in Dio e i principi evangelici di amore e carità⁵⁰. Infine, nel *De monarchia*, Bibliander si rivolse "universis Christianis, Iudaeis et Mahumedicis musulmanis" (includendo tra questi ultimi i saraceni, i mauri, i turchi, i tartari e tutti coloro che si attenevano al Corano), affinché cooperassero con i sovrani, gli ecclesiastici, i dotti e i teologi d'Europa, d'Africa, d'Asia, di regni e città "totius orbis" per realizzare la concordia religiosa, in vista dell'imminente instaurazione della "monarchia sempiterna" di Cristo e del suo regno spirituale, di giustizia e di pace⁵¹. Il teologo zurighese collocò questo appello in un vasto scenario apocalittico e profetico, ma cercò concretamente i mezzi per raggiungere questa riconciliazione, individuandoli nella ricerca dei dogmi comuni alle tre grandi religioni e di nozioni condivise, quali l'unitarietà e l'universalità del disegno salvifico divino. Dopo un'attenta disamina di testi sacri e sapienziali, tre dottrine fondamentali gli parvero confermare l'esistenza di un "consensum magnum" tra cristianesimo, islamismo ed ebraismo, al di là delle diverse forme in cui erano espresse: la duplice natura di Cristo, il suo ruolo profetico, il piano universalmente salvifico di Dio, basato sull'uguaglianza naturale della condizione umana e della disposizione misericordiosa di Dio verso di essa. Ferma era la sua convinzione che il riconoscimento reciproco della sostanziale uniformità dottrinale e del comune destino di salvezza sarebbe stato prossimo, grazie alla realizzarsi delle profezie messianiche⁵².

Quando redasse questi scritti, a metà del secolo, Bibliander aveva raggiunto una piena consapevolezza delle conseguenze devastanti dei conflitti religiosi interni ed esterni all'Occidente cristiano e della lotta politica nell'Impero.

48 Bibliander, *Oratio*, 22v-23r.

49 Bibliander, *De summo bono*. Cfr. Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme*, 236, note 45, 55.

50 *Ibid.*, nota 48. Bibliander, *Ad nominis Christiani socios consultatio*, 63v.

51 T. Bibliander, *De monarchia totius orbis suprema, legitima, et sempiterna quod regnum est et sacerdotium Messiae filii Davidis secundum carnem, filii autem dei vivi aeterna generatione*. L'opera è inedita. Su di essa vedi Egli, *Theodor Bibliander*, 90 sgg.

52 Bibliander, *De monarchia*, 2r-v, 3v-7v sgg., 16r.

Il dotto zurighese si sentì direttamente investito della responsabilità di adoperarsi per il bene pubblico come membro dell'*ecclesia Dei*, ma anche come cittadino del sacro romano impero germanico⁵³: così, oltre ad accrescere le conoscenze delle altre civiltà per enucleare una base per la convivenza religiosa e a lanciare appelli ai sovrani e agli ecclesiastici perché superassero le divisioni⁵⁴, egli dette consistenza politica all'*ecclesia Dei* eterna e spirituale. Nel *De monarchia*, prospettò l'instaurazione di regni e imperi grandissimi ed opulenti, profetizzati da vaticinii babilonesi, egiziani, persiani e romani⁵⁵. In un'altra opera coeva, il *De fatis monarchiae Romanae somnium vaticinum Esdrae prophetae*, rifacendosi alle profezie di Esdra e riprendendo il mito largamente diffuso nel mondo profetico coevo dell'"unum ovile et unus pastor"⁵⁶, affidò all'imperatore germanico il compito di attuare l'evangelizzazione e la pacificazione di tutti i popoli della terra, a partire dal 1553, un anno ritenuto, in base a complessi calcoli, "fatalis et climatericus" per l'islam⁵⁷.

Bibliander apportò un altro contributo a quest'opera di unificazione con la sua ricerca di una lingua comune, per l'intimo nesso esistente tra lingua e religione – dimostrato innanzitutto da Cristo, λόγος di Dio –, nel suo *De ratione communi omnium linguarum et literarum commentarius*, il cui titolo completo recitava significativamente *Cui adnexa est compendiarie explicatio doctrinae rectae beateque vivendi, et religionis omnium gente atque populorum, quam argumentum hoc postulare videbatur*⁵⁸. La condivisione del linguaggio vi era indicata come

53 Bibliander, *De monarchia*, 14r.

54 Bibliander, *De monarchia*, 12r-v.

55 Bibliander, *De monarchia*, 2r.

56 Sul profetismo nel Cinquecento vedi M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Age: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969) e *Prophetic Rome in the High Renaissance Period*, ed. M. Reeves (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); C. Vasoli, *Profezia e ragione. Studi sulla cultura del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Napoli: Guida, 1979); *Prophecy and Millenarism: essays in honour of Marjorie Reeves*, ed. A. Williams (Hallow, Essex: Longman, 1980); O. Niccoli, *Profeti e popolo nell'Italia del Rinascimento*, Bari, Laterza, 1982; Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*; G. Zari, *Le "sante vive". Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500* (Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990); Felici, *Profezie di riforma*. Sul mito dell'Impero vedi F. A. Yates, *Astrea. L'idea di Impero nel Cinquecento* (Torino: Einaudi, 2001).

57 Bibliander, *De monarchia*, 14v. Il 1553 era importante perché 1531 anni prima Cristo compiva ventidue anni, la data in cui, secondo le profezie, era finito lo Stato mosaico e in cui l'imperatore Tiberio aveva radunato molti re presso di sé, temendo l'arrivo del sovrano più potente della terra. Il 1553 era anche l'anno lunare millenario, quello della rivelazione di Maometto come profeta. La data è indicata anche nell'*Oratio de restituenda pace in Germanico Imperio* acclusa alla *De fatis*, 131 sg. Bibliander riferiva la predizione di Maometto circa la diffusione del Corano in Occidente, e la profezia di Esdra, secondo la quale quell'anno vi sarebbe stata la rivelazione del giudizio di Dio contro l'Islam. Cfr. Rotondò, *Anticristo e Chiesa romana*, 56 sgg.; Felici, *Profezie di riforma*, 204 sg.

58 L'opera fu edita a Zurigo, da C. Froschauer, nel 1548. Vedi Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme*, 245 sgg. (dove sono riportati i possibili punti dottrinali comuni fra le religioni); Egli, *Theodor Bibliander*, 80 sgg.; A. Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, III (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1960), 1084 sgg., 1171, 1196 e passim.

condizione dell'agognata unità dottrinale, ed entrambe venivano ricercate attraverso un confronto tra gli idiomi e i principi religiosi comuni. Quelli che Bibliander identificò, nel numero di dieci, appartenevano al patrimonio comune dell'umanità, in quanto fondamenti teologici e filosofici, seppure variamente elaborati: riguardavano sostanzialmente l'immortalità dell'anima, l'essenza spirituale dell'uomo e della religione, l'esistenza di un'unica divinità, onnisciente, onnipotente, eterna, bontà suprema, creatrice, reggitrice e giudicatrice dell'universo, guida della società umana attraverso suoi intermediari ispirati, principio normativo nella vita pubblica e privata, oggetto di un culto spirituale. L'accoglienza di essi da parte di persone di qualunque fede, cultura, condizione sociale, garantiva l'inclusione nell'ecumenica 'comunità dei santi', soggetta a un unico sovrano inviato da Dio.

Le delimitazioni poste da Bibliander al *regnum Dei*, con il suo cristocentrismo ed europocentrismo, presentavano sempre al loro interno i presupposti di un loro superamento verso l'universalismo e il relativismo culturale: le condizioni poste per l'ingresso nell'*ecclesia Dei* – l'osservanza dei principi etici essenziali, presenti in ogni uomo come legge di natura e la conversione alla sola legge d'amore di Cristo – allargavano infatti indefinitivamente i confini del regno divino e, minando le fondamenta delle muraglie poste dalle chiese a protezione della società cristiana contro popoli e culture 'altre', trasformavano profondamente il concetto stesso di tolleranza. Bibliander non giunse al riconoscimento del valore *in sé* dell'alterità. Mosse però passi importanti in quella direzione, individuando il nucleo essenziale della religione nell'etica e la sua sede nella ragione, che perdeva così i suoi tratti dogmatici e confessionali per farsi regola di vita universale. Nei limiti propri della cultura del suo secolo – un secolo "tutto religione", è bene ricordarlo –, il teologo zurighese segnò dunque un significativo progresso.

III.

Nell'anno 1553 vide la luce a Basilea l'opera *Tabularum duarum legis evangelicae, gratiae, spiritus et vitae libri quinque*, nonostante il divieto dei censori cittadini. Ne era autore una figura nota solo ai riformatori svizzeri per le sue visioni e per il suo radicale messaggio religioso, l'ex funzionario dei duchi di Savoia Giovanni Leonardi Sartori, alias Giovanni Leonardi (?1500-1556), come si era autoribattezzato in seguito al suo esilio oltralpe e all'assunzione del ruolo profetico⁵⁹. Le idee che il Sartori cercò di diffondere nel mondo riformato, in Svizzera, nelle Fiandre, in Inghilterra e in Francia, miravano a una spiritualizzazione della religione e a una assoluta coerenza con il Vangelo e i principi dottrinali riformati, in vista di una completa *restitutio Christianismi*; ma miravano anche alla creazione di un'*ecclesia Dei* universale e spirituale. La ricerca di consonanze tra Corano, Bibbia e testi ebraici fu la via percorsa da

⁵⁹ Sul Sartori vedi Felici, *Profezie di riforma*.

Sartori per superare le divisioni religiose e dare fondamento al suo progetto di concordia universale. Così, all'interno della sua opera, egli dedicò un libro al confronto tra il cristianesimo e la dottrina islamica, dal titolo eloquente *Lucida explanatio super Librum Alchoranum legis Saracenorum seu Turcarum, in quo manifesta est Evangelii Dei et domini nostri Iesu Christi confirmatio, et ostenditur quam male liber ipse hactenus fuerit intellectus*, comprensiva della *Lucida explanatio ex doctrina Mahumeti, quae apud Saracenos magnae est autoritatis*⁶⁰. Dopo l'edizione del Corano di Bibliander, fu uno dei testi più precoci e importanti sul rapporto con l'islam sia per la sua prospettiva universalistica sia per la conoscenza che apportava della dottrina musulmana, malgrado la sua connotazione cristiana, apologetica e missionaria. Testimonia del suo rilievo pure il fatto che il creatore dell'Hofbibliothek di Vienna, Hugo Blotius, pensò di utilizzarlo per la redazione di un grande trattato storico *de re Turcica* e che, nel Seicento, Tobias Hess, il mentore di Johann Valentin Andreae, fondatore dei Rosacroce, ne propose la ripubblicazione nelle *Lectionum memorabilium centuriae* di Johann Wolf⁶¹.

La *Lucida explanatio* aveva molti punti in comune con l'edizione di Bibliander, a partire dall'impiego del testo coranico e di altri editi dal dotto zurighese⁶² sino alla finalità della pubblicazione, quella di dare la possibilità di conoscere il testo islamico per l'instaurazione del dialogo interreligioso e la riconciliazione universale. L'atteggiamento ecumenico e conoscitivo non giunse, neppure per Sartori, all'accettazione né della diversità dell'islam né dell'islam *tout court*, poiché immutata rimase l'immagine di esso come eresia da contrastare a opera di un cristianesimo reputato la suprema sintesi della verità divina. Tale atteggiamento contribuì però a dare dignità alla religione musulmana (come alle altre religioni) in quanto legittime espressioni di Dio, nell'ambito di una concezione del cristianesimo alternativa a quella tradizionale, ovvero, anche in questo caso, sostanzialmente etica e spirituale.

L'avvicinamento all'islam di Sartori si incentrò sull'individuazione dei *fundamentalia fidei* fra le diverse religioni, in modo ancora più preciso rispetto a Bibliander. Egli commentò infatti le numerose *sure* riportate nella sua opera, cercando con puntiglio – e talvolta in modo pretestuoso – di dimostrare la sostanziale affinità dottrinale tra la Bibbia e il Corano. Premessa di tale ricerca fu la valorizzazione del testo sacro islamico e il rifiuto, invece, della religione musulmana.

60 I due scritti sono editi in appendice in Felici, *Profezie di riforma*, 277-323. Per le note rimando alle pagine di questa appendice.

61 Ringrazio Paola Molino e Carlos Gilly per queste informazioni.

62 Nell'opera di Sartori erano contenuti brani di ventiquattro *sure*, più altri tratti da altri testi pubblicati nell'opera del dotto zurighese, quali la *Chronica Saracenorum*, il *De generatione Machumet et nutritura eius*, la *Doctrina Machumetis* e la *Chronica mendosa et ridiculosa Saracenorum, de vita Machumetis et successorum eius* di Ermanno il Dalmata (pagine 189-223 della raccolta di Bibliander).

Il significato positivo attribuito da Sartori al Corano derivava non dal testo in sé, ma dalla sua sintonia con il Vangelo in merito ai principi religiosi essenziali, cioè l'unicità di Dio, il dogma trinitario e la primazia della prassi di vita evangelica rispetto alla dogmatica – l'espressione ricorrente era “hic liber confirmat Evangelium, ut apparet in multis locis”⁶³. La presenza di quelle dottrine induceva Sartori a dubitare della paternità dell'opera, attribuita piuttosto a un cristiano⁶⁴. Tale coincidenza appariva con chiarezza, a suo avviso, con una corretta comprensione del testo, capace di cogliere le verità divine sotto le immagini e le espressioni involute e oscure⁶⁵. Il testo si prestava infatti a due letture, quella dei credenti, che confermava il Vangelo e apriva la salvezza, e quella dei seguaci del “messo satanico” Maometto, che aderivano a una religione eretica, immaginifica e edonistica, fonte di dannazione: “Duae viae in eo [Corano] propositae sunt: una, vere credentium, quae confirmat Evangelium Iesu Christi Domini nostri in vitam aeternam, et altera quae tendit ad fabulas, voluptates huius saeculi et falsum paradisum deliciarum [...] alteram viam carnalem ad interitum elegerunt”⁶⁶. Come già Cusano⁶⁷, Sartori invitava tutti i cristiani a questa “pia interpretazione”, poiché lo svelamento della “retta fede cristiana” occultata dal linguaggio esoterico del Corano era la chiave per il ricongiungimento delle due religioni, mostrando la natura di viatico per la salvezza propria anche del testo islamico (“Nonne videtur in libro ipso, viris bonis vere credentibus recteque viventibus, toties replicatam esse promissionem vitae aeternae?”). La conoscenza del Corano risultava, in tale quadro, non solo legittima, ma fondamentale per i membri della *societas Christiana*: “Cognoscite ergo, o filii Israel, electi fideles, hunc librum Alchoranum esse firmamentum vestrae legis evangelicae, gratiae et fidei, et non destructionem nec mutationem”⁶⁸. Il Corano non era più considerato un testo da condannare, ma un'opera dottrinalmente significativa e un'espressione della rivelazione divina, per quanto imperfetta e da decifrare. Benché il punto di riferimento restasse la Sacra Scrittura, il cambiamento di giudizio era di grande rilievo.

Il rigetto dell'islamismo si basava sulla considerazione che l'interpretazione del Corano data da Maometto era una distorsione del messaggio cristiano contenuto in esso, trasformato in una religione “diabolica” da un profeta che era in realtà un “nuncius servitutis satanicae”⁶⁹. La condanna di Sartori si abbattava

63 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 286 e *passim*.

64 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 313.

65 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 320: “In Alchorano, seu Alfurcano, discretas, id est, segregatas et bipartitas esse sententias et figuras viae scilicet rectae fidei Christianae”.

66 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 280.

67 N. Cusano, “De pace fidei”, in Nicolai de Cusa *Opera omnia* (Lipsiae-Amburgi: in Aedibus F. Meiner, 1936).

68 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 283.

69 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 313 e *passim*.

sui seguaci di Maometto – giudicati “inescusabili” per la loro volontà di seguire l’interpretazione “satanica” del Corano⁷⁰ –, ma soprattutto sugli esponenti delle chiese d’Africa e d’Asia che, tradendo l’insegnamento del Vangelo con i loro comportamenti e con le loro dottrine, avevano favorito la propagazione dell’islamismo in quei paesi⁷¹. Due considerazioni, una di carattere antropologico e una di carattere storico-religioso, attenuavano in parte questo giudizio: la naturale inclinazione dei popoli asiatici e africani ad apprezzare i piaceri carnali e una religione come il maomettanesimo piuttosto che la “sancta sobrietas evangelica”⁷²; l’allontanamento, già ai tempi di Maometto, di molti cristiani ed ebrei dal Vangelo e la consacrazione invece a pratiche e dottrine superstiziose e “diaboliche”⁷³. Quest’analisi dello sviluppo dell’islam si inseriva nel generale quadro interpretativo di Sartori della storia e della religione, secondo il quale le vicende umane rivelavano il piano provvidenzialistico di Dio, nel quale erano iscritte: la decadenza dell’*ecclesia Dei*, il cui inizio era posto da Sartori dopo la predicazione apostolica in polemica con l’interpretazione riformata, imponeva a tutti gli uomini la necessità di un ritorno all’originaria purezza evangelica; la diffusione dell’islam assolveva la funzione di mostrare l’‘incredulità’ e la ‘carnalità’ alle quali i popoli asiatici e africani erano inclini per prepararne il riscatto⁷⁴.

Il disegno divino si prefigurava per Sartori come un processo di perenne rivelazione delle verità supreme, benché la loro manifestazione storica si fosse differenziata nelle forme e modalità. Pertanto, oltre l’islamismo, pure l’ebraismo era giudicato frutto di un’erronea interpretazione del Vangelo, di una deformazione del nucleo religioso comune attraverso le ‘favole’ e le ‘superstizioni’ presenti nel Vecchio Testamento⁷⁵. L’esistenza di quell’essenziale nucleo religioso era, però, inoppugnabile per Sartori e costituiva il pilastro di quella religione universale, unificante tutta l’umanità con i suoi principi etici e spirituali, che costituiva il fulcro del suo pensiero religioso e lo scopo ultimo della Riforma. Sartori propugnava infatti il rinnovamento della cristianità e della creazione di una nuova *ecclesia Dei*,

70 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 280; vedi inoltre 285, 323.

71 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 228: “Exque receptione Alchorani Mahumetis, manifestum est in illis ecclesiis Asiae et Aphricae refrigidatam fuisse Christi fidem spemque et charitatem ex ea orientes”. In parallelo, secondo Sartori, in Occidente ecclesiastici corrotti avevano causato la nascita di una religione “anticristiana”: 287 sgg.

72 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 278 sg.; vedi anche 297.

73 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 316.

74 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 278 sg.

75 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 320: “Et quoniam reliquiae Iudaeorum qui in Christum non crediderant, ad fabulas et quaestiones superstitiosas et inutiles conversi erant, ideo historias veteris Testamenti pro maiori parte variat, et fabulosas recitat in doctrinaque Mahumeti ac de eius generatione, tot quaestiones inutiles, damnosas et diabolicas adducit, ut cum videatur etiam incredulis aliam viam voluptatum carnalium, et Paradisum deliciarum omniumque concupiscentiarum refertam aperire, simul tamen iudicium extremum, et aeternam gehenam inferni eis rigide comminatur”. Vedi anche 321.

dai confini latissimi perché includente tutti coloro che partecipavano al processo di rigenerazione spirituale e aderivano al messaggio di amore di Cristo, e fortemente coesa nella consapevolezza di questa essenziale unità dello Spirito. Questa visione della società cristiana, iscritta nel piano provvidenzialistico divino, veniva manifestata agli uomini attraverso segni e rivelazioni dirette ai profeti, affinché se ne facessero portavoce e artefici della sua attuazione⁷⁶. La sua designazione carismatica a opera di Cristo investiva Sartori del compito di svelare le verità divine del Corano e permettere così la conversione dei musulmani al cristianesimo⁷⁷.

All'attività profetica Sartori unì comunque la ricerca concreta di un terreno di intesa fra le tre grandi religioni monoteiste, attraverso la ricerca delle similitudini tra la Sacra Scrittura e il Corano. L'impegno di assimilazione lo indusse a impiegare un metodo ermeneutico alquanto discutibile, mirante a eliminare le differenze fra i due testi⁷⁸. Il principale problema da superare fu il dogma della Trinità, da sempre ostacolo insormontabile all'accordo religioso. Sartori reputò tale dottrina chiaramente visibile nel Corano, già nelle parole della *fatiha* "in nomine Dei misericordis, miseratoris, gratias Deo Domino universitatis misericordis miseratoris, iudici diei iudicii. Te oramus, in te confidimus: mitte nos in viam rectam, viam eorum quos elegisti, non eorum quibus iratus es, nec infidelium" (*Sura I*, vv. 1-7). Il brano venne così interpretato:

Quamvis autor huius libri in hac eius praefatione Deum Patrem et Dominum Iesum Christum aperte non nominet, tamen per ea quae successive declarat in ipso libro, hic tacite, et Deum Patrem et Iesum Christum eius Filium, in unitate Deitatis essentiae intelligere possumus. Ponit enim hanc praefationem more libri Geneseos et veteris Testamenti, ubi in principio Deus solus nominatur posteaque nomina Domini et Dei semper ibi exprimuntur. Et quia [...] nomen Domini in novo Testamento magis Christo appropriari videmus, ideo per nomen Domini universitatis misericordis miseratoris, quem declarat iudicem diei iudicii, intelligendus est Dominus Iesus aeternus Filius Dei, quoniam sine eo, Deum iratum, et non pium, nec misericordem omnes reperient ex confirmationeque Evangelii quam videbimus in hoc libro factam, apparet de eo intellexisse, quia in Evangelio constat quod Christo Domino est data omnis potestas in coelo et terra, et ipse uti verus Deus iudicaturus est vivos et mortuos, bonos et malos, rogando eum ut mittat eos in viam rectam, viam eorum quos ipse elegit, etiam in hoc manifestat de Christo domino protulisse, et non in viam eorum, quibus iratus est, nec infidelium. Ecce quomodo posuit ibi duas vias, rectam scilicet credentium in salutem, et alteram infidelium, in damnationem et iram⁷⁹.

76 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 285.

77 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 281.

78 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 285. Le proposizioni contrastanti venivano dequalificate in quanto "oscure, fabulose, mendaci, piene di vane voluttà" ovvero interpretate con varie modalità, non escluse le forzature del testo, o semplicemente respinte in quanto non collimanti con il dettato scritturistico: peraltro Sartori dichiarava apertamente che "quae Evangelio contraria sunt, pro perversis et instabilibus hominibus pravi cordis scripta sunt, et non debent haberi in consideratione a Christi fidelibus".

79 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 281 sg.

Tutti gli aspetti del dogma trinitario furono individuati nel testo islamico. Nelle *sure* XII e XV i passi relativi a Dio furono riferiti alla nozione di consustanzialità delle tre persone; nella quarta si trovò conferma della piena divinità di Cristo e nell'undicesima della coesistenzialità "ab aeterno" tra Padre e Figlio; dalla tredicesima, si trasse la nozione di unicità divina nella differenziazione delle tre "essenze"; nella centesima, nella presentazione di Cristo come "figlio simile al Padre", si vide un esplicito riferimento alla sua consustanzialità e uguaglianza con il Padre ("in essentia scilicet Deitatis, potentiaque et virtute"), e quindi alla sua natura di progenie divina⁸⁰. La credenza nella duplice natura di Cristo era poi rivelata dalla presentazione del Messia nell'Annunciazione ("Manifesta est ergo in hoc loco confirmatio Evangelii, et lucida confessio, quod Iesus est Christus filius Dei, verusque Deus, et verus homo")⁸¹. La dodicesima *sura* era indicata come testo esplicativo del rapporto tra le due nature di Cristo, sebbene il dettato coranico fosse sottoposto da Sartori a un vero e proprio capovolgimento al fine di dimostrare la sua tesi e provare la coincidenza tra cristianesimo e islamismo⁸². Il fraintendimento del significato del passo era attribuito alla cattiva fede degli ecclesiastici, "ministri diabolici"⁸³. I passi di altre *sure*, in cui si definivano gli attributi di Cristo, furono sottoposti a un'analoga lettura, tendente a confermare la presenza di una corretta nozione cristologica nel Corano. A esempio, laddove si parlava di "anima di Dio", ci si riferiva alla natura di Dio, di figlio di Dio e di fonte eterna di salvezza di Cristo, perché con il termine 'anima' si intendeva la "plenitudo Deitatis et vitae aeternae [...] ab aeterno"⁸⁴. O, ancora, Cristo era definito nel Corano sommo profeta, messaggero, salvatore, verbo eterno e sapienza di Dio⁸⁵.

La lettura del Corano operata da Sartori, attraverso la sua peculiare lente, evidenziò la presenza anche di altre dottrine coincidenti con il cristianesimo, ovvero con la sua concezione del cristianesimo. La quarta *sura*, per esempio, fu addotta a testimonianza del sostanziale accordo tra Vecchio e Nuovo Testamento e Corano sulla necessità della fede in Dio e del carattere unicamente spirituale delle sue manifestazioni⁸⁶. Tutti i riti esterni erano soggetti a questa interpretazione, dalla circoncisione – mero "signaculum iustitiae fidei" – alla Mecca – non tempio

80 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 284, 290, 297, 310 sg.; sulla Trinità vedi anche 286 sg., 290 sg., 294 sg., 298 sg., 311, 321.

81 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 286.

82 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 292 sgg.: "Certum est quod hi sunt increduli, qui dicunt Iesum uti Mariae filium, et purum hominem, esse Deum. Quoniam Iesus Christus est aeternus Dei filius, verus Deus, et verus homo".

83 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*.

84 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 283 sg., 297.

85 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 283 sg., 286 sg., 290 sg., 301, 306, 313 sgg.

86 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 287.

terreno, ma “aedificium fidei spirituali” – alla preghiera ai pellegrinaggi⁸⁷. La quinta *sura* era considerata prova dell’ininterrotto processo di rivelazione divina in una ‘catena’ sapienziale che legava l’antichità ebraica a Cristo e a Maometto, di cui tuttavia il Messia e il Vangelo erano considerati l’apice⁸⁸.

La concezione spiritualistica del cristianesimo consentiva a Sartori di cancellare i confini tra le chiese e la condanna che pesava su ebrei e musulmani, prospettando l’unione dei fedeli delle tre religioni “qui ambulat secundum spiritum sanctum” nell’invisibile e metastorica *ecclesia Dei*, regolata dall’unica legge della grazia e dello Spirito⁸⁹. Era proprio il Corano ad attestare, secondo Sartori, che la conoscenza di quella legge proveniva dal Vangelo, seguendo il quale l’intera umanità era destinata alla salvezza⁹⁰. L’erronea lettura dei testi sacri conduceva invece cristiani, ebrei e maomettani alla dannazione⁹¹.

Battesimo ed eucaristia venivano considerati da Sartori i riti unificanti cristiani e musulmani nel segno di Cristo. Nella dodicesima *sura* veniva individuato il significato di “patto di grazia e pace” e di promessa di fedeltà a Cristo proprio del sacramento battesimale⁹². La tredicesima *sura* mostrava l’identità tra l’eucaristia e il rito di comunione nella mensa divina seguito dai musulmani (“Quid aliud hoc innuit, quam sanctam coenam approbare, ubi coelestis est refectio, vera scilicet participatio corporis, et vera communicatio sanguinis Domini est?”)⁹³. Era altresì nella pratica di una “fede viva”, con un atteggiamento di amore verso il prossimo e verso Cristo, che si esprimeva l’adesione al suo insegnamento presente nel testo coranico⁹⁴, laddove le opere, come appariva anche dalla sesta *sura*, non erano mezzi di salvezza⁹⁵. Piena sintonia tra Corano e Sacra Scrittura era infine riscontrabile nella descrizione del giudizio universale nella centesima *sura*, con la separazione dei giusti dagli empi e la loro collocazione alla destra e alla sinistra di Cristo⁹⁶.

87 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 287 sg.

88 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 287 sgg.

89 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 288: “Credentes autem qui ambulat secundum spiritum sanctum eis datum ex gratia et fide, fundati in domo Dei, in ecclesia Christi, quae est civitas sancta, Hierusalem coelestis, hi peregrinantur hac peregrinatione spirituali, dum vivunt in hoc saeculo, ambulantes secundum spiritum fine loci mutatione”.

90 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 292, 294, 299 sg.

91 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 295 sg.

92 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 291.

93 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 298.

94 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 310; vedi anche 292 sg., 300, 314.

95 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 288: “Igitur ut hic in Alchorano adducitur, ordinavit Deus, quod credentes imitentur sectam Abrahe fidelis, qui [...] fundamentum accepit super domum spiritualem orationis et fidei [...] Fundatus enim erat Abraham [...] super Iesum Christum”. Vedi anche 288 sg., 292, 302, 309 sg.

96 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 311.

Il giudizio espresso da Sartori su Maometto marcava un contrasto forte con la positiva valutazione del Corano. Il profeta, già attaccato nella *Lucida explanatio super Alchoranum*, veniva condannato senza appello nella *Lucida explanatio in doctrina Mahumeti*, attraverso il commento di passi del Corano, del testo della *Chronica Saracenorum*, del *De generatione Machumet et nutritura eius*, della *Doctrina Machumetis* e della *Chronica mendosa et ridiculosa Saracenorum, de vita Machumetis et successorum eius* di Ermanno il Dalmata. A essere negato era, innanzitutto, il suo carisma profetico, attraverso una rilettura di quei testi mirante a dimostrare che le affermazioni di Maometto in merito alla sua designazione profetica e alla sua origine adamitica e ismaelitica erano frutto della sua scelta in favore della ‘via’ peccaminosa del primo uomo e di Ismaele⁹⁷. Maometto, che si autoproclamava “servo e nunzio di Dio”, era in realtà il “messo di satana”, un “omicida e seduttore” diabolico e aveva divulgato una dottrina di perdizione⁹⁸. Pertanto, la sua predicazione e quella dei suoi successori erano designate come “sataniche”⁹⁹. Venivano invece attribuiti a Cristo tutte le vicende, gli insegnamenti, i caratteri di Maometto descritti nei testi islamici, mediante il consueto modulo interpretativo delle due “vie”¹⁰⁰. Per questo la paternità del Corano appariva assai dubbia¹⁰¹.

Esemplare di questa chiave di lettura è l’analisi dell’importante dialogo tra Abdallah ibn Salam e Maometto relativamente alla fede, a Dio e alla manifestazione del verbo divino, riportato nell’esposizione della *Doctrina Machumet*¹⁰². A un’analoga distinzione erano soggette le dichiarazioni di Maometto in merito alla comunicazione della Legge da parte di Dio: secondo Sartori, Maometto aveva conosciuto soltanto il “verbum satanae”, ovvero il testo relativo alla “via” anticristiana della perdizione, ma gli era rimasta nascosta la verità divina, celata sotto formule e immagini occulte nel Corano¹⁰³. Pertanto, il monito del profeta contro la debolezza nella fede era riferibile soltanto ai maomettani “adepti di Satana”, poiché responsabili delle proprie scelte, mentre coloro che seguivano la “viam rectam Evangelii ostensam in Alchorano” erano sicuri del proprio destino¹⁰⁴. Parimenti, l’incitamento a credere in un unico Dio fatto da Maometto era da considerarsi come un’esortazione alla vera fede cristiana (“quod lex Dei est fides, unaque sola sit [...] vera lex fidei, spiritus et vitae, stante approbatione Evangelii facta per Alchoranum: ergo loquitur de fide Christiana”)¹⁰⁵.

97 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 113 sg.

98 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 323.

99 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 318 sgg.

100 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 285, 289 sg.; vedi anche 301 sg., 313 sg., 314 sgg.

101 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 320.

102 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 316 sgg., 319. Vedi *Doctrina Machumet*, 189 sgg.

103 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 320.

104 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 322.

105 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 319.

L'analisi del testo islamico, e la contrapposizione alle dottrine di Maometto, era funzionale alla proposta da parte di Sartori di una concezione del cristianesimo affatto rivoluzionaria, nel suo radicale cristocentrismo e spiritualismo. La vita cristiana veniva risolta in una assoluta adesione al messaggio evangelico di Cristo con la guida del suo Spirito, fedele a un paradigma di estrema sobrietà nel soddisfacimento dei bisogni materiali, in opposizione alla lascivia, alla carnalità e alla mondanità insegnate da Maometto. Tale modello era leggibile, secondo il visionario, anche nel Corano, sempre che opportunamente interpretato¹⁰⁶. In conclusione, per Sartori, come per Bibliander, affrontare il problema dell'islam significò proporre una rifondazione della società cristiana, dei suoi confini e dei suoi valori.

Assai più radicale fu la posizione di Iacopo Paleologo da Chio (ca. 1520-1585), al quale merita anche solo accennare per la sua combinazione di filoislamismo, irenismo ed estremismo religioso¹⁰⁷. L'eretico greco manifestò infatti un pieno apprezzamento verso l'islam nell'ambito della sua visione religiosa mirante a una completa revisione del cristianesimo in senso antitrinitario – e nella versione più radicale dell'antitrinitarismo – e, sulla base di questa, all'unione delle tre religioni monoteiste. Legato al movimento unitariano della Transilvania guidato da Ferenc David, Paleologo vi assunse un ruolo peculiare per le sue posizioni estreme, connotate come “radicalismo dogmatico”¹⁰⁸. Egli ridusse considerevolmente la sfera del sovrannaturale, accentuando il non-adorantismo nella concezione cristologica e modificando il concetto di giustificazione, che portarono a una trasformazione profonda del sistema dottrinale riformato. Tale trasformazione preludeva alla concordia delle tre religioni monoteiste, considerate come paritarie. L'unitarianismo ne sarebbe stata la teologia unificante e la struttura visibile una chiesa del tutto adogmatica e federalistica, fedele a quella dei primi secoli del cristianesimo, comprensiva di tutta l'umanità per un universale “*ius adoptionis*” e priva di riti esteriori. Col pensiero del Paleologo, l'irenismo rompeva con irruenza gli argini della società cristiana tradizionale e del suo eurocentrismo, stabilendo la parità delle diverse confessioni e approssimandosi a una concezione moderna della religione e della chiesa.

La risoluzione della questione della Trinità si impose, naturalmente, come cruciale anche nel progetto irenico del Paleologo. Nella sua copiosa e complessa produzione intellettuale, essa occupò uno spazio centrale, benché inserita nel

106 Leonis Nardi, *Lucida explanatio*, 321 sgg.

107 Sul Paleologo vedi D. Caccamo, *Eretici italiani in Moravia, Polonia, Transilvania (1558-1611). Studi e documenti* (Firenze: Sansoni, Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1970), *ad ind.*; M. Firpo, *Antitrinitari nell'Europa orientale del '500. Nuovi testi di Szymon Budny, Niccolò Paruta e Iacopo Paleologo* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1977); L. Szczucki, “Le dottrine ereticali di Giacomo da Chio Paleologo”, *Rinascimento*, 11 (1971): 27-75 (a cui rinvio per l'analisi del pensiero e ulteriore bibliografia); Id., *Ket 16. szazadi eretnek gondolkodo: Jacobus Paleologus es Christian Franken* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1980).

108 L. Szczucki, *Marcin Czechowich (1532-1613): studium z dziejów antytrynaryzmu polskiego XVI wieku* (Warsawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1964), 257.

più vasto contesto della riforma religiosa generale. La posizione del Paleologo fu drastica: la figura di Cristo fu completamente privata della divinità per divenire quella di un uomo munito di potenza divina, ultimo di una serie di ‘unti’ del Signore, fra i quali Alessandro Magno, Giulio Cesare, Abramo, Mosè, Davide e i numerosi profeti. La fede giustificante fu legata essenzialmente alla confessione di due verità (esistenza di un solo Dio e della natura umana di Cristo), mentre la prassi di vita cristiana – aderente per Paleologo alle norme della Legge antica e nuova e svolta con piena libertà d’arbitrio – assumeva l’assoluta priorità.

L’assunzione del monoteismo da parte dei cristiani rappresentava la premessa per la riconciliazione con gli ebrei. Relativamente ai musulmani, l’atteggiamento di Paleologo fu più articolato e senz’altro originale, facendogli assumere un “ruolo di punta” nel confronto con la civiltà islamica nel suo tempo¹⁰⁹. Nei diversi scritti dedicati al problema, Paleologo espresse una valutazione del tutto positiva dell’islam, sul piano dottrinale e morale, per i suoi contenuti profondamente cristiani: ai suoi occhi, si trattava di una sorta di ‘scisma cristiano’. I maomettani furono giudicati come primi seguaci di Cristo, e quindi esenti dalle storture e superstizioni proprie della chiesa romana, e anch’essi “figli della promessa”. La concezione di Dio e di Cristo propria dei musulmani trovò completa approvazione nel Paleologo, poiché era rigidamente monoteista, considerava lo Spirito solo una potenza divina e concepiva Cristo un unto del Signore e non Dio per natura. La vita religiosa dei musulmani gli apparve encomiabile, per la loro pietà e carità e il rifiuto di pratiche superstiziose. Il Corano fu da lui considerato un testo con imperfezioni e antropomorfismi (peraltro analoghi o tratti dalla Sacra Scrittura), ma certo divino e necessario alla salvezza, per il messaggio di fede in Cristo che diffondeva. Paleologo attribuiva sempre un carattere cristiano all’islam, reputandolo “un elemento potenziale, capace di realizzarsi grazie all’unione dei musulmani con le chiese unitariane”¹¹⁰. Ma il passo compiuto dal teologo greco per una nuova valutazione dell’islam fu senza dubbio straordinario, che trova eguali solo in Guillaume Postel e in Adam Neuser, capo di un gruppo antitrinitario di Heidelberg e avventuriero politico celebre per la sua turcofilia¹¹¹.

Col Paleologo, dopo Bibliander e Sartori, islam e cristianesimo non conformista si trovavano ancora una volta congiunti nella visione di una nuova società, dove i tradizionali principi regolatori della morale e della convivenza risultavano completamente sovvertiti. La loro eredità è stata raccolta nel tempo?

109 Szczucki, “Le dottrine ereticali”, 54.

110 Szczucki, “Le dottrine ereticali”, 53.

111 Su Postel vedi i numerosi studi di François Secret, segnalati nella sua *Bibliographie des manuscrits de Guillaume Postel* (Genève: Droz, 1970), 147-151; W. J. Bouwsma, *Concordia mundi. The Career and Thought of Guillaume Postel (1510-1581)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957); *Guillaume Postel 1581-1981. Actes du Colloque international d’Avranches 5-9 septembre 1981* (Paris: Editions de la Maisnie, 1985); Rotondò, *Guillaume Postel*; M. L. Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel Prophet of the Restitution of All Things. His Life and Thought* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981). Per la ricca bibliografia su Neuser vedi *The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians: Johann Sylvan, Adam Neuser, Mathias Vehe, Jacob Suter, Johann Hasler*, ed. C. J. Burchill (Baden-Baden: V. Korner, 1989).

The idea of ‘naturality’ in the Hispanic monarchy and the formation of Spanish identity between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries: an approach.

GUILLERMO PÉREZ SARRIÓN

Among the concepts which have served throughout history to define the political identity of Spaniards, there are several of particular importance: ‘naturality’, nation, and patria. The concepts of *nation* and *patria* have a broad literature and a long history: they were originally applied to individuals belonging to a group defined by lineage, language, religion, or the territory where they lived. This semantic slide happened throughout the modern period, and especially in the eighteenth century, and became consolidated from 1789 onward.

Little attention has been paid, though, to the terms ‘natural’ and ‘naturality’ (*naturalidad*) or nature², in spite of their importance. Moreover, in those cases,

¹ The term naturality is not strange to English. It seems rare in modern speech, politically dominated by ‘citizenship’, but it was not so in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary registers nearly one full page for the term ‘natural’, including the meaning ‘natural-born’ as ‘native-born’ and “having a specified position or character by birth” (III, 15). It includes also ‘naturality’ as “the position or rights of a natural-born subject, chiefly Sc. E16-E17”, that is, in Scottish history of the early sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (II, 6). And, finally, the verb ‘naturalize’ appears as “Admit (an alien) to the position and rights of citizenship; invest with the privileges of a native-born subject, M16”, that is, mid sixteenth century (I, 1). To sum up, we can conclude that the term was alive in fifteenth-century Europe, and its use within the English and Scottish monarchies faded away during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England and Scotland, standing alone in the Spanish monarchy. In this article, though is a legitimate English word, I will write it thus, ‘naturality’, for the benefit of readers, to emphasize its special standing in the Spanish juridical and political vocabulary.

² ‘Nature’ is a confusing word in this context, thus I will avoid it.

analysis has been conducted in a way that takes for granted the fact that everyone clearly knows their meanings, applying them to single, isolated cases, without making comparisons³. But the analytical strategy of examining a single case, applied to a composite monarchy such as Spain, does not allow the function of 'naturality' to be seen in its actual function. What follows is just the opposite: to examine what 'naturality' actually was in the several political territories in order to be able to compare and discover differences and common elements.

Jurists distinguish three types of 'naturality': that defined by birth and lineage (*ius sanguinis*, or blood rights), that produced by residence (*ius soli*) and that acquired from a governor through a *carta de naturalidad* or 'letter of naturality'. But the concept has a legal as well as social meaning, since, in the last instance, it functioned as an element of cultural and political identification. The only sure way to know what the social use of 'naturality' was, is to resort to public archives, especially judicial records, but this goes beyond the reduced scope of this work. Reduced, indeed, but not marginal. The aim is to examine what was 'naturality', and how it evolved, taking the principal Spanish juridical sources as primary evidence for whether the term became a relevant factor in the formation of political identity.

Even so, the field is very broad. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we find six distinct 'naturalities' in the peninsular territories of the Spanish monarchy: Castile (which included the Indies), Aragón, Valencia, Catalonia, Mallorca and Navarre⁴. With regard to this, we will examine the 'naturality' in these realms and principality to demonstrate that, shortly after the War of Succession, they were reduced to two: Castilian 'naturality', which in time became Spanish, and that of Navarre, which remained a stable exception.

I. CASTILIAN 'NATURALITY' IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

'Naturality', according to the Dictionary of Authorities, was "the origin that a person has in the city or kingdom; and it is usually understood as the right through which an individual acquires the enjoyment of the privileges belonging to the natural-born". The term referred to the condition that permitted one to have something that others did not have. In effect, from centuries before, in Castile (and in other kingdoms of the Spanish monarchy, as we will see) the condition of being natural-born, or having 'naturality', had developed from a right: he who

³ See Pérez Collados (1993) and Herzog (2003).

⁴ The question of whether naturals of Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa and Álava were or were not Castilian naturals is not considered here. Pérez Collados affirms that they did not have Castilian 'naturality' (Pérez Collados 1993), 31 note 69, although he does not cite any source of authority. Personally, I think they did have it, but I am not able to prove it. In the same way, by extension, I discount Portugal, which was only part of the Crown of Castile for a short time (1580-1640); the county of Flanders, governed by the king of Spain as Duke of Bourgogne (1516-1711), the Low Countries (1516-1648), and the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, that were united with the Crown of Aragón (1504-1713).

possessed it could hold public office and have certain ecclesiastical benefits. It was the *reserva de oficios* or reserve of offices, so called because the offices or positions were reserved only for the natural candidates. Only Castilians could occupy offices in Castile, and the Aragonese, Valencians, Catalans, Mallorcans and Navarrese in their respective kingdoms.

However, the origin of the matter was not so simple. There were two kinds of positions, actually, in Castile: those lay and ecclesiastical by royal appointment, the majority local, and those appointed by the king to serve him in the royal court and in the monarchy's government. In this second case, the monarchs, from the Catholic Kings onward, selected for themselves a majority of natural-born Castilians, but also included those from other kingdoms and territories of the monarchy, in proportions that varied over time. In the Indies, at first attributed only to Castilians, it became clear during the sixteenth century that natural-born individuals "from the kingdoms of Spain" could occupy offices, though in accordance with Castilian laws and government, since they formally belonged to Castile⁵. 'Naturality' was, then, not a collective political privilege but a personal privilege. This situation prevailed until the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Originally, the granting of 'naturality' was the purview of royal laws enacted in Parliament, that is, with its consent, resulting as much from the king's initiative as from petitions by the estates of Parliament. It is important to remember that, from the end of the fifteenth century, two of the three estates of the Parliament of Castile – the nobility and the ecclesiastic – had no longer been called to the sessions. From then on, only the estate of *universities*, representing the Castilian cities, was called to Parliament. Over time, stemming from a sequence of events that I am still unable to specify, the monarch acquired increased prominence and, by the eighteenth century, became the only one to grant 'naturality'. In Castile, I believe that this had already occurred from the beginning of the sixteenth century, but it cannot be verified with certainty without a detailed analysis of the acts of Parliament, which is beyond the scope of this study.

In any case, we know that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the appointments for positions and offices were matters *de cámara*, that is, handled in chamber⁶. Until 1588, they were determined by the Council of Castile, and from then on by the Council of the Chamber of Castile (or simply the Chamber of Castile), a body created by royal decree on the 6th of January, 1588, and presided over by the president of the Council of Castile⁷, created so that,

5 This was already noted by Herzog (2003), 64-65, also of interest on this topic 64-93. The laws of the Indies on the topic in the sixteenth century are in *Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias* (1681), book 9, title 27, laws I to XXXVII – IV, 11v-16v.

6 It is so-called because the king dealt with them 'in chamber', that is, in his private chambers or rooms, away from public view.

7 In the eighteenth century, the Chamber of Castile or Council of the Chamber of Castile also began dealing with matters in Aragón, calling itself at times the Chamber of Aragón. It was, in fact, simply a room in the Council of the Chamber of Castile, which was composed of a

[...] from here on might be seen all the business concerning my Royal Patronage of the Church in these my kingdoms of Castile, Navarre and the Canary Islands as well as those that pertain to Justice⁸ and to Grace⁹; and at the same time that which concerns the provision and appointment of persons for positions on my Councils, and the Chancelleries and other Audiencias of these kingdoms and for their other offices of Justice [...] ¹⁰.

The text shows that the Council of the Chamber of Castile handled two fundamental royal privileges: the royal patronage over the Church, that is, the right to appoint certain ecclesiastical offices¹¹, and the right to appoint all the offices of justice and governance.

The *Novísima recopilación* dedicates to the Council of Castile, which had broad jurisdictional powers from 1480, books IV – with 30 titles, one dedicated to the Chamber of Castile –, V and VI. This last was dedicated to limiting the matters that were within its own competence, and those that had to be resolved only after they were first dealt with in the Chamber of Castile.

Regarding the matters of the chamber relating to the Indies, they were resolved in the Council of the Indies, where the king exercised his prerogatives over the Church in America, the so-called royal patronage of the Indies. This is interesting, since the 'letters of naturality' to occupy positions and offices, or to conduct business in the Indies, were processed in this council and not in the Council of Castile, nor in the Chamber of Castile.

All this legislation, with laws in force from at least the fourteenth century, only determined how the king's power should be administered, but the appointments of civil offices corresponded to the king in person, aided by the councils of Castile and of the Chamber of Castile, through the king's laws, which were of two types: laws given in the Parliament of Castile and laws given outside Parliament. The same thing occurred in the other Spanish kingdoms. Lacking data on the role of the Parliament of Castile in this decisive matter, I suppose that it must have run parallel to its loss of political influence, which was relatively early. Since Parliament became limited in its power to approve the *servicios* or

majority of the members of the Council of Castile. For this reason there is, at times, confusion over the three institutions.

8 In all probability, the matters of offices in which judicial disputes were mediated.

9 The references to offices and positions that the king granted by his royal grace, that is, by his own will, not by a court sentence, and without necessarily paying attention to the merits of the beneficiary.

10 NR, book IV, title IV, law I – II, 225-228, the text on 225.

11 The king had patronage of numerous ecclesiastical offices, that is, he was their patron responsible for providing them with sufficient income, assuring their operation and also appointing those who would occupy them. The king had all the patronage of the Indies and, in Spain, that of the military orders. There were also many ecclesiastical offices that did not belong to the royal patronage. These appointments depended solely on the ecclesiastical authorities. The appointments to these offices were carried out by Papal bull.

services¹² that were paid to the king, and this tax was collected only by the cities, from the end of the fifteenth century the king opted to call to Parliament only the estate of the Universities, that is, that of the cities, never the ecclesiastical or the noble estates. This is in sharp contrast to what occurred in the Parliaments of the kingdoms of the Crown of Aragón, which almost always were convened with all of its estates. Within them, the king did not have as much room to maneuver. In these kingdoms, the king also appointed the offices of the Church included in the royal patronage, and likewise, it was necessary for the candidate to have Castilian 'naturality' for these appointments.

The condition of 'naturality' and its opposite, the condition of foreignness, and how they were acquired and lost in Castile, appears in detail in the so-called *Libro de las Siete Partidas*, by Alfonso X the Wise, from the middle of the thirteenth century. In it, ten means of obtaining and losing 'naturality' are established: through birth, through vassalage, through upbringing, through rescue from captivity, death or dishonour, through conversion to Christianity, or through residence for ten years in the kingdom. But it was only after the union of Castile and Aragón at the end of the fifteenth century, and as the exercise of royal power became stronger, that the peninsular parliaments, along with the king, put in place the so-called *reserva de oficios*, that is, the list of positions that were reserved exclusively for the naturals of each kingdom. For these, the king could not appoint someone who was not a natural. It was from then on that more foreigners sought 'naturality', the condition necessary to occupy these posts. In fact, as the king made the concession of positions and public offices a basic instrument of his power, the Castilian cities, and their lawyers in the Castilian Parliament, continuously negotiated with the king and, in exchange for payment of taxes (services, millions) tried to limit the granting of 'naturality' that the king gave to foreigners, who were precisely those non-naturals. It was normal for the king to promise to observe the agreed-upon limits and then to try to subvert them by making exceptions. There are indications that this process was not exclusive; it happened not only in the Parliament of Castile, but also in those of the other kingdoms ruled by the Spanish monarchy.

The *Nueva recopilación* (New Compilation) of 1640 contains the laws of 1401, 1415, 1417, 1473, 1476, 1480, 1525 and 1560, almost all presented in Parliament and by these petitions, revoking 'letters of naturality' not authorized by the king and reiterating that 'foreigners' (that is those not natural of Castile, even though they were from other kingdoms of the Spanish monarchy) could not obtain the ecclesiastical benefits or dignities that the kings granted in their kingdoms¹³. The

12 The king convened Parliament mainly to request a *servicio*, or tax, that he negotiated with the estates. Once the amount was approved, collection was in charge of the cities who had representation in Parliament. Over time, it became the main royal tax collected in Castile. The *millones* were amounts added to the services already approved; they were assessed in millions of maravedís, thus the name.

13 *Nueva recopilación de las leyes destes reynos* (1640), book I, title III, laws XIV to XX – I, 10-13.

Novísima recopilación (Newest Compilation), when it deals specifically with the Church, also refers to the royal patronage, and in book I, title XIV (on 'naturality') it gives notice of some of the laws already mentioned, and others from 1565, 1588, 1632, 1715, 1721 and 1723¹⁴. The compilation was published in 1805, and it is obvious that then, in the mind of the judges, the question of 'naturality' continued to be closely linked to the right to occupy offices, especially ecclesiastical ones.

In any case, Castilian 'naturality', always seen as the legal privilege that allowed one to hold office by appointment of the king, was re-defined in 1565. That year, an order by Philip II established that, regarding the possibility of obtaining ecclesiastical benefits in Castile, and

[...] because it has been and continues to be in doubt who might say they were natural able to have the stated benefits, we order that he who says he is natural be born in these kingdoms, and be the son of parents who both, or at least the father, is himself born in these kingdoms, or has established residence there and in addition has lived there for a period of ten years. So that if the parents, both or at least the father, having been born and being natural in these kingdoms; being outside them in our service or by our command, or in passing and without having a residence outside these kingdoms, have a child outside them, that child will be considered natural to these kingdoms. Be this applicable to both legitimate and natural children or only natural; but in the case of bastards we decree and order that the qualities that conform to the above which are required of fathers, must coincide with the mothers¹⁵.

According to this decree, children were Castilian naturals only if they were born to a father, or both parents, who were natural in Castile and had lived in these kingdoms for at least ten years. Children were also natural if they were born outside the kingdoms being legitimate children of the father or both parents who were natural. In the case of bastard children, Castilian 'naturality' could only be transmitted by the mother. That is, 'naturality' was held by two factors: descendency and place of birth, and the preferred transmitter of Castilian 'naturality' was the father, except in the case of illegitimacy. As we shall see, this was an important difference with 'naturality' in Navarre, where the preferred transmitter was the mother.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 'naturality' was adapted to the changes produced in Castilian society. It is interesting to point out, now, how legislation came increasingly to make the distinction that it was one thing to be born natural, and another thing to become natural. After 1565, when it was clear who were the Castilian naturals, an important question began to be asked: who could become naturalized, that is, what were the requirements to acquire the document called 'letter of naturality' given by the king. This was a matter that remained tied to the politics of distribution of power of the monarch, and to the

14 NR, book I, title XIV, laws I to VIII – I, 104-111.

15 NR, book I, title XIV, law VII – I, 110; this is also in the *Nueva recopilación de las leyes destos reynos* (1640), book I, title III, law XIX – I, 13. Generally, the punctuation and spelling have been modernized in the textual quotations.

so-called sale of offices, a practice originated in the early medieval period that the Austrians spread extensively to get money for the Royal Treasury. The sale of offices by the king is well-known, and covered all types of posts and saleable rights. The relationship between the granting of 'letters of naturality' and the reservation of offices has been explained in great detail by Pérez Collados for the kingdoms of Castile and Aragón¹⁶.

The necessary requirements to obtain the 'letter of naturality' varied over time, and with the monetary needs of the monarchy and the political circumstances during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. According to Herzog, the main factors taken into account for foreigners who applied for Castilian 'naturality' were love, loyalty and integration in the community where they resided. In this sense, the neighbourhood, a legal condition by which a resident enjoyed the rights and obligations of the local community in which he lived¹⁷, was important proof of integration into the community by Castilian naturals and, in fact, the declarations of local authorities in naturalization proceedings were frequently an essential element in the granting of 'naturality'.

Many foreigners, however, were only interested in obtaining 'naturality' in order to trade with the Indies, not to reside in Spain. Since to be able to do this one had to be natural to one of 'the kingdoms of Spain', one way to achieve it was to initiate a process of naturalization that ended in the purchase of a 'letter of naturality', providing another source of income for the king (another way of doing business was to use Castilian merchants as intermediaries). 'Naturality' came to be granted in exchange for money and thus entered into the sale of offices that had so much political importance in seventeenth century Spain.

At the end of the sixteenth century, a *real cédula* (royal decree), issued on the 27th of August, 1592, established that in order to obtain 'naturality', foreigners had to fulfill the following requirements: 20 years of residency in Spain, at least 10 of which as a household, marriage to a natural woman, and possession of at least 4,000 ducats in real property. These were severe conditions but with Philip IV, naturalizations and Castilian 'letters of naturality' to go to the Indies were granted more frequently: the king sold them and often ignored the laws for these grants. Between 1621 and 1645, 196 letters were granted and, after decreasing for a time, many more were again granted by Charles II¹⁸. In

16 Pérez Collados (1993), 171-230.

17 The status of neighbour was a legal category, but also a social category, closely linked to the credit or reputation that an individual had within the community. On this, see Herzog (2003), 17-42. A *resolución* (decree) by Philip V of March 8th, 1716, answering to a consultation of the newly created Junta de Extranjeros (Board of Foreigners) set up the conditions for foreigners to be considered as neighbours in Spain; see on this NR, book VI, title IX, law III – III, 166-167.

18 Domínguez Ortiz (1959), 227-239, the quotation is from 228. The regulations regarding requirements for 'naturality' to go to the Indies are the *reales cédulas* (royal decrees) of October 2nd, 1608; October 10th, 1608; December 25th, 1616; October 11th, 1618 and June 7th, 1620, in *Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias* (1681), book IX, title 27, laws 31 a 33 – IV,

addition, the king attempted to grant 'letters of naturality' to foreigners to whom he wished to sell offices.

With all of this, the concept of 'naturality' and its direct link to the reservation of offices changed. At the end of the seventeenth century, the royal officials, to evade opposition to arbitrary naturalizations from the local parliaments and communities, began distinguishing between those naturalizations granted by integration into the country in accordance with the laws, and those given by privilege or royal warrant. In some cases, the 'letters of naturality' restricted the reach of privilege: certain foreigners were naturalized as a reward for services given to the king, but were not considered authentic naturals: it was known that they had purchased it or it had been granted to them without them really deserving it. This was the case of quite a few French, Italian and Irish engineers, draftsmen, mathematicians and architects, who were made soldiers and appointed officials of the royal army. The rest, the majority, those who fulfilled the legal requirements of residency, loyalty, neighbourhood and matrimony were considered the true natural-born of Castile.

The royal policy of selling 'naturality' had important political consequences, probably without explicitly seeking them. Since 'naturality' could also be bought, it was not the only condition that granted the king's subjects the honour of serving him by occupying public and ecclesiastical offices in Castile and the Indies. This began to rupture its most valuable quality: the direct and unique relationship with the Castilian reservation of offices. The *de facto* paralysis of the Castilian parliament, which was almost never summoned during the seventeenth century, only served to facilitate royal politics. All this prepared the way for what would come later: the new strengthening of absolutist monarchy, in tandem with the political culture of the Enlightenment. Meanwhile, the monarch governed the other kingdoms and principalities of the Hispanic monarchy, as well. It is time to see what happened there.

II. 'NATURALITY' IN ARAGÓN, VALENCIA, CATALONIA AND MALLORCA

The most notable characteristic of the legislation of 'naturality' in the lands of the Crown of Aragón – Kingdom of Aragón, Kingdom of Valencia, Principality of Catalonia and Kingdom of Mallorca – is its morphological similarity to that of Castile. The first impression is that the differences between Castile and these other kingdoms occurred largely because the evolution of their Parliaments was different from those of Castile, and not so much because the king's policy was different.

15v-16r. Domínguez Ortiz appears to refer to the applications processed in the Council of Indies, but there must be much more documentation available for study in the Council of the Chamber of Castile.

This question in the kingdom of Aragón has been studied in detail by Pérez Collados¹⁹. Aragonese 'naturalty' was fixed by an act of parliament (*acto de corte*) of John II, in 1461, which was always in effect and applied repeatedly in the courts:

[...] if a person or persons born in the Kingdom of Aragón who by reason of following the Royal Court or managing an office that they have obtained or will obtain, or by reason of negotiation, or for any other cause or reason, have been or will be absent from the Kingdom of Aragón [...] and being there any women to whom a child or children have been or will have been born, [...] let [these children] be considered as natural and born in the Kingdom of Aragón, as if they themselves were born there. We wish that they enjoy all the positions, benefits, privileges, honours, liberties and immunities in all and for all that those born and residing in the Kingdom of Aragón are able and ought to enjoy [...] ²⁰.

Therefore it seems clear that those born in Aragón were natural and, in the case of the Aragonese residing outside the kingdom, their children also.

For the rest, the privilege of 'naturalty' was also directly linked to the possibility of holding royal or ecclesiastical positions and offices as in Castile. In 1423 and 1533, Alphonse V and Charles I, by two laws, established and confirmed, respectively, that the ecclesiastical offices by royal appointment had to go exclusively to the naturals of the realm, with the exception of those of the archbishop and bishops²¹. Finally Philip IV, in 1646, ended up reserving for them the archbishopric and all the bishoprics, abbeys, prelatures and *encomiendas* or trusts of military orders²².

Regarding civil offices, in 1362 a law by Peter II reserved various judicial offices of the kingdom for the Aragón naturals²³ and John II in 1461 added all the king's offices in the kingdom to them²⁴. In 1626 Philip IV, by seven different laws, reserved all military offices, diverse civil offices of the kingdom and certain places in the councils of the monarchy for naturals²⁵, and again, in three more laws in

19 Pérez Collados (1993).

20 *Acto de corte* of John II, parliament of Calatayud in 1461, in Savall and Penén, I (1866), 23-24. I have copied the version of the modern text provided by Pérez Collados (1993), 75. In the most usual edition of the code of laws of Aragón, that of 1866, the so-called old laws (to 1547) are organized by books and titles, with no indices, while the so-called new laws (1547-1702) are organized by parliaments and have no systematic compilation by books, titles and laws. The edition contains, besides, a collection of *actos de corte* (literally 'acts of parliament') from 1554 (II, 194-450), another of observances, another of laws no longer in force, several translations into Spanish of the codes of laws and observances printed in Latin, and an extensive analytical index.

21 Laws of Alphonse V in the parliament of Maella in 1423 and Charles I in the parliament of Monzón in 1533; Savall and Penén, I (1866), 2-4.

22 Law of Philip IV (III of Aragón) in the parliament of Zaragoza in 1646, in Savall and Penén, I (1866), 496.

23 Law of Peter II in the parliament of Monzón in 1362, in Savall and Penén, I (1866), 256.

24 Law of John II in the parliament of Calatayud in 1461, in Savall and Penén, I (1866), 30.

25 Laws of Felipe IV (III de Aragón) in the parliament of Calatayud in 1626, in Savall and Penén, I (1866), 455-456 and 458.

1646, gave them the offices of prisons of the kingdom, and places in different royal councils and in the Indies²⁶. Lastly, in 1585 Philip II decreed that Aragonese naturals could have offices in the Indies²⁷.

There are few doubts, therefore, that the possession or acquisition of 'naturalty' was always linked to a reservation of offices identical to that seen in Castile. Nevertheless, the Aragonese laws did not provide testimony about the processes of naturalization that took place and the 'letters of naturalty' that resulted, although there are references to the fact that these types of processes did occur²⁸. We know little about the real application of these laws, but certainly, in the seventeenth century, the residents faced, with attitudes of rejection, a new problem, which was the enormous French immigration stimulated by the expansion of the French market and high Spanish salaries. In numerous cases they resisted granting 'naturalty' – to which many had an absolute right solely by virtue of being born in Aragón, or living there for more than a generation²⁹.

Laws in Valencia provided a similar and complementary vision. 'Naturalty' was given by the king, too: it was frequently requested by the three estates of Parliament and so granted, as is verified in several sessions of parliament. In the sessions of 1542, nine individuals were naturalized³⁰. In 1547, upon the petition of the three estates, the king admitted 26 more individuals as naturals, almost all nobles and merchants, and some ecclesiastics³¹, and in 1604, upon the petition of all or some of the three estates (ecclesiastical, 'military' or noble, and 'royal' or from the cities) he declared as naturals 48 more individuals³².

26 Three laws of Philip IV (III of Aragón) in the parliament of Zaragoza in 1646, in Savall and Penén, I (1866), 497-498.

27 Law of Felipe II (I de Aragón) in the parliament of Monzón and Binéfar in 1585, in Savall and Penén, I (1866), 416.

28 Two cases from 1677 and 1692 are quoted; Pérez Collados (1993), 42, footnotes 105 and 106.

29 The French in Aragón numbered some 30,000 individuals, according to an anonymous document presented to parliament in 1646; the data and references are in Pérez Collados (1993), 44-48.

30 Micer Joan de Gays, Pompeo de Gays, Francesc Ubach, micer Bertomeu Camos, micer Joan Costa, Dorotea Francisca Philibert, the Duke Ferdinand of Aragón, Bernard of Cárdenas (Duke of Maqueda and Marquis of Elche) and Pedro Portocarrero Cervato. All of them were born in the city of Valencia or were neighbours of it. Decrees of Charles I, in the parliament of Monzón in 1542, in *Furs*, II, ff. xc-xci and ci-cii. In the legal compilation of the kingdom of Valencia, the code of laws in force until 1547 (probably until the parliament session of 1542) was organized by books, titles and laws, in two volumes. There is no general index, only an alphabetical index. The laws of the subsequent parliaments: 1547, 1552, 1564, 1585, 1604 and 1626 were further edited in another two volumes. They were only organized by parliaments. The king decreed, in parliament in 1626, that a systematic compilation be done, but it never happened (*Furs*, IV, f. 14). Also interesting is Mora d'Almenar (1635) and to a lesser degree, Branchat (1784-1786).

31 Parliament of Monzon in 1547, chapters iv-xxvi, in *Furs*, III, ff. xvi-xx.

32 In this case, it is said that both parties, the estates and the king, "lent their consent" to the acquisition of 'naturalty', which seems to indicate a role of the estates more equal in importance to that of the king; *Furs*, IV, parliament of Valencia in 1604, ff. 76-86.

However, the applications from the three estates were not always accepted. In 1626, the ecclesiastical estate asked that Henry of Aragón Folch Cardona and Córdoba, Duke of Segorbe, be naturalized, and the king postponed a decision until it was approved by the other estates of Parliament³³. This process was not always guaranteed³⁴.

In parliament sessions of 1604, much longer and more complicated, the king accepted that children of Valencia naturals, when born outside the kingdom, were also considered naturals³⁵, the same as in Aragón. This forged a link between place of birth and 'naturalty', and extended it to immediate descendents. It was an act of parliament (*acto de corte*) requested by the military estate (that of the nobility), newly confirmed in parliament sessions of 1626³⁶.

But the greatest importance of 'naturalty' was that it allowed one to hold office in the Royal House, as well as civil and ecclesiastical offices in the councils and offices of justice of the monarchy, and in the very kingdom of Valencia.

In the parliament of Monzón in 1585, the military estate (the one that included the nobility) asked that they and the other naturals of Valencia, by virtue of being naturals, be appointed to positions in the Councils of State, War and the Inquisition, as well as to offices in the Royal House. They also petitioned for the Council of Italy and offices in the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, to which the king consented³⁷. That it was not always so is demonstrated by the fact that the three estates of Parliament in 1626 asked again for at least four places in these councils for naturals of the kingdoms of the Crown of Aragón. The king did not give his consent³⁸.

Regarding ecclesiastical benefits, the parliament of Monzón in 1547 prohibited foreigners from occupying such posts³⁹. In parliament in 1604, the three estates requested that, in accordance with the laws, different offices and posts of the kingdom continue to be given to naturals and not to foreigners; including all the ecclesiastical benefits, the scribes, the inquisitor of the kingdom, and the public offices of the Generalitat and the city of Valencia⁴⁰. The king in parliament in 1626 again approved this petition, which also extended to all offices with civil and criminal jurisdiction, the king's as well as those of the lords with vassals, and

33 Parliament of Valencia in 1626, chapter xliii, in *Furs*, IV, f. 42.

34 See parliament of Valencia in 1626, chapter cccxxiv, in *Furs*, IV, ff. 82-83.

35 Parliament of Valencia in 1604, in *Furs*, IV, f. 60.

36 Parliament of Valencia in 1626, chapter cviii, in *Furs*, IV, f. 22.

37 Parliament of Monzón in 1585, chapters xxxvii and xciv, in *Furs*, III, ff. 7 and 14.

38 Parliament of Valencia in 1626, chapters clxxiv, clxxv, clxxvi, clxxvii and clxxviii, in *Furs*, IV, f. 33.

39 Parliament of Monzón in 1547, chapter xxxi, in *Furs*, III, f. vi.

40 Parliament of Valencia in 1604, in *Furs*, IV, ff. 4, 14, 19 and 61.

to the public notaries⁴¹. He also answered – evasively – another petition which requested that in each office of the Royal House, the king reserve three places for naturals of the Crown of Aragón⁴², which implicitly bestowed one place on a Valencian natural, according to custom. The king continued to give ecclesiastical offices of bishoprics and archbishoprics, along with their rents or incomes, to naturals and also to non-naturals. The petition that these posts only be given to naturals of the kingdom or, failing that, to those of other kingdoms of the Crown of Aragón, was rejected by the king. On the other hand, he accepted it for other, lesser, ecclesiastical offices⁴³.

There is little data regarding naturalization for merchant interests. In the seventeenth century, it seems that foreigners who traded in the kingdom did not obtain ‘naturality’ easily, not even if they were married to a Valencian woman and resided for more than 10 years in the kingdom⁴⁴. We have observed a similar situation in Aragón.

I have very little direct information regarding the kingdom of Mallorca. It was united to the house and Crown of Aragón⁴⁵, and in 1439 no longer had a Parliament. Its matters were dealt with by the Parliament of Catalonia, but the Mallorcans were not called to the sessions: according to my research, the applications were sent directly to the king through ‘ambassadors’ commissioned for the job. Nevertheless, the inhabitants had privileges and franchises and one must suppose that, like other vassals of the Spanish king, they had their own distinct identity⁴⁶.

Philip II created a Royal Audience in the kingdom on the 25th of April, 1572. In 1608, he had a lieutenant and captain-general who acted as viceroy, at times, and presided over the Royal Audience and the Captaincy General with diverse offices appointed by the king⁴⁷. It is probable that there were offices reserved

41 Parliament of Valencia in 1626, chapters cxxviii and cxxxv, in *Furs*, ff. 24 and 26.

42 Parliament of Valencia in 1626, chapter clxxiv, in *Furs*, IV, f. 33.

43 Parliament of Valencia, chapters clxxii and clxxiii, in *Furs*, f. 33.

44 As seen in the case of Alicante in 1626; chapter ccxxix, in parliament of Valencia in 1626, in *Furs*, IV, f. 71.

45 *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 371.

46 “[...] com lo present Regne de Mallorca sia apartat, havent sas franchises especials, é en res en lo mon no sia sotmés al Principat de Catalunya ni a la observança de las llurs constitucions ni usatges, [y] mayorment com aquelles sien estades fetes en Corts particulars de Catalunya en las quals los habitants del present Regne no acostumen esser citats ni son tinguts de anar, encare [=encara] que los habitants del present regne hayan exprés privilegi [de] que per algun fet civil o criminal no poden esser trets fora lo present regne [...]” (as present Kingdom of Mallorca be apart, having its special franchises, and never be submitted to the Principality of Catalonia nor the observance of its laws and customs, as they are passed in the Parliament of Catalonia where they do not use to be called in neither have to go; though the inhabitants of this country [Mallorca] have the privilege of not being taken out of this country for any civil or criminal charge). The text is in Catalan. It is a decree of Alfonso V of June 17th, 1439, in *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 85 and 371.

47 Pragmatic of Felipe III, October 20th, 1608, in *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 212-214.

for naturals, as in other kingdoms, although I cannot be sure⁴⁸. I have not found any use of the words *naturalidad* ('naturality') and *natural* ('natural') among Mallorcan archives, but there is the word 'inhabitants' (*habitadores*) referring to a similar or identical quality. There are some indirect facts that indicate that the inhabitants had the privilege of holding offices⁴⁹, the same as naturals in other kingdoms. Thus, in 1663, relatives and servants of the governor could not occupy certain offices if they had not been born in the kingdom⁵⁰; no one from Aragón, Catalonia or Valencia could be the governor of Mallorca⁵¹; the so-called *habitadors* ('inhabitants') of the kingdom had diverse specific privileges⁵²; it was obligatory for them "[...] que los [¿jutges?] ordinaris sien fills de la terra" and "[...] de la Illa de Mallorques [=Mallorca]" (ordinary judges to be sons of the land and the island of Mallorca⁵³) and "[...] que los habitadors no sian tinguts pledejar fora lo regne" (that the inhabitants not be obliged to argue their case outside the kingdom)⁵⁴. Finally, in the seventeenth century, foreigners not married to a Mallorcan woman were not able to open a shop⁵⁵, a limitation that, in the eighteenth century, had the same force as those in Aragón and Valencia.

Book I, title V, of the king's laws, given in Parliament, refers to legislation regarding 'naturality' in Catalonia⁵⁶. It comprises a dozen laws, from the chapter on the king's court given by Alphonse IV in the parliament of Sant Cugat in 1419, to that given by Philip V (IV of Aragón) Bourbon in the parliament of Barcelona in 1702. All refer precisely to those persons who, from the beginning, were not considered naturals, the foreigners, to establish, as in Castile, Aragón, Valencia and Mallorca, that they could not hold ecclesiastical benefits and offices in the

48 Since there were no sessions of parliament nor processes for the application or approval of 'naturality' as in the rest of the cases studied, it can be inferred that Mallorcan 'naturality', if there was such, was freely handled by the king, or at least without the intervention of public petitions.

49 A good summary of the Mallorcan privileges in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries I am referring to, is *Sumari o repertori de les franqueses y privilegis del regne de Mallorca, en que está compres altre sumari fet antigamente per lo Magh. Micer Theseu Valentí Donzell, advocat del regne, dit vulgarmente 'la Valentina'*, in *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 215-401. The document gives an accurate reference of each one, giving notice of the legal compilations and repertories, printed or not, that contain the full texts. The following data have been taken from this source. The texts are in Catalan, not in Spanish.

50 *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 276, 301 and 355.

51 *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 298 and 301.

52 *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 305-308.

53 Although in Catalonia "[...] los iutges deuen esser catalans e los mallorquins [allí] son reputats Catalans [...]" (the judges must be Catalan and the Mallorcans [there] are considered as Catalans); all in *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 353-354.

54 *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 373.

55 *Ordinacions y sumari dels privilegis* (1663), 383.

56 *Constitutions* (1704), I, book I, title V, laws I a XII – I, 16-21. The texts of this compilation are in Catalan, not in Spanish.

principality. In another chapter from the court given by Charles I in 1534, it is indirectly stated that Catalans were only “[...] los nats, e domiciliats verdaderament y sens frau en los dits Principat de Cathalunya o comptats de Rossello y Cerdanya, y fills de aquells [catalans] encara que no sien nats dins los dits Principat o Comptats [...]” (those born and truly residing without fraud in the principality of Catalonia and counties of Rosellón and Cerdaña, and their children even though they may not have been born in the aforementioned principality and counties)⁵⁷.

These laws were reiterated, in other statutes until 1585, and expressly confirmed by Philip V (IV of Aragón) in the Parliament of Barcelona in 1702⁵⁸. The parliament of 1706, convened when the Catalans were already in rebellion, did not contain any substantial novelty, perhaps only a major exclusion of those non-naturals⁵⁹. They were *capítulos de corte*, or chapters of parliament, that is, they were given by the king in Parliament, so this institution must have participated in their development, the same as in all the other parliaments. The majority expressly mention, as the main reason to refuse Catalan ‘naturalty’, the fact that the Aragonese, Valencians and Castilians also prevented Catalans from occupying ecclesiastical offices in their kingdoms, since they were not natural to those respective kingdoms. This indicates that the granting of ‘naturalty’ was also a defensive mechanism, to keep their own reserve of offices from their neighbours.

In Catalonia, ‘naturalty’ was managed, notably, around ecclesiastical offices, according to what the laws of the principality show; that is, the same as in all the other kingdoms studied. But with respect to Castile, there were differences of magnitude. The power of the king was less, his capacity to appoint offices, and the number of offices that he appointed, were fewer. The same occurred in the other kingdoms. In Catalonia (as in Aragón, Valencia, and Mallorca), there were no *corregidores* or royal local magistrates until the eighteenth century, nor officials of the king to collect the main taxes, nor a developed army. One should not forget another important fact: the king’s Royal House in Barcelona, as monarch of the Crown of Aragón, was diminishing in importance, and in the number of offices, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while the Royal House of Castile, nucleus of government of the Austrians, only grew. Therefore, there were many more offices and power to distribute in Castile. Apart from that, in the fifteenth century, foreign merchants did not appear to have problems operating in Catalonia⁶⁰ and I do not believe that this situation

57 *Capítulo de corte*, Charles I Habsburg in the parliament of Monzón in 1534, *Constitutions* (1704), I, book I, title V, law II – I, 16-17.

58 *Capítulo de corte*, Philip IV (V of Castile) in the Parliament of Barcelona of 1702, *Constitutions* (1704), I, book I, title V, law XII – I, 23-24.

59 As they were presided over by archduke Carlos of Austria as Carlos III of Aragón; *Constitucions* (1706), see *constitucions* or constitutions 7, 24 and 27 and capitols or chapters 10, 65 and 112 to 115.

60 Pragmatic of Martín I the Human, on 15-I-1401, *Constitutions* (1704), II, book I, title XXVIII, law I – II, 66.

varied much until the massive penetration of the French occurred in the principality, between 1540 and 1620⁶¹.

III. 'NATURALITY' IN NAVARRE

The case of Navarre is complex, since it does not match any of the aforementioned situations and since, in order to explain it, one must go back in time to the sixteenth century, to the moment when the kingdom of Navarre was incorporated into the Crown of Castile.

The political facts that we know today⁶² establish that, when Ferdinand the Catholic conquered Navarre, he named himself king of Navarre, in August of 1512. However he did not succeed in conquering the entire kingdom itself, since the region of the trans-Pyrenees, the so-called 'Basse Navarre' or Lower Navarre, which later formed part of France, remained out of his reach. From there, the initial intention of the Spanish king, as it would be for someone who had achieved a military conquest, was to incorporate the kingdom into his other patrimonial states, that is, to the Crown of Aragón, as one more kingdom. The consolidation might have supposed a process similar to that of the rest of the kingdoms of this Crown: a union respecting laws and institutions. The initial incorporation into Aragón is verifiable, according to Floristán, at least, in an official document of 5th of June, 1514 in which there is reference to "[...] our kingdom of Navarre, due to its newly done acquisition and addition [...] of it to the Crown of our kingdoms of Aragón [...]" and in a letter to his son Charles I in 1515⁶³.

Nevertheless this intention was maintained for only three years. By then, Isabella the Catholic had died, in 1504, Ferdinand the Catholic had married Germana de Foix (1505) and had had a son by her, who died shortly after birth. The son, had he lived, perhaps would have been the new heir to a Crown of Aragón which included Navarre⁶⁴. The heiress to the Crown of Castile was Ferdinand's daughter, Joanna (so-called Johanna the Mad), by his first marriage with Isabella. Ferdinand did not get on well with her, nor with her son and future heir to the Crown of Castile, Charles of Gant. For a time, he considered disinheriting her from his estates in Aragón. Thus Navarre would not have united with Castile.

But politics won in the end. In the first half of 1515 Ferdinand, near death, faced with the support the new king of France, Francis I, gave to John Albret, pretender to the throne of Navarre, changed his opinion. Castile offered more options to defend the conquered kingdom against France, and Ferdinand the

61 See Nadal (1960), chapter 5.

62 For the argument, I take as initial reference the excellent presentation of Floristán (1991), 55-62, although, in my analysis, facts and quotations are placed in a specific and different context.

63 Floristán (1991), 57 and (1999), 475-476, note 63.

64 Although the marriage was agreed upon with the French king, and the descendant, in principle, would only have inherited the kingdom of Naples.

Catholic, as “administrator and governor” of Castile, decided to give Navarre to his daughter, Joanna, heiress to the Crown of Castile (1515).

The initial incorporation of Navarre into the Crown of Aragón, had it been consolidated, would have supposed an identical process to what had taken place in the other kingdoms, respecting laws and institutions. In fact, the Viceroy, in the name of the king, swore to respect the laws in the parliament of Navarre, on the 23rd of February, 1513⁶⁵. But the kingdom integrated finally with the Crown of Castile⁶⁶. Ferdinand the Catholic died soon thereafter, and could not completely carry out the integration of the institutions and laws of Navarre into those of Castile. The new king, Charles I of Gant, did not dare to continue and halted the idea of absorption⁶⁷.

So, the union of Navarre to the Spanish Crown was not by inheritance, but rather through its conquest by Ferdinand the Catholic. Initially it was to unite with Aragón in the Aragonese manner, then it began the process of uniting with Castile in the Castilian manner, and in the end it remained in between. The kingdom of Navarre united with the Crown of Castile, as the viceroy of Charles I, declared in the Parliament of Navarre on the 22nd of May, 1516⁶⁸, but the institutions and laws of Navarre were neither reformed nor abolished, remaining untouched. As Floristán holds, only the passage of time would determine how, finally, the incorporation was politically interpreted⁶⁹.

In any case, the partition of the kingdom into two territories was definitive. After several political events, the military victories at Noain (1521) and Maya (1522), besides the final seizure of Fuenterrabía by the Spanish (February 1524), assured the possession of most of Navarre. France and Spain agreed to let it be so, definitively, by the peace of Cambrai (5th August, 1529)⁷⁰.

In the Spanish part of Navarre, where the capital was located, Parliament continued to function in the same manner as before 1512. The viceroy governed with the Royal Council, also named the Council of Navarre. Justice was exercised by the Main Court for minor matters, the Royal Council of

65 See Floristán (1991), 57.

66 “[...] and that his Highness commanded that the things that touched the cities, villages and places of the mentioned realm of Navarre and their neighbours, be handled from that moment by the Council of the said Queen Joanna, our lady, and that justice might be administered to the cities and villages and places of the realm and to their neighbours, and that there they might come to petition her and keep the laws and customs of the realm [...]”, partially reproduced by Floristán (1991), 61-62. To which ‘Council’ does this refer: to the Royal Council of Castile or that of Navarre? Floristán maintains that it was the Council of Castile – it is the most logical – and that the incorporation should be thought of as a mere absorption by Castile. The original text, dated July 7th, 1515, is in the act of parliament of Burgos in 1515 (June 8th to July 7th, 1515), in *Cortes*, IV (1882), 245-259.

67 Floristán (1991), 59 and (1999), 477-479.

68 AGN, Comptos, record number 540, f. 132r, and a book of *Recopilación de actas de Cortes* (1503-1531), f. 158r; everything apud Floristán (1999), 478-479, note 76.

69 Floristán (1991), 59.

70 Floristán (1991), 76-83.

Navarre as supreme court of Navarre, and other Castilian councils (Castile, War, Inquisition) when one of the litigants was not a Navarrese, or when it dealt with the monarch's prerogatives⁷¹. Parliament, different from all the rest, self-convened every three years and did not need the king to call the sessions. One of its most important administrative duties became precisely the granting of 'letters of naturality'⁷², a fact that, with respect to the question under scrutiny, became decisive.

From the union of Navarre with the Crown of Castile, which was legally not very clear, three events (about which we know little) evolved over more than a century. We do not know the details, but we do know the results.

First, the idea that the incorporation of Navarre into Castile was a 'unión accesoria' (a union between unequals) like those in the Crown of Castile, where Castilian laws and institutions became weaker. Instead, the idea became dominant that it was a union *aeque principaliter*, 'egüeprincipal', 'equiprincipal' or 'unión principal', that is, a union between equals, identical to the rest of those in the Crown of Aragón, in which, when they united with the crown, the Kingdom of Aragón kept its laws and government institutions⁷³. Second, despite the aforementioned, the privilege of Castilian 'naturality' for the Navarrese as a consequence of their incorporation into the Crown of Castile did not disappear, but rather was strengthened through a particular mechanism: a double 'naturality'. That of Navarre was considered equal to that of Castile,

71 For example, when the appointments to offices were included in the Royal Patronage, in which case the competence was of the Council of the Chamber of Castile from its creation in 1588.

72 They approved each tax and global tribute to pay to the Crown, but the management of collection was done by the *Cámara de Comptos* or Chamber of Accounts. The permanent *Diputación del Reino* was only created in 1572, by agreement of Parliament. They shared the legislative initiative with the king: they proposed rules and agreements that, if the king approved, enacted laws considered to be Navarrese, and, at the same time, the king, on his own, also promulgated *reales provisiones*, *reales cédulas*, *autos* and *ordenanzas del Consejo* [*Real de Navarra*], y *ordenanzas de visita* (royal rulings, royal decrees, resolutions and ordinances of the Council [Royal of Navarre], and inspection ordinances). In order to propose rules or the compliance with provincial laws, laws, orders, privileges, uses and customs that were already granted, parliament prepared a document with *pedimentos*, or petitions, to the king. The document was delivered to the viceroy, dealt with and reported by the Royal Council [of Navarre], and delivered to the king for a decision. Since the granting of donations was the main prerogative of Parliament, they frequently delayed their approval in order to guarantee that the rest of their requests would be honoured. All according to Sánchez Martínez (2002), unpaginated.

73 From the sixteenth century, a double interpretation appeared, united to the topic of what was the nature of the laws of Navarre. The polemic was born out of the edition of the first 'reducción' or compilation of the code of laws of Navarre, already set forth in 1528. The question comprised several fundamental concerns: whether the union of Navarre with Castile was an absorption or an 'egüeprincipal' union, a union between equals; whether the codes of law of Navarre were granted by the king, or agreed upon with him, and whether they were only of the kingdom, or of the king and the kingdom (Juan Martínez de Olano, 1573; Pedro de Ollarizqueta, 1575). The polemic, which continued during the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, must be interpreted as normal in one context, that of the Ancien Régime, in which the re-defined, disputed role of the institutions was habitual. The data are in Leoné Puncel (2005), 63-87, the statement on 86.

and vice-versa. Third, a certain number of inhabitants of French Navarre⁷⁴ continued to consider themselves Navarrese and sought recourse to the laws and ‘naturalty’ of Spanish Navarre. After 1583, when at last Spanish Navarrese ‘naturalty’ became fixed, those whom we can call French Navarrese continued to apply for a ‘letter of naturalty’ as Navarrese, that is, as Spanish Navarrese.

The first question, that of the *unión principal* or *equiprincipal*, has a historiographical nature and is at the heart of everything. But we cannot go into detail about that; it is necessary to pay attention to the others, which are of most interest at the moment. The second question, that of double ‘naturalty’, was essential: with it Navarrese naturals, from the beginning, were also considered Castilian and admitted to positions and offices in Castile. The Parliament of Navarre, as in any other realm, asked the king, many times successfully, to permit only their naturals to occupy offices in Navarre⁷⁵. But in addition, after decades of petitions, they gained something very important: exclusive control of Navarrese ‘naturalty’, which was granted them by Philip II in 1580⁷⁶.

The capacity of Navarrese naturals to occupy offices in Castile was accepted from the very beginning, but with the crisis in the monarchy from the end of the sixteenth century, the Castilians occasionally raised objections, and it was not again clearly accepted until 1645. That year, in the context of a political crisis stemming from the Union of Arms and the war with France, the College of the Holy Cross of the University of Valladolid refused to admit the Navarrese José de Egués as the recipient of a grant, because he was not considered a Castilian natural. The Parliament of Navarre then applied to king Philip IV that two things be expressly recognized: that the union between Castile and Navarre had been a *unión principal*, or between equals, and that the Navarrese, from the beginning, had been admitted as Castilian naturals to occupy positions and offices in Castile, and vice-versa. The king determined that the petition had merit, admitted the thesis of the *unión principal*, and ordered that the Navarrese be admitted⁷⁷.

74 That is, from the *merindad* (‘county’) of San Juan de Pie de Puerto, or of Ultrapuertos (‘beyond the ports’), or of ‘Tierra de Bascos’ (that is, land of the Navarrese who speak Basque). The Navarre of Ultrapuertos, Lower Navarre (‘Basse Navarre’) or French Navarre, was an independent realm during the sixteenth century and did not unite with France until its king, Henry III of Navarre, inherited the Crown of France and, as Henry IV of France, united both kingdoms in 1594.

75 Navarrese ‘naturalty’ was the subject of legislation similar to others, it can be seen in NRLN, book I, titles VIII and IX – I, 373-419 –, and IX – I, 421-437.

76 Parliament of Pamplona in 1580, law 40, in NRLN, book I, title VIII, law I – I, 373-374. Quoted as well by Floristán (1999), 482, note 88.

77 “[...] the year 1513 [the kingdom of Navarre] was united and incorporated by king Ferdinand of glorious memory in the mentioned kingdoms of Castile and León. And although the kingdom [of Navarre] remained distinct and separate in territory, legal code and laws, it did not remain so in communication and promiscuous aptitude for royal offices and ecclesiastical benefits, by having incorporated [to Castile] with this quality. This was so established in the referring writ inserted in the General Parliament that took place in the city of Burgos in the year 1515, where it is expressly stated that by the incorporation of this kingdom to those of Castile and León, it

Shortly thereafter the king explicitly recognized, by royal warrant on the 30th of September, 1647,

[...] that the naturals of this kingdom of Navarre for the same reason as those of the Crown of Castile, León and Granada and of the rest of those individuals may enjoy and ought to enjoy the offices, benefits, scholarships, academic residences and all the rest useful and proper that they are able and ought to enjoy the same as those born [...] in the mentioned kingdoms [...]⁷⁸.

Shortly after, in 1652, the parliament of Navarre complained again to the king that, in 1648, Navarrese naturals had been prohibited from being able to enter the list of those eligible for other offices, those of the rector of the College of Saint Ildephonse and of the University of Alcalá de Henares, because of not being Castilian naturals. The Navarrese, invoking again the decree of 1645, asked to be considered Castilian, and the king again granted it⁷⁹. The double 'naturalty' of the Navarrese no longer seemed to be in doubt.

So, from the middle of the seventeenth century, both the *unión equiprincipal* and the double 'naturalty' were fully accepted. But since 1515, 140 years had passed, and in so much time other things had also changed. During that time, Castilian naturals came to realize the double privilege of the Navarrese: politically they continued to have their own institutions and laws, but at the same time they were equal when it came to occupying positions and offices in Castile and the Indies. They had the advantages of *foralidad* (privilege of having provincial laws) without its drawbacks. Neither did the king ignore these ambiguities when it came time to distribute royal and ecclesiastical positions and offices. And the same thing occurred with the French Navarrese. No doubt they soon realized that, continuing to be considered Navarrese, gave

might keep its laws and customs free of censure and unharmed so it might govern itself. This was in such a way that, the incorporation of this kingdom was not by means of suppression but by that of *unión principal* [=union between equals]. So each kingdom retained their original character in laws, territory and government, although [=and] naturals as well retained equal and reciprocal rights to those of Castile in Navarre and those of Navarre in Castile to obtain dignities, offices and benefits with no difference, which has been observed and used thus after the incorporation was done. Normally, many of the dignities of this kingdom have rested with Castilian people, and have not been allowed for anyone from another province, or nation. And also their naturals because of this aptitude being reciprocal, have been admitted to the offices and benefits of Castile. Since this right was recognized to be clear and common and very close to the spirit of your Majesty, besides being equal in both kingdoms, and that without this right the aforesaid incorporation would not have had any effect [...]", parliament of Olite in 1645, law 6, in NRLN, book I, title VIII, law XXXIV – I, 412-413, the quote is from 412. The event was also noted by Floristán (1991), 165-166.

78 Parliament of Olite in 1645, law 6, in NRLN, book I, title VII, law XXXIII – I, 404-407, the text on 405. It has been reproduced in part in Floristán (1991), 165-166.

79 Saying "That we have not considered, nor do we consider the naturals from that kingdom [Navarre] to be foreigners to the kingdoms of Castile and León [...]". Parliament of Pamplona in 1652, law 1, in NRLN, book I, title VII, law XXXIV – I, 407-419.

them privileges in Navarre and also allowed them to be considered as Castilian naturals, to be appointed to offices in Castile and the Indies.

We do not know to what extent the French Navarrese were considered naturals after the conquest of Navarre by Ferdinand the Catholic. Their situation at this time was probably not well-defined, like the conquest itself, which only became definitive after a time. However it was, the certain thing is that, during certain decades, many, sincerely or out of self-interest, continued to consider themselves Spanish Navarrese. As early as the 28th of September, 1526, the inhabitants of San Juan de Pie de Puerto, principal town of the *merindad* (county) of Ultrapuertos, or 'Land of the Basques', ratified their loyalty to Charles I of Gant as king of Navarre⁸⁰, and in 1580, within the framework of the religious wars that were then devastating France, the question of 'naturality' of the inhabitants of French Navarre came to the forefront. That year, parliament decreed that

[Your Majesty] declares to be natural he who was procreated from a father or mother natural inhabitant of the mentioned Kingdom of Navarre; and he who was born in the mentioned Kingdom of a foreigner not natural and inhabitant, be not understood to be natural of the mentioned Kingdom nor can he enjoy the liberties and privileges, nor 'naturality'. Which only the three Estates and no other give and can give⁸¹.

Thus it was confirmed that, from then on, only those born of parents who were naturals themselves and who, in addition, resided in the kingdom would be considered Navarrese naturals, not those who only fulfilled one of the two conditions. Only "the three Estates" gathered in Parliament were able to grant Navarrese 'naturality'. This decision gave a judicial instrument of great importance to the institution, which in time would have important social and political consequences. When a French Navarrese petitioner applied for 'naturality' he had to address the Navarrese Parliament to approve his petition. He could not go to the Council of the Chamber of Castile, where the family and client networks which had been formed on both sides of the border, since before the conquest, came to have growing importance, to assure that a petition would be successful. The grant depended on the Navarrese parliament, which convened every three years – whether or not the king called them into session. This differed from all the other peninsular parliaments, so that the process of granting Navarrese 'naturality' remained, in fact, outside direct royal control. The Castilian king, who controlled the granting of Castilian, Aragonese, Valencian, Catalanian and Mallorcan 'naturality' had lost control of Navarrese 'naturality'. Moreover, since this was a competence of parliament, it could be used by it as an instrument of negotiation with the king.

80 Yanguas, III (1840), 423-426; apud Floristán (1991), 83-84.

81 Parliament of Pamplona in 1580, law 40, in NRLN, book I, title VIII, law I – I, 373-374. This book and title are dedicated to Navarrese 'naturality' and provide more references with regard to it. In parliament in 1580 was also established, in its law 26, that naturals of Navarre could not be held prisoner, except by officials of the kingdom, nor be judged, except by Parliament and Council of the realm: NRLN, book I, title VIII, law XI – I, 380-381.

Three years later, the definition of Navarrese ‘naturalty’ was completed when parliament, in 1583, petitioned, and the king granted, that ‘French Navarrese’ or ‘Basques’ (that is those who spoke Basque in the French region) not be considered Navarrese:

By the laws of this kingdom it has been ordained and ordered that foreigners not be admitted in this kingdom in offices and benefits and, in spite of this, the [Navarrese] Basques have expected not to be foreigners and to be able to have offices and benefits in this kingdom. And since they are subjects and vassals of another prince, we beseech that your majesty order and command, interpreting the mentioned laws, [...] that the [Navarrese] Basques be considered foreigners and not be admitted in this kingdom in offices nor benefits, vicariates and rents [...]. And that the same be understood and done with the French⁸².

This deprived the French Navarrese of ‘naturalty’ in Navarre and as a consequence they directed a letter to the king (1586) in which they argued that, until 1583, when they resided in Spanish Navarre, they had been considered Navarrese for all intents and purposes:

[...] naturals born within the village of San Juan [de Pie de Puerto]⁸³ and other places of the mentioned Basque *merindad* [county] who came to live and reside from the ports to this part [...], as naturals have enjoyed what other naturals of the other five *merindades* [counties] of this kingdom enjoy and have been appointed and admitted to royal offices of justice and government and ecclesiastical benefits and cures as other naturals of this kingdom without any distinction and without it being necessary to naturalize them as required if they were foreigners [...]⁸⁴.

They complained about the cited law of 1583 that had declared them foreigners, and asked that it be revoked, arguing that when, in 1512, Ferdinand the Catholic took possession of the kingdom, the representatives of this jurisdiction had sworn their obedience and loyalty to him. Thus the petitioners affirmed that if, from 1527, the “princes that have been and are from Béarn” began to collect the rents from the territories, it was because the Spanish king allowed them to occupy those territories. They also argued that, when the prince of Béarn began to defend Lutheranism and attack his Catholic subjects, those subjects were helped by the viceroys of Navarre who had allowed them to enter Spanish Navarre to practice their Catholic faith⁸⁵; and that Charles I and Philip II had received “many knights and gentlemen” of the jurisdiction as their own subjects⁸⁶.

82 Parliament of Tudela in 1583, law 47, in NRLN, book I, title. VIII, law VII – I, 377-378.

83 Today's French village Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port.

84 Idoate (1981), 406-408, in Floristán (1991), 145-146, where the complete document is found.

85 That is, to emigrate temporarily or definitively, at least in some cases.

86 Idoate (1981), 406-408, apud Floristán (1991), 145-146.

Therefore, it seems that the fixation of Navarrese 'naturality' and the rejection of the French Navarrese was an attempt either to slow the migration of Catholics persecuted by the Protestant prince of Béarn, in the context of France's religious wars, or to prevent the king from issuing to them the 'letter of naturality' without input from parliament, or both. There are no details of the political debate this provoked, but there is proof that the petition was not successful, since, in 1592, parliament ratified the laws of 'naturality' given in 1580 and 1583⁸⁷. From then on, French Navarrese, as foreigners, remained obliged to apply for Navarrese 'naturality' to the Parliament of Navarre. The process took place in parliament and the petitioner's personal contacts became more important than ever, since they could determine the successful outcome of the process.

The test of 'naturality' in Castile, Aragón, Valencia, Catalonia, Mallorca and Navarre reveals the existence of certain elements common to all these territories. Having or obtaining 'naturality' was needed to have the honour of serving the king. It allowed the occupation of civil as well as ecclesiastical offices in the monarchy, to ensure positions of power in service to the king and to monopolize the offices of one's own territory, excluding the foreigners. The king controlled the process of granting 'naturality' in Castile and in the rest of the cases, except for Navarre. It seems clear that the Navarrese elites occupied advantageous positions with respect to the rest of the subjects in the territories of the Crown of Aragón, because they were the first to hold positions close to the king⁸⁸, they controlled 'naturality' from their own Parliament, and they certainly ensured an unusual position with respect to the Castilians: they were equal when it served their interest, and different when it served their own interests. The Navarrese reached the king before anyone else, and when the rest, without a doubt taking advantage of the crisis of State in the seventeenth century, came clearly requesting more offices, the Navarrese had already occupied important positions. They had had the important advantage of being first-comers. And they used it.

IV. THE CONFORMATION OF SPANISH 'NATURALITY' IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the eighteenth century, a new phenomenon, the accelerated spread of the market, promoted substantive changes in 'naturality'. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the timid beginnings of economic recovery, together with the progressive paralysis of the provincial Parliaments (that had been almost never convened) during the century, made these institutions especially obsolete for any government that wanted to develop a mercantilist economic

⁸⁷ Parliament of Estella in 1592, law 20, in NRLN, book I, title VII, law VI – I, 377.

⁸⁸ The Navarrese were the first to occupy offices and positions in the Spanish monarchy from the beginning of the sixteenth century. According to Kagan, between 1524 and 1699, the percentage of Navarrese in a sample of colleges of Castilian universities was greater than all of the other non-Castilians together, and from the universities, they were promoted to offices and rents in the king's Court and the Indies; Kagan (1981), 155, as quoted by Floristán (1999), 483, and this writer.

policy. The difficulties in admitting the 'naturalness' of the French in Catalonia, Aragón, Valencia and Mallorca demonstrated the new competition, and the ensuing problems, that these individuals – who in many cases were involved in commercial activities – represented. They were a problem not only for the noblemen, but also for natural merchants. On the other hand, customs duties in Navarre, Aragón, and Catalonia, were under the control of their respective Parliaments, not of the king, and thus it was simply impossible to develop a policy of tariffs with the provincial parliaments, if the king did not convene them. And he did not, for political reasons.

Moreover, the parliaments were not prone to draw up a policy on custom duties since these had primarily fiscal, not commercial interests, for them. In any case, it would not have been minimally effective; the on-going changes in international markets, and the changing situation of the prices of trade, would have demanded prompt decisions that could not be taken without the king. The last Catalan parliaments that produced legislation took place in 1599 and 1702 (the unfinished one of 1626 did not pass any law and that of 1706 was illegally presided over by the archduke Charles as Charles III of Aragon). The last Valencian parliament took place in 1626, and only in Aragon were there parliaments in 1626, 1645-1646, 1677, 1678, 1686, 1687 and 1702. They were not many, either. Once again, Navarre was the exception: parliaments were convened every three years, but by contrast, here, the so-called *derecho de tablas*, or custom duties tax, was an income of the king's Royal Treasury, not of the realm; it was managed by the Cámara de Comptos until 1749.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this, none of these provincial custom duties would have been useful in developing a mercantilist custom duties policy, since all of them were given at lease until the decade of 1740. So, it was the lessees, not the king's officials, who interpreted how the tariffs had to be applied in each case. Any customs policy was nearly impossible while customs continued to be at lease.

To this was added new and exceptional political circumstances, arising from the War of Succession: the suppression of *fueros* or provincial laws in Aragon, Valencia and Catalonia (but not in Navarre); the appearance of a French merchant elite in Madrid, joined to those of Seville and Cádiz, and the reaffirmation of royal power in concert with the political culture of the age.

For that reason, the granting of 'letters of naturalness', which until then had required the more-or-less formal consent of the respective Parliaments, ended up fully in the hands of the king, who within a few years made two important decisions that have not been taken into account until now, and that had considerable consequences. First, between 1715 and 1723, the different naturalities of the monarchy united around the Castilian 'naturalness'. Second, as a consequence of the new circumstances, the king began to use 'naturalness' as an economic instrument, not just as a tool for the distribution of power, and ended up establishing different types of 'naturalness'. All this strengthened his political capacity, weakened the reserve of offices that the Castilians had preserved for their naturals over two

centuries, and extended the social range of those who were entitled to occupy them⁸⁹. These changes left aside, once more, Navarrese ‘naturalty’, for three reasons: the Navarrese had been loyal to their king, they had contributed to the economic effort of the war, and their networks of political influence within the court were already well developed. From then on, they increased.

The first thing that Philip V did was to consolidate the competence of Castilian cities in the granting of Castilian ‘naturalty’ through a royal resolution, in consultation with the Council of the Chamber of Castile, on the 26th of August, 1715, by which it was decreed that Castilian ‘naturalty’ would not be granted “without asking for the consent of the cities and villages with a vote in Parliament” for the purpose of awarding rents or ecclesiastical offices and municipal posts. Next, four types of ‘naturalty’ were created. An important addition on the 7th of September, 1716 to the instruction of 1588 (“which has the Chamber [of Castile] for its government”, that is, that which created the Council of the Chamber of Castile), established four types of ‘letters of naturalty’ for foreigners:

[...] it is declared that naturalities for foreigners belong to the decisions by this Tribunal without the need for consultation, except those that are to enjoy ecclesiastical income, in whose case consultation should precede. This grace is an authorization for the foreigner to be able to enjoy and have in these kingdoms all and any offices, honours, dignities, rents and privileges that naturals have, without any difference or distinction. There are four classes: the first, absolute, to enjoy all the ecclesiastical and secular without any limitation; the second for everything secular, with the limitation that it not include things that impinge on the ecclesiastical; the third to be able to obtain certain ecclesiastical rent in canon, dignity or pension without exceeding it; and the fourth is for the secular and only to enjoy honours and offices as naturals excepting all that is prohibited by the articles established [in the contracts for the collection of the service] of millions. For the first three the consent of the kingdom must precede their grant, writing letters to the cities and villages voting in Parliament, except when such naturalities are of those that have been granted by the kingdom at the time of the dissolution of the general Parliament⁹⁰.

Here, two things must be noted. The first is that subjects of the king are no longer mentioned, rather only ‘foreigners’ who apply. Castilian ‘naturalty’ is not mentioned. It seems to be consolidated in the terms that were established in 1595: affiliation and birth, *ius sanguinis* and *ius soli*.

The second is the final sentence, key to the whole text, whose interpretation, in my judgment, is in no doubt. In a subtle but clear way, the vote in parliament, obligatory for granting Castilian ‘naturalty’ in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was supplanted by an individual bureaucratic ‘consent’ of the cities with a vote in parliament, whatever kingdom it might be. In addition, the king gave more power to the Council of the Chamber of Castile in the granting of ‘letters of naturalty’ to foreigners, and establishing limits, depending on the grace that was

89 Herzog (2003), 76-93.

90 NR, book I, title XIV, law VI, footnote 5 – I, 110.

granted. In this way, cities with their own vote in Parliament, but not necessarily meeting in the sessions, continued to judge 'naturality'; but in fact the granting of it remained in the hands of the Council of the Chamber of Castile (that is, the king), with the tacit consent of the *brazo real* or royal estate, that of the villages and cities, which was precisely the only body that had been summoned to parliament by the king during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The law also affected those who until then were Aragonese, Valencian, Catalanian and Mallorcan naturals. The three Parliaments of the Crown of Aragón, which comprised all the branches or estates, had been suppressed; but the representatives of the *brazo de universidades* or estate of universities, that of the cities (equivalent to the royal estate in Castile), of those political communities, continued to exist because the decrees of the *Nueva Planta* (literally 'new template') (1707, 1714) had incorporated them into the Parliament of Castile. They were part of it already, therefore the law affected them as well.

Indeed, soon after, in a resolution in consultation with the Council⁹¹, on the 1st of October, 1721,

[...] it was declared that in the kingdoms of Aragón, Valencia, Catalonia and Mallorca ought to be requested the consent of the cities with a vote in Parliament to take place in them the grace of 'naturality' that His Majesty accords, so that foreigners might enjoy there certain ecclesiastical rent, And in the cases in which His Majesty grants limited or absolute 'naturality' for all the kingdoms of Spain asking the consent of the cities with a vote in the Parliament of the kingdoms of León and Castile, it is requested it ought to be practiced in the same way with those of the Crown of Aragón⁹².

This law confirms that the king granted 'naturality' to foreigners "for all the kingdoms of Spain", that is that the law of the 7th of September, 1716 was also being applied to the new representatives of the estate of universities, born from the old parliaments of Aragón, Valencia and Catalonia, who had become part of the Parliament of Castile. The decree of 1721 simply said it was enough to consult Aragonese cities in the same way that had been established for Castilian cities in 1716. Thus, it was explicitly declared that all the members of the parliament of Castile, each of them individually, and without the need to be gathered in parliament, continued to be competent to 'consent' that the king grant Castilian 'naturality'. The innovation was that the Castilian parliament included Aragonese representatives, that it was no longer necessary to convene parliament for 'naturality', and that 'naturality' was granted for all of Spain. In fact, Castilian 'naturality' had become Spanish 'naturality'. Finally, it must be emphasized that it was applicable to "the grace of 'naturality' that the king accords", that is, that which the king gave as a mercy, by way of grace, not by way

91 The text does not indicate which it is: it could be the Council of Castile or the Council of the Chamber of Castile.

92 NR, book I, title XIV, law VI, footnote 4 - I, 110.

of justice. Of the 'naturalness' attainable by the rest of the inhabitants, nothing is said, simply because there was no need. The king, in changing the awarding of 'naturalness' to foreigners, had created its opposite: a new Castilian 'naturalness' that had no name at first, included all others, and that by usage came to be called Spanish 'naturalness'.

Perhaps legal archives may some day provide details, not currently known, about how these laws were really applied. At this moment in time, their reading leads one to think that what the regulation did, subtly, was to attribute Castilian 'naturalness' to the king and extend it to the Aragonese, Valencians, Catalonians and Mallorcans. This interpretation concurs with the fact that soon after, by royal decree on the 7th of June, 1723, naturals of Castile, Aragón, Catalonia and Valencia could obtain ecclesiastical offices and positions reciprocally, without being considered foreigners among themselves⁹³, something that until then they could not do without fulfilling the requirements in force for each kingdom.

In this peculiar way, 'naturalness' in the Spanish monarchy became legally merged in the eighteenth century, dispensing with parliament but not with those who comprised it. Aragonese subjects could hold offices in Castile, along with those foreigners whom the king considered to be useful or necessary, which gave him the capacity of greater action than he had previously had and, in social and political terms, notably broadened the ability to distribute the power of the monarchy. It is worth pointing out that there is no reference to the Basques in these laws, I think because it was accepted that they had Castilian 'naturalness'.

And the kingdom of Navarre remained outside all of this, once more, because its parliament continued alive and active as before, which would have important consequences for maintaining the commercial networks of the French in Navarre. Or rather, Navarre remained at the same time within and without, because in the seventeenth century it was already established that Navarrese 'naturalness' was equivalent to Castilian 'naturalness'. The Navarrese continued in their singular situation, which offered them new possibilities and advantages.

The questions that remain unanswered in this analysis are many. But I believe that the comparative analysis of 'naturalness' from additional documentary sources will permit a better understanding of what is now barely outlined. 'Naturalness' in the territories of the Spanish monarchy had different origins, but almost all with common characteristics; the unification of the category by the king, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, set the basis of Spanish 'naturalness' as a political category. At the same time, in the context of the budding development of the domestic market, the use of processes of naturalization came to have an increasing economic significance and provided added advantages to the growing commercial networks like the Navarrese and Catalanian. For decades, the French networks competed successfully in the Spanish domestic market, but at a certain time they became non-naturals, that is, foreigners. They

⁹³ NR, book I, title XIV, law V – I, 108-109.

were stripped of privileges and finally, after the French Revolution, they ended up constituting the opposite of Spanish 'naturalness' which was then already the Spanish nation, the Spanish *patria*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGN = Archivo General de Navarra

Constitutions = *Constitutions y altres drets de Catalunya* (1704)

Furs = *Furs de València* (1547-1635)

NR = *Novísima recopilación de las leyes de España* [...]

NRLN = *Novísima recopilación de las leyes de Navarra* [...]

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Novissima recopilacion de las leyes de el reino de Navarra, hechas en sus cortes generales desde el año 1512 hasta el de 1716 inclusive. Que con especial orden de los tres estados ha coordinado el licenciado don Joaquín de Elizondo, síndico, y diputado que fue del mismo reino, oidor togado de la Cámara de Comptos, y ahora oidor del Real Consejo, Infiriendo en la recopilación de los síndicos y a los títulos a que pretienen todas las promulgadas en el referido tiempo. Y dedica al mismo ilustrísimo reino y a sus tres estados, 2 tomes (Pamplona: Oficina de Joseph Joaquín Martínez, 1735; facsimile ed. *Novísima recopilación de las leyes de Navarra*, 3 vols, Pamplona: Diputación Foral de Navarra and Editorial Aranzadi, 1964).

Nueva recopilación de las leyes destes reynos, [...] hecha por mandado de la Majestad Catolica el Rey don Felipe Segundo nuestro señor; que se ha mandado imprimir con las leyes que después de la ultima impresión se han publicado por la Majestad Católica del Rey don Felipe Cuarto el Grande nuestro señor (Madrid: printing press of Catalina de Barrio Angulo and Diego Díaz Carrera, 1640; first published 1566. Facsimile ed., Valladolid: Lex Nova, 1982).

Ordinacions, [...] y sumari dels privilegis, consuetuts, y bons usos del regne de Mallorca. Donats a la estampa per Antoni Moll, notari, sindich y archiver perpetuo de la Universitat de dit Regne. Comensats a imprimir essent iurats los M. Ill. y Magh. Ss. Ignaci de Torrella, Agusti Palou, Hieroni Pont des Mur, Ioseph Amer, Iaume Matheu Suñer y Hieroni Denus; y finits en tem[p]s dels M. Ill. y Maghs. Ss. Francesc Bronda, Thomas Garriga, Iaume Morell, Gabriel Amengual, Francesc Serra y Iaume Llinás, iurats lo present any, 1 (Mallorca: Casa [=Casa] de Pere Guasp, 1693).

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Ethnography, philosophy and the rise of natural man 1500-1750

JOAN-PAU RUBIÉS

I. SAVAGES AND NATURAL MAN IN ROUSSEAU'S *SECOND DISCOURSE*

In his still today indispensable *The Fall of Natural Man*, Anthony Pagden drew a distinction between a natural man 'living outside human society', as understood in the sixteenth century by those scholastic theologians and humanist rhetoricians he was concerned with, and the Enlightenment (or Rousseauian) view of natural man as a man stripped of the artificial trappings of civilization. If the history of the European intellectual encounter with the American Indian could be construed as the 'fall' of the Aristotelian image of natural man as a man who had failed to fulfil its pre-determined social condition (a distinct theme from the Christian idea of the fallen condition of mankind into sinfulness), the early modern trajectory more generally is surely the history of the opposite process, the *rise* of natural man as a central concept of the Enlightenment. And if Pagden's account outlined the intellectual steps by which, within the context of Spanish imperial and ecclesiastical debate, a comparative ethnology of the barbarian replaced the Aristotelian stereotype, my argument here is about how, in a general European context, empirical ethnography about 'savages' affected in varying and sometimes paradoxical ways the philosophical debate about what being human was, and should be, about. While from the perspective of cultural and intellectual history, the rise of natural man to a position of prominence – be it in the context

of political theory or, more generally, history and philosophy - is indisputable, its relationship to actual encounters and ethnographies of the savage is far less clear. In any case this rise, or any previous fall that we might want to talk about, can not be seen as relating to one single idea or interpretation. Rather, what I think needs to be emphasized is the plurality and even ambivalence of ideas of savagism and natural man in a variety of early modern anthropologies.

Some of the potential for ambiguity in the concept of 'natural man' derives from the various meanings of the word *nature*: natural man was to begin with 'what man really is (or was)' in the state of nature, but also, in the natural law tradition, which assumed a rational element to nature, it could also be 'what man should be' according to right reason. This ambiguity was crucial to the reception of ethnographic accounts of 'real savages' because, whilst these could inform the empirical investigation of 'what man really is', they could also help challenge the idea that it was civilization that best represented what men should be. In other words, the real debate was whether civilization fulfils, or, indeed, corrupts human nature. The reception of the early modern ethnography of savages suggests that a number of European philosophers who might be classified as 'libertine' thinkers increasingly questioned the simply positive valuation of civilization as fulfilling human nature, that is, the position implicit in the dominant humanist and scholastic traditions.

Rousseau's *Discourse on the origin and foundations of inequality among men* (1755), or Second Discourse, can be taken as a starting point for a retrospective analysis, since in this work natural man may be said to have reached its high point as a figure of the Enlightenment debate on civilization. Rousseau's idea of natural man as a solitary being, naked and homeless, without concern for material goods and free from the passions, basically unsociable but capable of compassion, and in fact without even an elaborate language or family structure, was powerful and original in its radical conception¹. As is well known, it served to re-define natural law in purer terms around the idea that men have rights and obligations primarily as sentient beings, rather than just as rational beings. It also served to denounce how the progress of civilization, property rights, laws and the state had led to the growth of an artificial inequality amongst men. But leaving aside his own particular uses of natural man to mount an unprecedented critique of civilization, Rousseau's discussion is also symptomatic of how the natural law tradition became entwined with two distinct sources of reflection: classical primitivism, on

1 Of the many general discussions of Rousseau's anthropology and his idea of natural man, I have found most useful Victory Goldschmidt, *Anthropologie et politique: les principes du système de Rousseau* (Paris, 1974), and A. M. Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man* (Chicago, 2000). The classical article by Arthur Lovejoy, "The supposed primitivism of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*", *Modern Philology*, 21 (1923): 165-86, questioning the idea that Rousseau sought to portray the pure state of nature as desirable, remains salutary and offers useful distinctions, but underestimates Rousseau's positive valuation of man's natural instincts and his ambivalence towards 'perfectibility'.

the one hand, and modern accounts of savages, on the other. It is this aspect which I wish to explore here².

In relation to his use of ethnography, it is worth emphasizing at the outset that Rousseau's argument is often misunderstood, because his modern savages – the savages he read about in travel accounts – were no longer natural men, but instead represented a subsequent stage in a process of historical evolution, a process in which the rise of civilization was also the beginning of moral corruption. Caribs and Hottentots helped the philosopher think about natural man, but did not represent natural man in a pure state. Despite Rousseau's explicit rejection of the philosophical idealism of the natural law theorists that took man's rationality and modern passions for granted, his image of natural man remained, at heart, non-empirical, much as Hobbes' equivalent idea of the state of nature (which Rousseau sought to replace) had been: the natural man of the *Second Discourse* was the result of historical speculation based on 'negative' reduction, that is, on stripping away all the elements that make up man as a civilized being³. In this way Rousseau challenged the classical (Aristotelian) and Renaissance (scholastic or Christian humanist) assumption that man is only man because he is both rational and social. A social life was not a necessity for natural man. Rather, sociability was the outcome of man's perfectibility, which indeed led him to freedom and rational enlightenment, but also to many errors, moral corruption and unhappiness⁴.

In order to construct his natural man, however, Rousseau found inspiration in an alternative tradition of classical primitivism developed by Stoic and Epicurean writers. One of its themes, the positive valuation of natural simplicity, was exemplified by Seneca in one of his most famous letters, on

2 For the influence of travel accounts on Rousseau see Gilbert Chinard, *L'Amérique et le rêve exotique dans la littérature française au XVII^e et au XVIII^e siècles* (Paris, 1913); George Pire, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les relations de voyages", *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 56 (1956): 355-78; René Pomeau, "Voyage et lumières dans la littérature française du XVIII^e siècle", *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth century*, 57 (1967): 1269-89; H. Krief, "Rousseau et la 'science' des voyageurs", in *Rousseau et les sciences*, eds. B. Bensaude-Vincent and B. Bernardi (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003).

3 Opinion remains divided on the extent to which Rousseau's state of nature was meant to be taken as purely conjectural in a Hobbesian manner rather than historically factual. For an argument emphasizing the theoretical element see Victor Gourevitch, "Rousseau's 'pure' state of nature", *Interpretation*, 16 (1988): 23-59. There are however too many efforts by Rousseau to find empirical support for his account of the state of nature to make this interpretation fully convincing, ranging from the African apes who might be like natural men (perfectible but reduced to purely animal functions) to the minimally social and happy savages of travel accounts, and it makes little sense to isolate the 'pure' state of nature from the rest of the story. Even if methodologically Rousseau privileged theoretical speculation over historical research (and he necessarily had to), the power of his rhetoric relied on historical plausibility. A similar speculative but not a-historical method applied to his unpublished essay on the origins of languages, originally written in parallel to the *Second Discourse*.

4 "I do not see that one can seek the source of moral evil anywhere but in man, free, perfected, hence corrupted", Rousseau, *The Discourses and other early Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 234.

the theme of the Golden Age (*aetas aureas*), arguing that freedom and indeed true *humanitas*, the love of fellow humanity, had been lost through the greed that accompanied the process of civilization, and that ‘following nature’, the philosophical ideal of the Stoics, consisted of a virtuous return to a primitive simplicity (although he did not say that savage men could, in their state of ignorance, be called virtuous)⁵. Less obvious, but possibly equally crucial, was the influence of Lucretius, the Roman poet of the later Republic. In book V of *De Rerum Natura* Lucretius had offered a detailed image of the stages of the early history of man, as part of a didactic exposition of Epicurean Philosophy⁶. Although Rousseau would condemn his teachings as perverse (alongside those of Hobbes and Mandeville), Lucretius was probably his most extensive model⁷. Unlike Seneca and the Stoics, Lucretius was anti-Providentialist, a position Rousseau did not espouse, and the poet’s account of the primitive state of mankind was not entirely positive. However, Lucretius offered a naturalistic account of the growth of civilization, and one in which a new artificial morality eventually replaced the natural principles of strength and courage⁸. Rousseau

5 Seneca, letter XC to Lucilius. It seems likely that Seneca was following the Greek Stoic writer Posidonius, whose early history of mankind as a civilizing process accompanied by the growth of ills provided a common source to Seneca and Lucretius (and possibly Diodorus Siculus too). However, whilst Epicurus developed an atheistic interpretation of this process, Seneca did the opposite, emphasizing the high moral significance of a *return* to simple nature. The subtle point, not always appreciated, was to abandon the trappings of civilization from a position of rational knowledge, not to become a beast again, driven by passions. It is quite possible that it was Seneca who brought together the Golden Age myth of the poets with the Stoic account of the negative, denaturalizing effects of the early history of civilization, giving the narrative a fresh anti-Epicurean slant, and inspiring many subsequent Christian writers.

6 The dominant Christian traditions, in the West often inspired by Augustine, had been sympathetic to Seneca’s primitivism, which echoed the Biblical Eden, but emphatically rejected Lucretius’ anti-Providentialism, that is his attempt to explain all events in natural and human history without reference to any deity, offering a naturalistic explanation based on materialistic atomism whilst attacking all religion as superstition; however, from its discovery in the early fifteenth century by Poggio Bracciolini, the poem was published repeatedly and exerted an often invisible influence, especially amongst libertine writers. This influence however became more open throughout the Enlightenment, as it became easier to challenge religious orthodoxy.

7 Although the influence of Lucretius on Rousseau has not always received attention, it was noted by early critics. Consider Jean de Castillon, *Discours sur l’origine de l’inégalité parmi les hommes. Pour servir de réponse au Discours que M. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève, a publié sur le même sujet* (Amsterdam, 1756), vi, 20 and 255-66 (with extensive parallels). See also Jean Morel, “Recherches sur les sources du Discours sur l’inégalité”, *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 5 (1909): 118-98.

8 A similar theme appeared in the opposition between barbarians and civilized developed by Latin writers such as Tacitus in his account of the German tribes: in an ambivalent image imbued with nostalgia, the Roman Empire brought peace and prosperity at the expense of liberty and natural virtue, and compared to the civilized, barbarians were hospitable, courageous and chaste. However, they were also indolent, and indeed, the most savage preferred to live in extreme poverty than under the tyranny of needs and obligations.

could build upon this image of loss of natural virtues to further assert that self-preservation (*amour de soi*) and compassion (*pitié*) already defined human nature in its original state, previous to any social contract or indeed rationality, providing principles of natural right that might inspire a more egalitarian and hence more satisfactory reconstruction of the political order⁹.

How then did these different elements, classical primitivist, ethnographic and philosophical, combine? Rousseau's fundamental formulation of self-preservation and compassion as the two building blocks of natural law echoed the minimalist principles of Hugo Grotius¹⁰. However, his questioning attitude towards the process of civilization relied on classical primitivism supported with modern ethnography. Whilst Rousseau openly rejected an Epicurean anti-Providentialist world view (one that Diderot had in fact revived for Rousseau and his contemporaries), he silently adopted a Lucretian model of early man as a solitary being without language or family¹¹. Rousseau seems to have used the evidence of savages from a variety of travel accounts as supplementary to his historical speculation on how the progress of civilization also gave rise to an artificial moral and political system that increasingly betrayed the equality of those origins, a time when natural men were self-sufficient, morally innocent, and happy. To sum up this process, 'the less natural and urgent man's needs, the more his passions increase and, worse still, so does the power to satisfy them'¹². The Caribs were, among known peoples, those who

9 Hence Rousseau rejected a natural law foundation for society, but believed that the "règles du droit naturel" derived from the agreement of these two pre-social principles. He also asserted that animals, which followed these same principles, logically also had natural rights, even if they could not recognize them rationally. But his project concerned mankind: it consisted in reconstructing the political order upon new foundations that recognized this truth about human nature, and hence the artificiality of many pernicious and oppressive social institutions too often assumed to be necessary by natural law theorists, most notably private property.

10 Rousseau also had in mind Samuel Pufendorf's speculative account of how self-preservation led to the rise of social institutions, but his narrative offered a contrary interpretation. Similarly, Rousseau's *Second Discourse* was a reply to Bernard Mandeville and his *Fable of the Bees*, in particular the fifth and sixth dialogues of the second part (London, 1729), where Mandeville developed the Lucretian story of the progress of civilization along Hobbesian principles, that is, through a strict anthropology of selfish passions such as fear, greed and pride.

11 As illustrated in his letter to Voltaire of 17 August 1756, Rousseau defended the concept of an impersonal Providence not occupied with individual human affairs (other than granting men an immortal soul), one which allowed him to interpret nature, hence also man in his natural state, in positive terms (Rousseau, *The Discourses*, 232-46). In this respect, he was closer to a Stoic deist than to a traditional Christian 'priestly' position, and at odds with Diderot's materialism. Officially, Rousseau returned to Protestantism (following a long Catholic interlude) when he visited Geneva in 1754, just after completing his *Second Discourse*. However, his interpretation of Protestantism as a religion both natural (rational) and civil (tolerant) was very peculiar and his actual views, which questioned all revealed religion, remained highly controversial, as the reception of the *Émile* and the *Social Contract* (1762) in Geneva would eventually prove.

12 Rousseau, *The Discourses*, 199 (I, 17, note ix). Here and elsewhere I quote the *Second Discourse* according to the translation by Victor Gourevitch, occasionally adapted according to the French original. For the latter I have used *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, eds. Blaise Bachofen and Bruno Bernardi (Paris: Flammarion, 2008).

remained closer to a natural state, but like all other savages, they already belonged to what Rousseau understood to be the second stage in the history of sociability, a stage half-way between animal simplicity and the formation of political societies regulated by laws. This was no longer natural man, but represented man at his happiest, because most equal:

The example of savages, almost all of whom have been found at this stage [when men began to congregate but before there were laws], seems to confirm that mankind was made to remain always in this state, the genuine youth of the world... So long as they applied themselves only to tasks a single individual could perform, and to arts that did not require the collaboration of several hands, they lived free, healthy, good, and happy as far as they could by their nature be, and continued to enjoy the gentleness of independent dealings with one another; but the moment one man needed the help of another, as soon as it was found useful for one man to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property appeared, work became necessary, and the vast forests were transformed into smiling fields that had to be watered with the sweat of men, and where slavery and misery were soon seen to sprout and grow together with the harvests¹³.

This passage elicits some questions which, I believe, require more attention than they have received. We may begin by considering to what extent was Rousseau informed by the ethnography he read in his travel sources – the Dominican missionary Jean-Baptiste du Tertre for those famous island Caribs, but also, elsewhere, the obscure adventurer François Corréal for the Caribs of Venezuela, or the German Peter Kolb for the African Hottentots (those same Hottentots whose rejection of civilization inspired the frontispiece to the *Second Discourse*)¹⁴.

These are the sources Rousseau makes explicit. Did Rousseau ignore classics of the earlier ethnography of savages, such as the influential account of the Tupinamba of Brasil written by the Huguenot pastor Jean de Léry, and published by the Protestant presses of Geneva in the late sixteenth century? The question is relevant, because Léry's account of the natural virtues of the cannibal, rhetorically opposed to the corrupt morals of the Christian and civilized, in some ways pre-figured Rousseau's type of argument.

This leads to a second question, Rousseau's substantial contribution to the interpretation of ethnographic sources. Was Rousseau saying anything different from his illustrious predecessor Montaigne (whom Rousseau had read carefully) when he used the cannibals of Brazil to question the extent to which Christian Europeans adhered to natural law properly understood?¹⁵ To what extent was he

13 Rousseau, *The Discourses*, 167.

14 This frontispiece (see figure 1) showed the image of a Hottentot who late in the seventeenth century had been taught the rudiments of Christian civilization, but who chose to return to his savage life and renounce all things European after returning to his country. It was a famous story, told by Peter Kolb and other travellers, and summarized by Rousseau in his note XIII from Prévost.

15 Rousseau's reading of Montaigne in relation to some of the ideas of the *Second Discourse* is documented in his annotated copy of the 1652 edition of the *Essays*, now at Cambridge University Library. See Jean Starobinski, "Rousseau: notes en marge de Montaigne", *Annales*

inspired by the attacks on private property and European religion more recently publicised by the baron de Lahontan by means of account of the Hurons of Canada? More generally, how generalized in the travel writing and cosmographies of the early enlightenment was the myth of the innocent or virtuous savage to which the narrative of loss of natural equality belonged?



Fig. 1 'Il retourne chez ses égaux'. Frontispiece to Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (Amsterdam: Marc Michel Rey, 1755). Reproduced by kind permission of University of Cambridge Library.

de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 41 (1997): 11-56. Montaigne was in turn reading and quoting Seneca and Plutarch, and there is a clear genealogy linking the Stoic primitivism of these writers, Montaigne's reading of them with a sceptical edge, and Rousseau's critique of civilization, albeit his educational and political revisionism was novel within that tradition.

We must of course read the traditions of soft primitivism – the positive image of the life of men in a natural state – against the prevalence of negative images of savages as barbarians or cannibals, and a third question must relate to the contextual logic underlying these variations. Were there basically two images, positive and negative, broadly used with two kinds of agendas? While the political logic behind some of these uses cannot be ignored, there was no imperialist consensus in mid-eighteenth century Europe, and the role of colonial justifications can easily be exaggerated in the analysis of early-modern ethnographic sources. To what extent were the intellectual agendas behind the negative and positive images of savages conditioned by issues other than the justification or criticism of colonial empires?

II. IMAGES OF THE SAVAGE IN EARLY MODERN ETHNOGRAPHY, FROM VESPUCCI TO LAHONTAN

In order to answer these questions it may be useful to distinguish four key elements of the myth of the savage in relation to ethnographic or pseudo-ethnographic sources. Although these themes have an analytical value, their emergence and development must be understood in relation to particular genres and contexts.

A first paradigm is clearly literary, and belongs to the epic genre in history and poetry: it consists of *the rhetorical equality of civilized European and non-European barbarians* within a ‘heroic’/chivalric paradigm renewed by classical models. There are glimpses of this ‘aristocratic savage’ in various Spanish and Portuguese narratives of conquest such as the letters of Cortés, but it becomes especially clear in epic poems like Alonso de Ercilla’s *Araucania* (1591). The theme would continue to echo until its final efflorescence in the romantic imagination¹⁶.

However, the relative equality of the European and the barbarian fighting each other was normally marginalized by the sixteenth-century image of *the savage as representing ‘minimalist humanity’*, that is, men living in a state somewhat close to (but not identical with) animals. This was a state that all men could revert to in the wrong circumstances – it represented what we all are underneath. Hence, when in 1542 the Spanish conqueror Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca described his dramatic shipwreck in the coast of modern Texas (Galveston Island), he made it obvious that the loss of all the trappings of civilization, including clothing, placed the Spanish at a level below the Indians amongst whom they found themselves, and Cabeza de Vaca interpreted the ritual crying of the local Karankawa – a particularly poor and primitive tribe – as an act of human sympathy for his own wretchedness¹⁷. In those circumstances, it was the Spanish who reverted

16 Harry Liebersohn, *Aristocratic Encounters. European Travelers and North American Indians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

17 “To see those men, who are so lacking in reason and so brutish, like animals, weeping on our behalf, made me and others in the group even more desperate”. *Relación de los naufragios y comentarios de Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, ed. Manuel Serrano Sanz, *Colección de*

to cannibalism, and the humane and generous Indians were at this point scandalized¹⁸. This image of minimalist humanity had, again, classical sources, in particular Aristotle's influential idea that both rationality and sociability defined the distinctive nature of mankind; so did the notion of a primitive transition from a savage condition to civilization, described in particular detail by Epicurean and Stoic writers such as Lucretius or Diodorus of Sicily¹⁹. The key issue was that from a humanist antiquarian perspective, the New World savages of modern ethnographic accounts were equated to the primitive barbarians of the ancient world – and especially ancient Europe – as represented in classical sources, in Tacitus for example. John White's coupling of the Ancient Picts of the British Islands with the Algonquian tribes of Virginia, so effectively publicised by Theodor De Bry, stands as the clearest example of how by the late sixteenth century this equation had become iconic²⁰.

Under the combined pressure of antiquarian primitivism and the colonialist debate, a simple opposition between the savage and the civilized was eventually replaced by a more nuanced hierarchical and historical naturalism, a classification of degrees of barbarism (with 'barbarism' understood as lack of civility rather than simply as cultural difference) represented from the end of the sixteenth century by Jesuit historians and cosmographers like José de Acosta or Giovanni Botero. This was in some ways the fate of that natural man whose fall is at the centre of Anthony Pagden's story: the Spanish debates about New World barbarians prompted by the dispute about the rights and wrongs of empire had the effect of questioning the Aristotelian image of natural slaves, that is to say, of the natural inferiority of barbarians. The assault was led by men like the Dominican theologian Francisco de Vitoria, who led by their religious universalism insisted that even the most savage amongst the barbarians were ultimately rational beings who could learn to be civil and Christian, and thus were entitled to natural rights such as liberty and property. It was very much as a result of that debate that the simple opposition between the civilized Europeans and irrational savages gave way to the idea that barbarians needed to be classified in a hierarchy of degrees of cultural development, implying that historical

libros y documentos referentes a la historia de América, V (Madrid: Librería General, 1906), 48-9. Influenced by his Christian cultural assumptions, Cabeza de Vaca seems to have misread a possibly friendly local ritual of welcoming for an act of compassion. The issue here is not however anthropological accuracy, but that at the point when the Europeans descended to a lower condition of minimal humanity, the European traveller and ethnographer projected an idea of common humanity.

18 *Relación de los naufragios*, 52.

19 Varro, Vitruvius, Horace, Virgil and Manilius echoed similar ideas. All seem to have influenced by Lucretius to some extent.

20 See Sam Smiles, "John White and British antiquity: savage origins in the context of Tudor historiography", in *European Visions: American Voices*, ed. Kim Sloan, British Museum Research Publication, 172 (2009): 106-12.

change could lead to some sort of progress of civilization. This paradigm was as we shall see influenced by humanist historiography, and eventually contributed to the philosophical histories of the Enlightenment concerning the origins and development of society, often informed by exotic ethnography. However, the idea that cultural differences could be explained in relation to genetic differences – the idea that human capacities were radically different between different nations or races – did not entirely die out: it also found new formulations within the naturalistic paradigms of the Enlightenment.

But minimalist humanity had another use: it could be used to speculate about *the state of nature and natural rights*. Hence it also influenced natural law debates and political philosophy, most clearly in Thomas Hobbes and those who reacted to him. Eventually, this discussion about the state of nature also contributed to the philosophical speculations about ‘natural man’ that were so central to many writers of the Enlightenment, in particular (as we have seen) Rousseau.

The speculations of Rousseau however also owed to another, softer version of primitivism, ‘the humanist myth of the Golden Age’, a time before private property, work, greed, or the necessity of laws. This humanist image, our third element, was directly influenced by the Greek and Latin poets, especially Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*²¹. By contrast, its relation to image of Eden before the fall is less straightforward. We might call this nostalgic primitivism ‘Stoic’, because various Greek and Roman authors influenced by Stoicism understood following nature and living in austere simplicity in positive terms, and were keen to denounce the extent to which civilized life, especially life in cities, could lead to moral corruption, for example through excessive luxury. This Stoic tradition, best represented by Seneca’s letter XC but also by Plutarch (whom Rousseau read assiduously), often relied on a normative understanding of providential nature as apprehended by human reason, an objective moral order often expressed through the idea of natural law (a notion also articulated by Cicero in a number of influential passages), and should therefore be distinguished from the Epicurean (or Lucretian) model of the early history of civilization that I alluded to earlier, which depicted a process driven by necessity and chance, without any role for Providence or rationality²². In Lucretius’ influential narrative, the solitary life of the first men was hard and resisted idealization, yet the progress of civilization was no less problematic; once the rudiments of communal (fire, housing, language, and the simplest arts) had been acquired, culminating in the natural leadership of primitive and heroic kings, degeneration quickly ensued, as men,

21 Hesiod and Aratus were the key sources amongst the Greeks, whom Ovid and Virgil largely echoed.

22 The normative character of the Stoic vision of the Golden Age of original simplicity is not to deny that to some extent its appeal was connected to an idealized account of the origins of the Roman Republic, a vision for example expressed by Livy, who understood Roman greatness as an outcome of its original austerity, and attributed its present troubles (at the turn of the first century) to a decline of morals brought about by luxury and greed.

driven by ambition or greed, fell upon each other, making the institution of laws and private property necessary in order to curb this violence. Thus although the Epicurean and the Stoic agreed in considering human endeavour in civilized society as somewhat vain and in locating a happier, simpler period of moral innocence in a past before excessive wealth brought the corruption associated with property, authority and laws, Lucretius unlike Seneca rejected any Golden Age or the notion that right reason was located in the past, and embraced civilization as both inevitable and, to some extent, desirable²³.

As I have argued elsewhere, analysing Peter Martyr of Anghiera's interpretation of the natives of Hispaniola discovered by Columbus as men living in a Golden Age (Anghiera was in fact the key early exponent of this image), it would be wrong to treat this as a simple projection of a classical theme without any basis on first-hand reports. The image of innocence was rooted on empirical descriptions of cultural simplicity and lack of property written by those same explorers and settlers who, having proclaimed their desire to convert those naked peoples to Christianity, very quickly proceeded to enslave them²⁴.

In any case, I would argue that this poetic but also to some extent ethnographic image of primitive simplicity was always challenged by the negative image of the savage as cannibal and idolater. A good example of the ambivalent play between these two sets of images can be represented by Vespucci: living according to nature was equivalent to living unconstrained by any laws, "like Epicureans", hence the people of Brazil went naked, held all property in common, required no justice, recognized no kings, had no religion or faith, took as many women as they wished, and ate human flesh²⁵. However, after its paradoxical transformation by the Huguenot traveller Jean de Léry and, more decisively, by the Catholic moral critic Montaigne, even the cannibal contributed to the more libertine (and at heart Stoic or Epicurean) idea of a 'natural man' not corrupted by civilization, and hence happier and less hypocritical than modern European man. As Léry observed:

The elaborate attire, paint, wigs, curled hair, great ruffs, farthingales, robes upon robes, and all the infinity of trifles with which the women and girls over here disguise

23 Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935) offer what is still the most systematic and compelling account of classical primitivism and anti-primitivism. Only occasionally I depart from their typology. The Greek sources for Stoic primitivism are to some extent lost, but it seems clear that authors like Seneca and Cicero were influenced by Posidonius. The parallels offered by Diodorus Siculus and his contemporary Lucretius suggest that there may have been a common basis for Stoic and Epicurean treatments of the subject in the first century BC, although with Seneca the divergence becomes explicit (see n.5 above).

24 Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Travel writing and humanistic culture: a 'blunted impact'?", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 10 (2006): 131-68.

25 Letter of July 1502 to Lorenzo di Perfrancesco di Medici. The published version, *Mundus Novus*, added sensationalism to this basic description, especially by graphic and obviously exaggerated depictions of promiscuous sex and generalized cannibalism, but kept its basic features.

themselves, and of which they never have enough, are beyond comparison the cause of more ills than the ordinary nakedness of the savage women²⁶.

This idea of savage innocence of course culminated in key texts of the French Enlightenment about the ‘noble savage’, which often stood somewhere between the ethnographic and the philosophical. The Baron de Lahontan, in his semi-apocryphal account of his travels amongst the Hurons (*Voyages...dans l’Amérique Septentrionale*, 1703; revised 1705), offered the clearest formulation of the way the idea of natural equality became the key element in this idealization of the savage as representing man as he should have stayed:

Ce sont des homes chez qui le Droit Naturel se trouve dans toute sa perfection. La nature ne connoit point de distinction, ni de prééminence, dans la fabrique des individus d’une meme espece, aussi somme-nous tous égaux...²⁷

This was a man whose nakedness was less sinful, whose sexual morality was less repressive, whose religion was less absurd, and whose economic and political life was more equal and less oppressive than in Europe. However, with Lahontan the moral significance of the idea of innocence had been deeply transformed. With Léry and Montaigne, it was the moral failings of European Christians, rather than their way of life or their religion, that were being exposed by the rhetorical consideration of the positive qualities of American Indians: in Montaigne’s famous expression, “we can indeed call these people barbarians by the rules of reason, but not in comparison with ourselves, who surpass them in every kind of barbarism”²⁸. What Montaigne had not done was to question the traditional contents of the rule of reason. By contrast, Lahontan’s anti-clericalism ensured that it was no longer a Christian understanding of natural law that defined the moral compass of savage innocence. Instead, a deistic type of natural religion was associated with an idea of natural right that, against traditional Aristotelian principles, altogether questioned the benefits of the fundamental institutions of civilization, such as private property and the rule of law²⁹.

26 Jean de Léry, *Histoire d’un voyage en terre de Brésil*, ed. Frank Lestringant (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1994), 234.

27 Baron de Lahontan, *Dialogues curieux et Mémoires de l’Amérique Septentrionale*, ed. Gilbert Chinard (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1931), 257. This statement was an addition by the author of the 1705 revisions, Nicolas Gueudeville, who enhanced the radical edge of Lahontan’s dialogues with the chief Adario. For a discussion of these alterations see Chinard’s introduction, 29-44, and Aubrey Rosenberg, *Nicolas Gueudeville and his Work (1652-172?)* (The Hague-Boston-London: M. Nijhoff, 1982), 123-31.

28 Montaigne, “On the cannibals”, *The Complete Essays*, translated by M. A. Screech (Harmondsworth, 1991), 236.

29 Interestingly, whilst the Golden Age theme was general to European humanistic culture, the criticism of civilization and in particular of private property through the use of the savage was mostly a French libertine theme, in contrast, for example, to the dominant trends in the British Enlightenment.

Our fourth and final element concerns the image of *the savage as colonial subject*. Here, however, it is important to emphasize that the colonial realities of European domination overseas, especially in the New World, did not generate a uniform image or single theme of the savage. On the contrary, various colonial contexts generated a number of debates, both within each imperial system and between them. As we have seen, the *apology of empire* often involved negative ethnological stereotypes, in particular, the use of the Aristotelian idiom by which barbarians became natural slaves, the use of the natural law tradition by which savages were ignorant men who committed crimes against natural law, or the use of the classical idiom by which savages were men living a primitive life 'without any law', that is, like beasts (what I have described as 'minimalist humanity'). This classical repertoire was often supported by a Christian (Augustinian) Providentialist theme which insisted that savages were obviously great sinners whom God chose to punish (for example, by decimating them, as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo suggested)³⁰. By contrast, critics of colonialism presented *the Indian as victim*, in two modes, Catholic 'Providential utopianism', and the Protestant 'Black Legend'³¹. It is however crucial to note that not all defence of empire was built upon negative stereotypes, and not all praise of savages was anti-colonial. Catholic Providential Utopianism, in the Franciscan or Jesuit mode, and in the writings of Las Casas, was still in the end little more than attenuated (religious) imperialism, often working to moderate the harsher realities of the colonies. Moreover, a positive image of native peoples was often mobilized in defence of colonization against metropolitan sceptics – hence, from Columbus in Spain to Thomas Harriot in England, the *capacity for civilization and Christianization* become important markers for the future subject (or even the future slave). In other words, promotional literature, Catholic or Protestant, was relatively pro-native.

III. THE PROBLEM: HOBBS' FAKE AMERICAN SAVAGES

This complex typology raises the question of whether the classical image of the Golden Age, and the subsequent libertine elaboration of the noble savage theme, had anything to do with speculations about the state of nature, or should be treated as an altogether separate paradigm. It is, in other words, important to disentangle with some precision the relation of the natural man of philosophers and philosophical historians to the noble savage myth, in particular the savage of libertine discourse of the early Enlightenment (best represented by Lahontan), which may be interpreted as a re-invention of the classical Golden Age to serve

30 The negative image of the savages as sinners who lacked knowledge of natural law and therefore could be subjected or dispossessed was not exclusive to Spanish imperialist writers such as Oviedo or Sepúlveda, it also helped support colonialist policies in Protestant countries.

31 Notably, writers like Las Casas, Benzoni (especially through the illustrated edition by Theodore de Bry), and Montaigne. Arguably, the tradition culminated in the secular criticism of colonialism by Abbé Raynal and Diderot.

a moral debate, satirical or philosophical, about European Christianity and civilization. Here I will seek to demonstrate that it is the negative theme of what men are when stripped of civilization (that is, a hard primitivist paradigm devoid of the myth of the Golden Age) that is most closely connected to the philosophical idea of man in the state of nature, and hence to theories about the origins of civil society. Moreover, I shall argue that whilst empirical ethnography of New World (and, later, Pacific) savages was remarkably relevant to the elaboration of the libertine myth, especially in the writings of Montaigne and Lahontan, the relation between ethnography and speculative natural rights theory, too often taken for granted, was highly problematic. I believe that the depth and sources of this tension have to some extent been obscured by the fact that eighteenth century writers like Rousseau and Diderot, who inherited both the libertine myth and the Hobbesian thought experiment, were able to offer a synthesis between the two traditions.

From a modern philosophical perspective, perhaps the better known set of images relates to the crucial role that the idea of man in a state of nature played in the development of moral and political thought. We are all familiar with Thomas Hobbes' characterisation of the natural condition of mankind as equivalent to a state of war, in which lack of security makes any industry or civilization impossible, therefore human life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". The subsequent centrality of this image of a social and political contract whose terms are defined speculatively on the basis of ideas of man living in state of nature is pervasive in modern liberal consciousness, even though John Locke, or Jean-Jacques Rousseau, wrote in very different contexts and aimed at very different conclusions from those reached by Thomas Hobbes. Less clear in the historiography, but in my opinion more important historically, is to assess why and how this tradition originated. Simply comparing the treatment of the image of natural man and his natural rights in these three major landmark writers, in order to note that Hobbes sought to defend an extreme version of absolute sovereignty, Locke, on the contrary, a moderate form of monarchy where the executive powers of the state had to be conditional, and Rousseau, most paradoxically, the idea of the alienation of human nature through the same process of civilization that guaranteed sociability and property rights, does not take us very far, unless we consider a broader cultural context.

Even though it was generally understood (by writers as diverse as Suárez, Grotius and Locke) that human political and cultural realities were empirically diverse and needed to be elucidated through historical research, the natural law tradition treated the subject of the state of nature speculatively, not empirically. One explanation is that this was a way of circumventing the Biblical account of Creation and the Fall, without openly embracing atheism, as for example Rousseau declared in one famous passage of the preface to his *Second Discourse* in 1754³². Arguably this problem had already been identified by the Renaissance

32 Rousseau, *Discourses*, 132. See also note 64 below.

ethnologist Johannes Boemus in 1519 by simply considering the clash between the classical and Christian accounts of the earliest history of mankind. However, there is a deeper issue here. In effect, whether in the late scholastic tradition, or in the modern Protestant natural law tradition, the idea of natural law and natural rights were derived from supposedly rational axioms, with empirical observations only playing a supplementary role. I am not sure it has been sufficiently emphasized that the results were not always compelling. Hobbes' idea in *Leviathan* that "the savage people of many places in America (except the government of small families, the concord thereof dependeth on natural lust) have no government at all, and live at this day in that brutish manner as I said before", for example, agrees with an image of utter barbarism that circulated in England in the seventeenth century, but is completely at odds with the more detailed and authoritative ethnographies of North America produced by English writers from Thomas Harriot to John Smith, narratives that emphasized a degree of civil order and even harmony amongst the savage nations, and which were widely publicized by Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas³³. In the case of Hobbes we know that, in his capacity as tutor and secretary to Lord Cavendish, he became a shareholder and sat at the Courts of the Virginia Company between 1622 and 1624. Here he had the opportunity to personally meet Samuel Purchas, amongst others very well informed about the Algonquian tribes around Jamestown, so it is quite inconceivable that he would not have been aware of the tenor of this ethnographic discourse³⁴. It is true that after the great massacre of Virginia settlers in 1622 a more negative view of native savagism came to prevail than had been the case previously, but this (in any case amply provoked) aggression towards the English did not justify Hobbes' assumptions about the lack of civil order and security (above the level of the family) *within* each native village or tribe. We could say that whilst Hobbes' idea of a state of nature could conceivably claim a kind of scientific status purely as a model of what it would be like if men did not live under political authority, Hobbes was in fact tempted to argue, both in *De Cive* and in the *Leviathan*, that his account of 'the natural state of men before they entered into society' described the reality both of former ages amongst many nations (I think we can safely assume pre-Roman antiquity in Western Europe), and of the current life amongst many American Indians³⁵. In doing so Hobbes was not

33 I have analyzed Harriot's rhetorical strategy in Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Texts, images and the perception of 'savages' in Early-Modern Europe: what we can learn from White and Harriot", in *European Visions*, ed. Sloan, 120-130.

34 Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes, Sandys and the Virginia Company", in Id., *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 53-79.

35 Hobbes' "natural condition of mankind" is best understood to be an abstraction to explain what impels men to form society (namely fear of each other) rather than a description of historical time before the creation of political societies. For Hobbes ancient history was to begin with Biblical history, and his empirical examples were therefore modern American

inspired by his readings of travellers' accounts, but took the classical paradigm as a starting point (possibly also influenced by his experience translating Thucydides), and forced modern ethnographic evidence to portray something quite different from what it often did³⁶. As revealed by the iconography of the title page of *De Cive*, Hobbes in effect subtly transformed the iconic status of the savage as a subject for potential civilization proposed by De Bry into an emblem of pure natural liberty opposed to civil society³⁷.

His methodological position, where rhetorical power may have been more important than any facts, is not too different from that of Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda when, in a very different polemical context in Spain a century earlier, he insisted in defining the peoples of the New World as irrational and therefore natural slaves, abusing the Aristotelian definition. It is of course significant that, under pressure from the relatively well-informed Dominicans, the imperialist school of the Spanish debates about native rights was to a very large extent forced to retreat into a subtler condemnation of the Indians, usually on the grounds that in their idolatry, human sacrifices, cannibalism and (highly exaggerated) sodomy, they failed to follow some crucial commandments of natural law. There is no evidence to my knowledge that the Hobbesian sacrifice of ethnography to axiomatic theory suffered from an equivalent reaction from those better informed, given how secondary the issue of the native Americans and their rights was to the conclusions of his whole project. Indeed what seems most remarkable is the extent to which subsequent writers felt free to approach the subject in a similar manner, that is, building a political theory by reference to the speculative image of a previous state of nature. Whilst John Locke evidently read travel accounts with attention, taking notes for example from Jacques Sagard's account of the Canadian Hurons, or Inca Garcilaso's account of Peru, and used ethnographic evidence to challenge the idea that men were born with innate ideas, when representing the state of nature his main model was Hobbes's preceding account.

savages, or savages in past centuries, rather than primitive men in the most distant past, sharing the equation of the American savage and the European ancient proposed in 1590 by John White and Thomas Harriot. Hence in *De Cive* (1647): "One may easily see how incompatible perpetual war is with the preservation of the human race or of individual men. Yet a war that can not be brought to an end by victory because of the equality of the contestants is by its nature perpetual [...] The present age presents an example of this in the Americans; past centuries show us nations, now civilized and flourishing, whose inhabitants were then few, savage, short lived, poor and mean".

36 In his translation of Thucydides, Hobbes quickly encountered the famous passage on the origins of civil society in Greece, with its emphasis on a primitive nomadic existence marked by insecurity, and Attica's paradoxical escape from faction and invasions thanks to the poverty of its soil. Hobbes might have also been influenced by Lucretius, whom he certainly read (possibly in the 1640s) in relation to his atomic materialism and his contacts with Gassendi. The possible influence of Lucretius on Hobbes merits more attention.

37 For an analysis see Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 99-103.

Therefore my leading hypothesis is that philosophical images of *natural man understood as man before any social contract* did not usually bear a direct relationship to images of actual savages, whether we are dealing with savages endowed with primitive virtues, or those living like animals and without knowledge of natural law or Revelation³⁸. That does not mean, however, that *the notion of natural rights* was the consequence of a purely speculative exercise. In fact the picture is more complex. We must consider, for example, Vitoria's concern with the actual conquest of America and the fate suffered by the civilizations of Mexico and Peru as the source of his natural law arguments about just war and rights to liberty and property, or the influence that his thought on the matter exercised over Hugo Grotius. However, even if we grant that natural rights were in some cases an important concern, the extent to which a detailed ethnography of New World 'barbarians' or 'savages' affected these theoretical discussions is a different matter. Arguably, whilst the historiography on the Spanish overseas conquests, and the debate on the legitimacy of those conquests in terms of natural law, was often shaped by ethnographic research (this is especially the case in the writings of Las Casas), this ethnography only had a limited role in the formation of the philosophical idea of natural man. What the ethnography of particular groups of savage and civilized gentiles often did, from Hispaniola to the Philippines, was help *decide the range of applicability of theoretical notions of right and nature* within a political and ecclesiastical debate about conquest and mission.

Thomas Hobbes might have decided to ignore those accounts that emphasized that the savages of America were in many ways very civil; John Locke, by contrast, was (as we have seen) an avid reader of travel literature, and there can be some argument as to what extent his philosophical arguments relied on historical material. One line of interpretation suggests that the state of nature was meant to depict not how men are, but rather what rights and duties men have when placed by God in the world: not a primitive way of life in a secular historiography modelled on the classical account of the rise of civilization, but rather something all men carry within themselves as natural creatures prior to living in society (as they inevitably must)³⁹. However, when it came to his philosophical arguments, there can be no doubt that Locke made a strong claim about the historical validity of his theories, in particular his use of 'savages' was important in at least two respects. First, evidence from savages was crucial to questioning the thesis that moral ideas were innate, for example by attacking the classical principle that there existed a universal consensus about fundamental moral norms, including religious worship. Second, although Locke's state of nature can be seen as primarily an elaboration of Hobbes' account, he insisted that it was no mere fiction, and located the transition to civil

38 The subject has been discussed by François Tricaud in relation to Hobbes: "Hobbes conception of the state of nature from 1640 to 1651: evolution and ambiguities", *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, eds. G. A. J. Rogers and Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 107-123.

39 John Dunn, *Locke. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003; 1st ed. 1984), 53.

government in pre-history. He acknowledged that the state of nature had become in modern times rare, because it was obviously inconvenient for men to live without society, and he also recognized that the evidence was scant, because pre-civil men kept no historical records (with the exception of the ancient Jews). However, he found sufficient evidence of the historicity of the process by which free and equal men came together to form a civil society in the accounts of the origins of European city-republics such as Venice and Rome, and in José de Acosta's explanation of the way men in Peru used to live without government like the savages in Florida or Brazil. The savage nations of America also supported his claim that the first kings were only leaders elected for the purposes of warfare (hence the consensual nature of political power in the earliest societies was established)⁴⁰. My point here is not simply to note that treating the state of nature of seventeenth-century political philosophers as deliberately a-historical contradicts the empirical claims made by Locke and, to some extent, also Hobbes; of equal significance is the fact that Locke's reliance on Acosta stands as one clear example of the way the Spanish Jesuit's classification of barbarians into degrees of civilization, combined with his assumption (in his account of the peopling of the New World) that in the beginning all Indian nations were nomadic savages, had transformed America into the privileged laboratory for the development of a kind of stadial theory for the history of gentile mankind.

The historical assumptions underlying the Renaissance model of the rise to civilization can be illustrated with reference to Johannes Boemus' *Omnium gentes mores, ritus et leges* (Augsburg, 1520), the first comprehensive ethnological treatise of Renaissance Europe, and a work often reprinted and translated. As we have seen, Boemus (Böhm), a humanist cleric from Ulm, faced the difficulty of reconciling the biblical and classical accounts, deriving the latter from Diodorus Siculus. The philosophical account was of course objectionable, because it began with a spontaneous emergence of mankind from a combination of physical elements, without any providential intervention: there was no creation of Adam, not even a glimpse of an intelligent design. Yet obviously something about the history of the rise of civilization from a condition of beast-like savagism appealed to Boemus as plausible, although, inevitably, he felt compelled to declare the truth of the account given in *Genesis*. The signs of ambivalence, which led him to present both accounts for the reader to judge, are highly significant. In fact, Boemus managed to reach a synthesis by displacing the classical account of the rise of civilization at the time *after* the flood. Although primitive life, which was 'rural, secure and idle', echoed the theme of the Golden Age, Boemus' dominant theme was the perfection and happiness of European civilization, compared with the simple, rude and uncivil life

40 Daniel Carey discusses Locke's selective use of travel accounts for the very different arguments of the *Two Treatises* (to illuminate the history of European civility) and the *Essay* (to question innate ideas) in *Locke, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. Contesting diversity in the Enlightenment and beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 69-97. The empirical validity of Locke's state of nature is suggested in *Two Treatises of Government*, II, chapter 8 (including passages on Acosta and on elective monarchy).

of earlier times⁴¹. The growth of civilization from a condition of gross barbarism had been driven by conflicts between men, economic needs and concern with security, and there could not be any doubt about the fact that the creation of laws and walled cities ensured civil peace and led mankind to historical progress:

And then they began to provide for their maintenance, not only by husbanding their grounds, or following their flocks, but by sundry other exercises and new invented arts, to pass by sea with their navies into foreign nations, first for transporting of companies to inhabit new-found countries, and then for traffic and trading with one another; to train up horses for the cart; of copper to make coin; to clothe themselves more curiously; to feed more daintily; to have more humanity in their speech, more civilities in their conversation, more state in their buildings, and in all points to be more mild, more wise, and better qualified: and laying aside all gross barbarism, and bestly cruelty, abstaining from mutual slaughter, from devouring of human flesh, from rapine and robbery, from open and incestuous couplings of children with their parents, before indifferently used, and from many more such enormities. They applied their reason and strength to recover the earth... and made it fertile and very delightful to behold⁴².

Interestingly, Boemus's image of man living in a state of utter incivility after the Flood, which we might describe as either neo-classical or proto-Hobbesian, was written with willful independence from the accounts of American savages by Vespucci, even though, given their wide circulation in Germany, Boemus must have at least heard rumors⁴³. In this first example of armchair humanist cosmography modern ethnography would confirm, rather than create, the image of pre-civil man underlying the classical history of the progress of civilization. Hence the Spanish translator of Boemus' work in 1555, the humanist rhetorician Francisco de Thámara, was able to supplement Boemus' account of the customs and religions of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Europe with those from "Las Indias y tierras nuevamente descubiertas", directly adapting the ethnographic chapters recently published by imperialist historians of the Spanish conquest such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo and Francisco López de Gómara⁴⁴. Adhering to the contrasting images of barbarism and civilization developed by Boemus, Thámara

41 More generally, Boemus' declared aim was to offer a source of moral instruction through the compilation and comparison of human rites and customs.

42 Boemus, *The manners, lawes and customes of all nations*, translated by Ed. Aston (London, 1611), preface to the reader. I have used Aston's English translation (which followed the Latin edition published in Lyons in 1604) because it is more faithful and clearer than the 1555 version by William Waterman. I have compared Aston's rendering to the Latin of the second edition (using the Lyons edition of 1541).

43 The wide circulation of Vespucci in Germany, sometimes illustrated, is commented on by Hans-Joachim König, "Pluralità di culture o modello Europeo? L'America e gli Indios nelle prime testimonianze scritte tedesche", in *Il nuovo mondo nella coscienza italiana e tedesca del Cinquecento*, eds. A. Prosperi and W. Reinhard (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), 225-8.

44 Francisco Thámara, *El libro de las costumbres de todas las gentes del mundo y de las Indias* (Antwerp: Martín Nucio, 1556).

was content with an image of native savagery that made the Spanish conquest seem part of a civilizing process, a restoration of human unity through both true religion and the highest forms of civilization. This was therefore the humanist paradigm in its imperialist version, which as Boemus had demonstrated, could be made compatible with both the Biblical image of cultural and religious degeneration, and with the classical alternative that emphasized the progress of civilization. Humanist historians of the New World like José de Acosta thus had a powerful set of assumptions from which to integrate a stadial history of New World barbarians to the triumphant history of Christian civilization. Moreover, those writers who in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sought to take the pre-civil state of nature as the starting point for a historical hypothesis for the development of human societies had a solution to the problem maintaining religious orthodoxy: the state of nature was to be a relapse into bestiality from the rationality of Noah, rather than an absolute beginning for mankind from animal origins.

Within the natural law tradition, the stadial theory (and the idea of a relapse) received impetus in *De jure naturae et gentium* (1672) by Samuel Pufendorf, a writer roughly coeval to John Locke. However, in his case this development was largely driven by further theoretical considerations rather than the impact of any historical or ethnographic evidence. As a matter of fact, here the state of nature was explicitly declared to be a theoretical model. Against Hobbes's sharp dichotomy between man in nature and man in political society, Pufendorf placed his emphasis on natural sociability as precisely the mechanism that could explain how the savage – that is, man living in a state of natural freedom – formed communities and became civilized. It was not however a natural sociability in the Aristotelian sense of being instinctive, but rather it derived from self-preservation and selfish calculations, given the peculiar nature of man: his vulnerability when socially isolated, his infinite capacity for expanding needs, his perfectibility through language and culture. All these led to society before the state was needed. In this way Pufendorf, as Istvan Hont has emphasized, accepted Hobbes's conjectural method without accepting his conclusions, and he did so in order to be able to reconstruct Grotius' position as a modern reply to the sceptical attack on the parochial assumptions of Aristotelian scholastics (it was Pufendorf, rather than Grotius, who really perceived the relativist challenge posed by Montaigne and Charron)⁴⁵. As an alternative to Hobbes' simple state of nature as a state of war, he offered a conjectural history of civilization involving multiple acts of consent that led both to a law of property and, through agriculture, to the various stages of economic progress. It differed from the Jesuit Acosta's influential definition of various degrees of civilization because now the point was not to classify barbarians (in order to rule and evangelize them), but rather to understand the mechanisms of social transformation: a historical, rather than an ethnographic, question, and

45 Istvan Hont, "The language of sociability and commerce: Samuel Pufendorf and the theoretical foundations of the 'four-stages' theory", in Id., *Jealousy of Trade. International competition and the nation-state in historical perspective* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 159-184.

far less empirical⁴⁶. In Pufendorf's almost entirely conjectural theory, the state (*civitas*) was only the eventual outcome of an economic process driven by selfish sociability, and only appeared when demographic growth, cultural sophistication, exaggerated consumption and commerce made it necessary. Through the wide reception of Pufendorf's work, this conjectural history (one which perhaps, through Lucretius, was more Epicurean than has been understood, Pufendorf preferring to pretend that he was a Christian Stoic) would lead natural law to the philosophical histories of the Scottish Enlightenment⁴⁷.

It is possible that in this northern European tradition of the seventeenth century, where the state of nature served to explain how society and government could have possibly come about, rather than why they were, for rational men, a natural condition (as Thomist writers had assumed, following Aristotle), the casual way with which American and other savages could be presumed to live in that state, without laws or agriculture, was influenced by the fact that many of these writers wished to secure property rights in Europe whilst at the same time defending a European right to appropriate lands overseas (this was certainly

46 On the context and empirical foundations of Jesuit and other Catholic missionary classifications of degrees of civility in America and Asia, see J. P. Rubiés "The concept of gentile civilization in missionary discourse and its European reception: the *Repúblicas del Mundo* by Jerónimo Román", in *Circulation des savoirs et missions d'évangélisation (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)*. Charlotte de Castelnaud, Ines Zupanov, and Aliocha Maldavski eds. (Madrid, forthcoming). By contrast, in the definition of the state of nature in his *De jure naturae et gentium* (Book II, chapter 2) Pufendorf's sources are generally those of a humanist antiquarian, especially ancient poets and historians – in this he was very similar to Grotius. The crucial discussion of the sceptical attack against the existence of natural law involved the evidence of diversity of opinions and customs in barbarian nations across the world, no less than Carneades's famous argument of the primacy of utility, but Pufendorf relied on Montaigne and Charron for the point, rather than on primary ethnographic sources. Similarly, in his account of the origins of property as a series of contractual agreements from a default position of communal ownership (Book IV) Pufendorf also relied a great deal on classical sources rather than on modern savages, and the chapter involved an explicit reinterpretation of the Golden Age myth along anti-primitivist lines: it was the indolence and torpor of men in a state of nature that Ovid and Virgil had truly sought to portray, not an ideal lost age. This does not mean that Pufendorf was unaware of the rich ethnographic literature of the age, in fact he actually quoted various sources in his discussion of objects of property; my point is that his most distinctive arguments about the state of nature largely ignored modern ethnography. I have relied on the translation by Basil Kennett, *Of the law of nature and nations* (1703).

47 Pufendorf's classical sources of inspiration, and his Epicureanism in particular (which he also knew through Gassendi), deserve more attention. In the crucial chapter "Of the natural state of man" (Book II, chapter 2) Pufendorf supported his minimalist definition of natural man as man stripped of all human or religious rules and institutions, that is, without arts and culture and outside civil society, with extensive quotations from Lucretius, Diodorus Siculus (the same passage so crucial to Boemus) and a passage from Cicero's *Pro Sestio*. These accounts of the early history of civilization were all seen as equivalent, and led directly to a summary of Hobbes's discussion of the state of nature (1703, 80-1). Acting very much like Boemus 150 years earlier, Pufendorf felt obliged to declare that these accounts were untrue in the light of Biblical Revelation, although within their own logic they were valuable: "however fabulous these accounts appear, yet as far as the authors of them were in the right, that upon supposal of such an origin of mankind, the face of nature would have born all these features [...]"

one of Locke's concerns). The extent to which North American tribes cultivated lands and lived peacefully in large communities (let alone their sophisticated understanding of rights to access to hunting grounds) was not therefore sufficiently appreciated.

IV. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT DEBATE: SAVAGES, PRIMITIVE MANKIND AND THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

The modern natural law tradition of the seventeenth century was the starting point for Rousseau's Second Discourse, and also the starting point for our second look at the significance of his contribution for the history of natural man. Rousseau's key claim in the Second Discourse was that those modern political philosophers who had written of the state of nature in order to examine the origins of society had described the passions of civilized man, rather than those of savage man, projecting back the moral depravity of men driven by artificial desires. Adopting a hypothetical evolutionary premise (as we have seen of Lucretian inspiration) that placed natural man between the animals and civilized man, it was the exploration of distinctly primitive passions that made Rousseau's contribution original, and which led him towards taking more seriously the ethnography of 'negroes and savages'⁴⁸. His fundamental principles of self-preservation and pity had of course a clear genealogy in the minimalist principles explored in the modern natural law tradition; however, whilst self-preservation was distinctively familiar, Rousseau's notion of an instinctive, pre-rational sympathy with the suffering of others, not only challenged Hobbes, but was also less utilitarian than the rational sociability of Grotius, Locke and, especially, Pufendorf⁴⁹. For Rousseau, human society was entirely conventional, and human perfectibility – a key notion in the contemporary understanding of the history of civilization – could certainly lead to the arts and sciences, but also to self-destruction.

48 Rousseau was also influenced by the notable discussion of anthropological unity and diversity in the recently published third volume of Buffon's *Histoire naturelle de l'homme* (1749). However, the more evolutionary *Des époques de la nature* would only appear in 1778.

49 Rousseau's notion of pity, or compassion, is defined in the Second Discourse as a "natural repugnance to seeing any sentient beings, and especially any beings like ourselves, perish or suffer", and implies empathy to the extent that it is built upon an identification with the sufferings of others, a point made explicit in the discussion of commiseration (*The Discourses*, 153: it is reasoning that distances us from others, by engendering *amour propre*) and also in the *Essay on the origin of languages*. In the latter work however Rousseau was uncertain that "in the first times" man already had the imagination to 'activate' his natural feelings of pity, and his views of solitary men who "knowing nothing, feared everything, and attacked in order to defend themselves" seem more Hobbesian than those of the Second Discourse (see especially its ninth chapter: Rousseau, *Discourses*, 267-78). Rousseau's problem was how to account for pity without the previous development of the imagination; as Adam Smith, one of his early readers, recognized, a fuller theory of sympathy was needed. Rousseau never revised the *Essai* for publication. In fact, with his many references to the Biblical account, these passages of the *Essay* may betray a first draft which he wisely put aside when he submitted the *Second Discourse* to the Dijon Academy.

Although Rousseau adopted the ethnography of modern savages as a valid indication of the primitive passions and physical conditions of natural man, his use of these sources was not methodologically sophisticated. For example, his description of the Hottentots (Khoikhoi) of South Africa, the emblematic savage who rejected civilization of his frontispiece, derived not from the best French (let alone German or Dutch) editions of Peter Kolb's account (an excellent French translation by Jean Bernard had been published in 1741). Instead, Rousseau read the French version by Abbé Prévost in volume V of his ongoing *Historie Générale des Voyages* (1746-59), in effect a translation of an English summary prepared by hack writer and cartographer John Green, alias Bradock Mead (c.1685-1757), for the *New General Collection of Voyages and Travels* published by Thomas Astley between 1745 and 1747. Astley's collection was distinguished by systematically summarizing and re-arranging primary materials rather than by any sense of textual fidelity to the original. Green's summary of Kolb's account, in turn, was based on the idiosyncratic English translation by Guido Medley (1731), an obscure writer looking for the patronage of the President of the Royal Society Hans Sloane⁵⁰. Despite Rousseau's casual reliance of what was available in an encyclopaedic synthesis of travels, suggesting a lack of concern for textual accuracy which removed him and many other *philosophes* from the humanist principles of an earlier antiquarian culture, he was influenced by the interpretative bias of his sources, as given by Prévost. Peter Kolb's sympathetic account of the Hottentots was distinguished by challenging the negative stereotypes that prevailed in the majority of seventeenth-century accounts, although this emphasis had been slightly muted in the version offered in the *Historie Générale des Voyages*⁵¹.

50 Peter Kolb, *The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope, or a particular account of the several nations of the Hottentots* (London: John Innys, 1731). The book was reprinted in 1738. Medley felt free to summarize and re-arrange the material, and despite praising Kolb for his factual accuracy, he introduced a more negative moral evaluation of the Hottentots (emphasizing especially their laziness) than is found for example in Jean Bernard's French version (also abridged) published in 1741 (reprinted 1742 and 1743). Where Kolb worked as an ethnographer, for example in his attempt to explain the logic behind the Hottentots' practice of infanticide, Medley simply wrote about their ignorance of natural law. This subtle editorial difference is symptomatic of the fact that, in general, English Protestant culture was more resistant to a positive image of the savages than French culture in this period.

51 On Kolb see the very useful essay by Anne Good, "The construction of an authoritative text: Peter Kolb's description of the Khoikhoi at the Cape of Good Hope on the eighteenth century", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 10 (2006): 61-94. It would be fair to say that rather than idealizing the Hottentots as noble savages, what Kolb did was to restore them to their humanity. In this respect his account is more balanced than (let us say) father du Tertres account of the Caribs. On the early-modern ethnography of the Hottentots (albeit with reference to English-language sources only) see also Linda E. Merians, *Envisioning the Worst. Representations of Hottentots in Early-Modern England* (Newark and London: Rosemont Publishing and Printing Co., 2001); Dominique Lanni, *Fureur et barbarie. Récits de voyages chez les Cafres et les Hottentots 1665-1721* (Paris: Cosmopole, 2001); and François Fauvelle-Aymar, *L'invention du Hottentot: Histoire du regard occidental sur les Khoisian XVe-XIXe siècle* (Paris: Publications, de la Sorbonne, 2002). For the slightly less positive emphasis of the version offered by Prévost, a consequence of the intermediary role of Medley's translation, compare the discussion of Khoikhoi virtues and vices in Prévost, *Histoire Générale des Voyages*, vol. 5 (1748), book 14, pp. 145-147, to Kolb, *Description du Cap de Bonne-Esperance*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam: J. Catuffe, 1743), I, ch. 6, pp. 65-102.

Similarly, the Dominican father Jean Baptiste du Tertres's account of the Caribs, published in 1667 in his landmark natural history of the French Antilles, was cast in the idealizing virtuous savage tradition, albeit from a Christian Stoic perspective, rather than the libertine position represented by Lahontan⁵². It is worth considering the rhetorical power of du Tertre's image, which was accompanied by a classicizing engraved figure of the Carib and his wife that echoed Jean de Léry's iconic representations of the Tupinamba [figure 2]:

in truth our savages are savages in name only, just like the plants and fruits which nature produces without any cultivation in the forests and wilderness; which, although we call them wild, nevertheless possess their genuine virtues and properties of strength and full vigour, which we so often corrupt by our artifice, and change so much, when we plant them in our gardens⁵³.

This simile between natural men and plants, with their simple virtues of strength and vigour, and their artificial opposites, was complemented by an image of the human quality of sociability in a world of almost perfect social equality:

The savages of these islands are the most content, the happiest and least corrupted by vice, the most sociable, the least deformed, and the least tormented by illness, of all the nations of the world. This is because they are such as nature produced them, that is to say, with great simplicity and natural naivety: they are all equals, so that they do not know almost of any kind of superiority or servitude [...] nobody is richer or poorer than his companion, and all, with perfect unanimity, direct their desires to that which is useful and strictly necessary, despising everything which they consider superfluous as a thing nor worth possessing⁵⁴.

The life of this savage was also undoubtedly happy and healthy. They were indolent but not without a perfect intelligence, offering a direct and systematic challenge to current images of irrationality, cruelty, deformity and bestiality. A vague Christian paternalism of long pedigree amongst Catholic missionaries underlay this account: those savages could be brought to embrace Christianity, if only the French colonists who called themselves Christian provided a better moral example, and the French

52 Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire Générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, 2, vols. (Paris: Tomas Joly 1667). A preliminary version had been published in a rush in 1654, and was plagiarized by Sieur de la Rochefort (a Protestant minister in Rotterdam) for his own *Histoire Naturelle des Antilles de l'Amérique* (1658), if we are to believe an indignant du Tertre. Hence the 1667 edition was published in a polemical context. A third volume, with further details of the recent history of the French colony, was published subsequently in 1671. Volume II of 1667, "Contenant l'Histoire Naturelle", is the relevant one for the ethnographic chapters, which offered a detailed treatment of three distinct groups: the natural inhabitants (book VII, 356-419), the French colonists (book VII, 419-482), and the Black slaves (book VIII, 483-539).

53 du Tertre, *Histoire Générale des Antilles*, II, 356.

54 du Tertre, *Histoire Générale des Antilles*, II, 357.

colonial Governors offered more support to the missions⁵⁵. The frontispiece of the work evoked the possibility of a positive exchange between the civilized and the savage, by which the former gave technology and learning, the latter natural products, with the promise of conversion in the background.

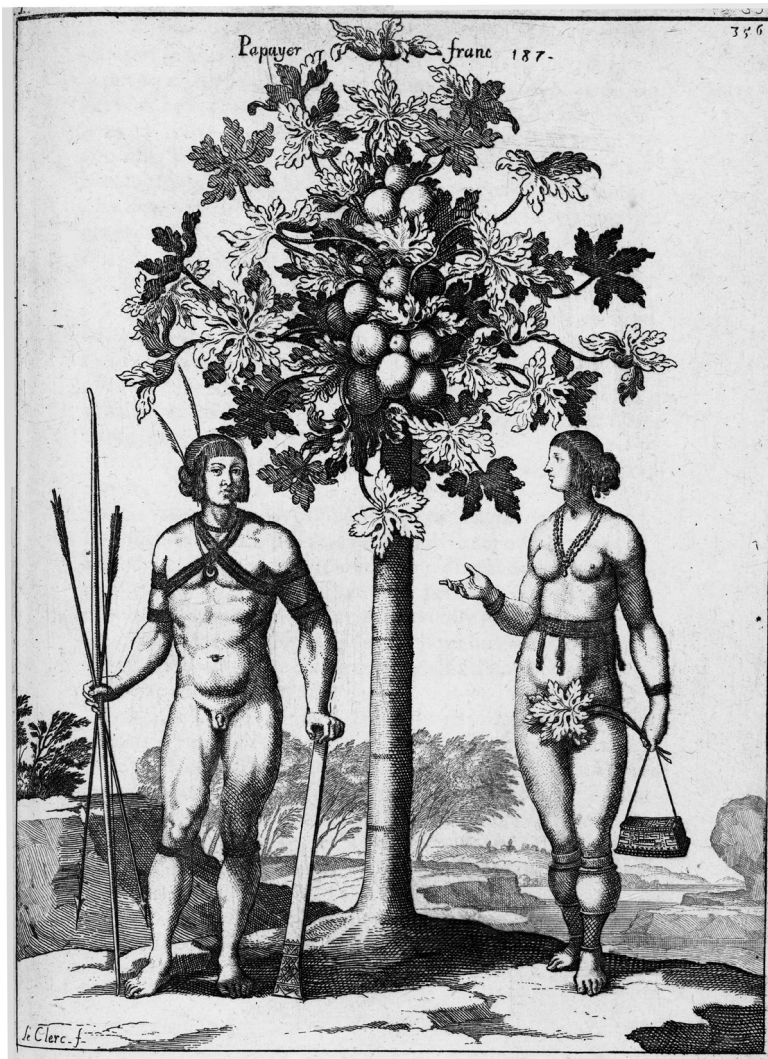


Fig. 2 Jean Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire Générale des Antilles* (Paris, 1667), vol. II, p. 356. Reproduced by kind permission of the University of Cambridge Library.

55 du Tertre, *Histoire Générale des Antilles*, II, 414-15. Chapter 13 of the treaty on the savages of the French Antilles was devoted to “Des obstacles qui se rencontrent à la conversion des sauvages”. The evolution of the image of the Carib is discussed in the documentary anthology *Wild Majesty. Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the present day*, eds. Peter Hulme and Neil L. Whitehead (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1992).

It is difficult to assess the extent to which these passages inspired, rather than simply corroborated, Rousseau's ideas about natural compassion, and his positive image of the life of the savage as fundamentally happy. There is an important gulf separating du Tertre's emphasis on the full humanity and sociability of the savages and Rousseau's natural man, who was solitary and close to an animal (albeit this was not, for Rousseau, a bad thing in itself). But this is precisely why Rousseau understood these savages as a step removed from natural men. It is, in any case, quite clear that Rousseau's approach involved a re-appropriation of the attack on the artificiality and, indeed, moral corruption of civilization that he found in his ethnographic sources. The theme had been, originally, a late Stoic elaboration of the Golden Age myth; later, with Jean de Léry, a Protestant theme about the moral failings of supposed Christians, a treatment which found its Catholic counterpart in missionary writers like father du Tertre, slightly more optimistic about the possibility of redemption; and after Montaigne, a sceptic, potentially libertine denunciation of how reason and civilization can lead us astray. This latter tradition had culminated in Lahontan's dialogues, especially in the radical version by Nicolas Gueudeville, yet despite their very similar concern with natural liberty and equality, and their parallel attack on private property, it remains unclear whether Rousseau actually read them⁵⁶.

The distance between Rousseau and Montaigne is significant of the fact that with Rousseau (as also with Diderot, albeit with a different interpretation) we witness a coming together of the ethnographic savage of the libertines and the speculative state of nature of political theorists, rather than the triumph of the former over the latter⁵⁷. With his natural man Rousseau offered a substantive

56 For a discussion of this insoluble problem see Chinard in Lahontan, *Dialogues curieux*, 67. By contrast, Réal Ouellet argues that Rousseau and Diderot never read Lahontan and only knew his name by fame, and that any thematic similarities reflect their popularization: Lahontan, *Oeuvres complètes*, II vols. (Montreal: Les Presses de L'Université de Montréal, 1990), "Introduction", 179-82. It is worth noting that Gueudeville was also the author of a number of dissertations which spoke positively about the savages in the relevant volume on America and Africa of the *Atlas Historique* (7 vols. 1705-20) commissioned by the Amsterdam publishers François Honoré et Compagnie, a work of reference and synthesis meant for a popular audience which, through Gueudeville, acquired a notorious radical edge. The relevant dissertation is found in volume VI, first published in 1719, and is notable among other things for offering a positive and revisionist interpretation of the Hottentots, ahead of the circulation of Peter Kolb's account in Dutch, French and English versions.

57 As revealed by Rousseau in his *Confessions*, Diderot had actually intervened in the *Second Discourse*, before their friendship broke down. Although sceptical about Rousseau's speculative image of natural man as solitary and 'good', and a great believer in the law of nature as a rational principle that led to sociability, Diderot shared the sense that modern savages were very much like primitive men (this is especially clear in his contributions to Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes*). Hence, the modern ethnography of savages helped understand the origins and foundations of society, and in particular the anti-natural and often pernicious character of the institutions and moral order of the civilized. For a discussion see Yves Benot, *Diderot: de l'athéisme à l'anticolonialisme* (Paris: Maspero, 1970); Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Maspero, 1971), 407-73; Robert Wokler, "The influence of Diderot on the political theory of Rousseau", *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 132 (1975), 55-111.

criticism of civilization, despite a 'no return' bottom line – it would indeed be futile to attempt to go back to a simpler primitive life (but of course, as we have seen, this had also been the Stoic position)⁵⁸. What was novel was his insistence that political philosophy and in particular the idea of natural law could be illuminated by a new understanding of natural man. Rousseau's natural man, detached from any biblical myth, was pre-historic and speculative, and served as a tool for political thought, for example for questioning rights to property and re-thinking the legitimacy of the state, in direct dialogue with the earlier contributions of Hobbes and others. Rousseau, in effect, offered a critique of Hobbes whilst developing his model of a conventional social contract, and he did so by relying on the type of Stoic primitivism that Montaigne, exploiting the ethnography of modern savages, had transformed into an attack upon the claims of human reason. Montaigne, however, had never been engaged in a political argument of a Hobbesian kind. He had offered a relativist and cautious questioning of the rationalist arrogance of the men of his own society, espousing no cultural changes, but asking for humility and tolerance from those who blindly thought of themselves as civilized. His natural man, displaying a 'naïveté originelle' of Stoic inspiration, was not pursued beyond what he saw in the Brazilian cannibals, that is actual savages, in a truly ethnographic fashion, and there was no attempt to engage with the classical account of the early history of civilization (although Montaigne had read and annotated Lucretius). It was not how men became civilized that preoccupied him, but rather the difficulty and indeed vanity of human attempts to live according to right reason, the fact that 'our laws' have distanced us from those natural laws under whose command the savages who lack our goods and our vices still live⁵⁹.

Rousseau's speculative efforts represented a partial historicization of the state of nature, although in practical terms his views were seen as no less ideological and speculative than those of his predecessors in the natural law tradition. It was his equation of natural man with a solitary animal that truly struck his contemporaries, rather than his occasional and supplementary use of ethnography, and future critics did feel the need to neutralize any specific experiments with solitary wild men or children found in the forests⁶⁰. But

58 For Seneca to seek natural simplicity was a supreme form of virtue, but he did not seek a return to mere animal instincts. For Rousseau such going back was in any case a tragic impossibility, although there remained some hope that one could educate children according to their best natural instincts.

59 *Le Brésil de Montaigne. Le Nouveau Monde des "Essais" 1580-1592*, ed. Frank Lestringant (Paris: Éditions Chandeigne, 2005), 102. Lestringant (ibid. 235-8) sees Rousseau as a natural successor to Montaigne, but the evidence for any direct influence of the essays on the Second Discourse is limited, by contrast with the clarity of such an influence in the previous *Discourse on the arts and sciences* (1750). Diderot's contemporary articles on cannibals and savages in the *Encyclopédie* (1751) also reveal the influence of Montaigne, together with those of missionaries such as fathers du Tertre and Charlevoix.

60 Ferguson, for example, in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), denied the scientific validity of studying such wild men because they were not representative. Nevertheless

Rousseau also defined the terms of the future debate as an exercise in historical reconstruction, and his fine gradation from a solitary man who might look like an orang-utan, through the savage of modern ethnography, to the various stages from barbarism to human civilization, transformed the basic rhetorical opposition between natural man and civilized man into an analysis of the various stages through which a perfectible animal, by becoming free, rational and social, also became moral, and morally corrupt. (The fact that this finer gradation underlies his more general opposition is the reason why natural man sometimes seems interchangeable with the savage, sometimes is distinguished from it, creating considerable confusion)⁶¹.

It is therefore highly significant that Adam Ferguson, one of Rousseau's most decisive critics, found a reply against both Rousseau and Hobbes, now paired for their speculative bent, precisely in a *fuller* historicization of the theme of the transition from rudeness to civilization⁶². The secular model of speculative history was not in itself questioned. The problem of course was that the history of primitive peoples was, as such, impossible to write. For this reason, it is not surprising that Ferguson took the avenue left open to him, relying on the ethnography of savages as an empirical source for the natural historical depiction of early mankind. The old antiquarian insight displayed in De Bry's publication of Harriot's account of Virginia, by which the European ancient was equivalent to the modern primitive, now received its full theoretical justification: in the same way that natural historians rely on present observations to depict any species, so must the anthropologist concerned with the character of man (as an animal and intellectual being) take account of the facts. This triumph of 'scientific' ethnography was however predicated on the assumption of most eighteenth-century natural historians that species were stable, an assumption which of course was derailed not many decades later, between Buffon and Darwin.

these cases, mentioned by Rousseau in passing, fascinated many of his readers, so much so that eventually the sensational study of Victor of Aveyron in the 1800s was interpreted as disproving Rousseau's idea that a solitary existence was compatible with human perfectibility through reason and language. The proposition that in fact Rousseau meant to argue that an isolated natural man could not by himself develop into civilized man seems overly charitable. See Nancy Yousef, "Savage or solitary? The wild child and Rousseau's man of nature", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62, 2 (April 2001): 245-63.

61 There is some controversy about whether Rousseau's discussion of apes as possible natural men in his famous note X implied an argument about evolution from animal origins. For the latter interpretation see Robert Wokler, "Perfectible apes in decadent cultures: Rousseau's anthropology revisited", *Daedalus*, 107 (1978): 107-134. This has been questioned for missing the crucial point that for Rousseau apes were not assumed to be a distinct species, but possibly men. See in this respect Victor Gourevitch, "Rousseau's 'pure' state of nature", and Francis Moran III, "Between primates and primitives: Natural man in Rousseau's Second Discourse" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 54, 1 (January 1993): 37-58.

62 Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 8-11.

There always remained however an alternative tradition of the history of the rise of civilization, one far more concerned with religious orthodoxy. As we have seen, the crucial contribution of humanist armchair writers like Johannes Boemus to the early-modern perspective on primitivism had been to synthesize the Biblical story of geographical dispersion and religious degeneration with the classical account of the origins of civilization, based on the dichotomy between the savage and the civilized. Throughout the seventeenth century, a number of antiquarian scholars, Catholic or Protestant, battled with the issue of how to fit the records of gentile history with the genealogies and chronologies found in Genesis, often resorting to diffusionist theories; however, they also relied on the idea of the basic comparability of the ancient primitive with the modern savage, a principle also established by the late sixteenth century, and the two methods, genealogical and comparative, were often seen as complementary, as exemplified by the Jesuit Joseph-François Lafitau in his efforts to rescue the orthodox religious vision from the dangers of libertinism (Lahontan being one of his targets)⁶³. At the height of the Enlightenment, the type of synthesis proposed by Boemus remained relevant, and the problem of reconciling these two kinds of narratives continued to preoccupy Rousseau when he wrote his *Essay on the origin of languages*, although his *Second Discourse* cleverly dispensed with the biblical story by avowedly renouncing a fully empirical history⁶⁴. The more conservative approach is exemplified by Rousseau's contemporary Antoine-Yves Goguet, a worthy successor to Bossuet who, pre-empting the libertine attack on Biblical authority developed by the likes of Voltaire, embraced modern travel accounts as the perfect empirical supplement to Genesis, in effect renewing the antiquarian strategy first developed with remarkable success by Jesuit historians of the New World, from Acosta to Lafitau⁶⁵.

The fresh ethnographic impulse the eighteenth century prompts a reflection on the peculiar position of the modern natural law tradition (in effect a fundamental branch of political philosophy) in the history of the rise of natural man. The tradition that culminated in Pufendorf adopted a view of the state of nature that was particularly, perhaps even wilfully blind to modern ethnographic evidence, whilst following closely the Lucretian model of the

63 Andreas Motsch, *Lafitau et l'émergence du discours ethnographique* (Paris: PUPS, 2001).

64 Rousseau, *The Discourses*, 269-71, for his uncomfortable attempts to fit the stories Cain and Abel, Adam, the tower of Babel, and Noah, in his hypothesis about the progress from pre-linguistic savagism to barbarism, and from the latter to civilization and agriculture. Rousseau's declaration that he will dispense with the facts in the preface to the *Second Discourse* obviously refers to the Biblical narrative of origins, which he did not wish to openly question, and can not be taken as an argument for the view that his speculative account of the state of nature was never meant to be in some way historically valid.

65 Goguet, *De l'origine des loix, des arts et des sciences*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1758). John Pocock has recently (2005) emphasized the influence of Goguet in writers such as Gibbon.

rise of civilization in a process driven by necessity (although this Epicurean influence could not be proclaimed too openly for fear of offending religious sensibilities). By contrast, the libertine tradition of moral relativism, which in reality was more critical of European moral arrogance than genuinely relativist, embraced the evidence of travel accounts about savages and let it play against existing Stoic notions of Golden Age moral simplicity, and Christian ideas about innocence (often cultivated by missionaries), although the latter theme was, from an Augustinian perspective that emphasized original sin, a more problematic undertaking. In the 1750s, the modern philosophical and naturalistic ethnographic traditions were to come together in a variety of contexts: through renewed antiquarian apologies of the old Biblical paradigm such as Goguet's, through Rousseau's unique and radical critique of the cultural assumptions of the modern philosophers, and through those Scottish philosophical historians who rejected his radical approach and preferred to update the legacy of Pufendorf and Mandeville, distinguishing various stages and focusing on the mechanisms by which civility developed alongside the economy.

Inevitably, these various alternatives had political implications. I have sought to distinguish the role of three elements in the early-modern history of natural man: classical primitivism, with its often under-appreciated theory of the origins of civilization; 'modern' ethnographies of savages (more or less fictionalized), with their increasingly appreciated complexity; and theories of natural law, natural rights and the state of nature. The latter theories constituted in some respects a self-contained debate within a theological, juridical and eventually philosophical tradition mainly concerned with legitimizing political and civil power in European contexts, but often bore upon the question of the legitimacy of conquering barbarians or settling their lands, and had enormous implications for the emergence of a theory of universal rights in modern political thought. Although the uses of ethnography could be limited and highly selective, this political debate was at some crucial points either inspired, or informed, by empirical ethnographies of savages in America, Africa and the Pacific. Indeed, the plausibility of any social contract theory and, indeed, of any speculative history of civilization, now depended, to a remarkable degree, on the plausibility of its ethnographic support.

Nevertheless, such ethnographies of savages (no less than the classical accounts of the origins of civilization) could be rather ambivalent in their assessment of the extent to which civilization involved moral progress from the savage condition or, rather, a moral loss, however partial. Any answer involved solving additional questions about the point where the three elements of this complex story met, that is, *the point at which natural man ceased to be simply natural man*: could humans be fully human – by which *rational* and *moral* was implied – without being to some extent civilized? Could they have rights before being fully civilized? And at which point was natural man no longer natural man, but

a mere savage at the bottom of a ladder that led towards a global civilization? Of course, given the context of early modern colonialism, in the background there was always another question: what were the rights of the more civilized nations to conquer savages or settle amongst them? The sixteenth century answer was conditioned by Christian universalism and was inevitably yes, Europeans have such a right, although one might deplore the manner in which the conquest of barbarians was being conducted. However, as the religious discourse of European Christendom became questioned within Europe, and as Europeans demonstrated their technological superiority in a variety of encounters, the issue reverted to a simpler question of whether secular civilization was such a good thing, and could be imposed without embarrassment⁶⁶.

⁶⁶ This essay is an extract from a section of my forthcoming monograph *Europe's New Worlds. Travel Writing and the Origins of the Enlightenment*. I am grateful to Guido Abbattista for the opportunity to include it within his stimulating project *Facing otherness*, and to Istvan Hont for his valuable comments.

II. Enlightenment culture and the reflection on 'otherness': historical, ethnographic, statistical and economic knowledge in European and colonial contexts

The Lappon, the Scythian and the Hungarian, or our (former) selves as ‘others’. Philosophical history in eighteenth-century Hungary

LÁSZLÓ KONTLER

The only appropriate genre of history is that of Mr Voltaire, which had not existed before him. [...] There is one single object the philosopher must make the target of his historical investigations: the portrayal of manners and morals, because his aim is improvement and enlightenment, which is only to be expected from the better knowledge of the human mind and heart,

wrote the twenty-three year old Count János Fekete in 1764, in his notes to the versified *Lettre à M' de Voltaire* by Lőrinc Orczy, subtitled “The Complaint of a Hungarian” (*Plainte d' un Hongrois*)¹. Orczy is recognized to be the first important representative of a *ständische* Enlightenment and an important apologete of modern ‘luxury’ in Hungary, while Fekete is known as a prominent Voltairian. Both of them clearly recognized the methodologically innovative character of Voltaire’s historiography: its commitment to a history of civilization, rather than a mere narrative of events, and its endeavour to turn an impartial and de-mystified rendering of history to the better understanding of the present. At the same time, both of them harboured a certain resentment towards their French idol, the

1 J. Fekete, L. Orczy, *Lettre à M' de Voltaire ou Plainte d' un Hongrois*, ed. I. Vörös (Fontes Minores ad Historiam Hungariae Spectantes 1) (Budapest, 1987), 20. For details, see O. Penke, *Filozofikus történetek és történetfilozófiák. A francia és a magyar felvilágosodás* [Philosophical histories and philosophies of history. The French and the Hungarian Enlightenment] (Budapest: Balassi, 2000), 172 ff.

reason being his neglect of topics from Hungarian history that could have figured prominently in his presentation of the major themes in the progress of European society: the achievements of the fifteenth-century King Matthias Corvinus in the battlefield as well as his patronage of art and culture, or indeed 'le siècle de Marie Thérèse', marked by the growth of arts and sciences, as well as successful defensive wars. This mixed response, shared by several contemporaries, shows that the merits of a new type of Enlightenment historiography – of which Voltaire was regarded as an important, but not the only representative – were not only recognized in eighteenth-century Hungary, but were also understood as applicable to major themes in national history.

This paper is going to highlight a complex, even somewhat paradoxical development arising from this combination, one that had important consequences for the shaping of various options in identity formation in the period known as the Hungarian national awakening. I shall concentrate on the contested issue of ethnic origins as approached in terms of the discursive patterns of Enlightenment philosophical history and discussed in the vocabulary it offered, by some authors of the 1770s and 1780s, i.e., the very beginning, or indeed the prelude to this period. I hope to show how this innovative language, developed in strict reliance on the achievements of the eighteenth-century sciences of man, when applied to confronting a theory of linguistic kinship and by implication of national origins which was at variance with the inherited 'master narrative' on the subject, became instrumental in reaffirming the traditional view. It did so by underpinning a quasi-racialist 'othering', characteristic of ethno-nationalist discourses of identity arising in the nineteenth century and still preserving their vigour. In all of this, the political climate of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1770s, and the fact that during this period the relevant trends of Enlightenment were predominately embraced by nobles strongly attached to the ideology of social distinction posited by the above-mentioned 'master narrative', played no small role.

The paradoxical nature of these developments arises from the following considerations. We know about instances, in historical situations not significantly different from that of eighteenth-century Hungary (as an inferior partner within a composite state, with a highly ambivalent constitutional and economic status), in which a new preoccupation with the history and the progress of manners and morals was turned to the criticism of a tradition of martial (vain)glory and sham independence. The oeuvre of William Robertson, historiographer royal for Scotland, is a case in point. Robertson, who in his later works on non-European civilizations displayed considerable expertise in portraying the 'significant others' of contemporary European commercial modernity in vivid anthropological terms, was engaged in a quite different sort of 'othering' in his *History of Scotland* (1759) and in the *View of the Progress of Society from the Fall of the Roman Empire to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* (1769) – the Preface to the *History of the Reign of Emperor Charles V*. He pointed

to the distant and ‘foreign’ character of a world inhabited by the ‘former selves’ of refined, commercial and enlightened contemporary Europeans and Scots (at least, Lowlanders), whose manners seemed to distance them radically from their predecessors. Robertson’s combination of narrative with stadial history, in a cosmopolitan (or, comparative) perspective, was imbued with an enlightened version of patriotism in the sense of displaying a strong commitment to the values of refinement, sociability, social solidarity and the rule of law, all of which followed from his criticism of the rudeness of manners associated with feudalism. Ethnic pride and satisfaction in martial valour seemed relatively irrelevant from this perspective².

Even in eighteenth-century Scotland, however, Robertson’s case was a quite distinctive one³, and the Hungarian examples below demonstrate the immense variability of the field of interpretation marked by the notions of ‘manners’ (socially and culturally defined and derived standards or interaction, and a shared moral psychology) on the one hand and ethnicity and language on the other, when it comes to definitions of identity. In what follows I seek to explore some ways in which the intellectual elite of Hungarian society sought to redefine its own identities as well as its patriotic agendas through revising and adjusting kinship narratives inherited from medieval chronicle literature, and construing new ones. While on the one hand these narratives were closely tied to the question of origin, they also had far-reaching consequences to the distribution of social and political authority – in other words, inclusion and exclusion, more generally discourses of ‘otherness’, operated on this level too.

The theory of a prestigious *steppe* kinship of the Hungarians with the mighty Huns, establishing the status claims of an (originally) military aristocracy, was hardly contested ever since its authoritative formulation by Simon Kézai in the thirteenth century. The corporate paradigm, i.e., the idea that the *res publica* was established upon the dualism of the monarch and an autonomous *corpus*

2 Robertson’s achievement is assessed in this sense in a now sizeable literature. See C. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland’s Past. Scottish whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689-c. 1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); C. Kidd, “The ideological significance of Robertson’s History of Scotland”, in S.J. Brown (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 92-121; K. O’Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); J.G.A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, especially Vol. II: *Narratives of Civil Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), section iv. I have proposed possibilities of a fruitful comparative perspective on the Scottish Enlightenment and the Hungarian Reform era of the early nineteenth century focusing on Robertson and a prominent Hungarian historian in L. Kontler, “European Historians from the Periphery. William Robertson and Mihály Horváth”, *Hungarian Quarterly*, 45, Spring (2004): 109-126.

3 See D. Allan, *Virtue, Learning, and the Scottish Enlightenment: Ideas of Scholarship in Early Modern History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993); see also D. Allan, “Protestantism, Presbyterianism and national identity in eighteenth-century Scottish history”, in T. Claydon, I. McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity. Britain and Ireland, c. 1650-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 182-205.

politicum, first obtained some institutional reality in the *generalis congregatio* (or, *parlamentum publicum*) of 1277, and took an epic shape in the *Gesta Hungarorum* of Kézai (ca. 1282/1285). The *Gesta* is a projection of the desirable model of the polity into the distant past, in which kinship and continuity was alleged between the ancient Huns and the Hungarians. It defined membership in the body politic through a theory of inequality, in which the dissolution of the ancient self-governing community and the creation of a boundary between the free and the unfree was explained by reference to the contempt of the latter for the call to arms issued “in the name of God and the people” (ch.7)⁴. The military nobility, in virtue of its eminent role in the series of campaigns ultimately leading to the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin at the end of the ninth century, was thus identified as the *communitas Hungarorum* (ch.42)⁵, a corporate legal person authorized not only to govern itself but also to be involved in decision-making on behalf of the *populus*. Laws were represented as deriving their binding force from the *assensus* of the *tota communitas* or its *sanior pars*, and a vocabulary of consent and pact was used in explaining the origin of the power of rulers among both the Huns and later the Hungarians (ch.19, ch.46)⁶. Already in regard of ancient times, endowed with prescriptive authority, Kézai referred to “the dominion of the Huns and Attila” (ch.15) in a sort of *politia commixta*⁷.

During the subsequent centuries the theoretical premisses of the corporate paradigm became fully integrated in the political thought and attitudes of the Hungarian elite, and ultimately received reinforcement from legal humanism in the *Tripartitum Opus Juris Consuetudinarii Incltyi Regni Hungariae* of István Werbőczy, a culmination of the centuries-old process of collecting “the customary law of noble Hungary”⁸. Though its enactment was prevented by a party of magnates at the diet of 1514, it was published in Vienna three years later, and became included in the Hungarian *Corpus Juris* in 1628. The most successful Hungarian book of all times went through over fifty editions in three centuries, during which period it was regarded as an authentic source of law

4 Anonymus, *A magyarok cselekedetei* – Kézai Simon, *A magyarok cselekedetei* [The deeds of the Hungarians] (Budapest: Osiris, 1999), 93.

5 *A magyarok cselekedetei*, 107.

6 *A magyarok cselekedetei*, 101, 109.

7 *A magyarok cselekedetei*, 99. For a detailed discussion of Kézai’s theory, see J. Szűcs, “Társadalomelmélet, politikai teória és történelemszemlélet Kézai *Gesta Hungarorum*ában (A nacionalizmus középkori genezisének elméleti alapjai)” [Social theory, political thought and historical approach in Kézai’s *Gesta Hungarorum*], in *Nemzet és történelem* [Nation and History] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984), 413-556. Abbreviated German version in J. Szűcs, *Nation und Geschichte* (Köln: Böhlau, 1981).

8 For a discussion of the *Tripartitum* in this sense, see G. Hamza, “A *Tripartitum* mint jogforrás” [The *Tripartitum* as a source of law], in *Degré Alajos emlékkönyv* (Budapest: Unio, 1995), 77-85. More recently a comprehensive approach to the *Tripartitum* has been taken in the studies in M. Rady (ed.), *Custom and Law in Central Europe* (Cambridge Centre for European Law, 2003).

– as the only readily available and accessible compilation on the subject, and as a faithful representation of the views of the nobility. Werbőczy confirmed the principle fundamental to the self-understanding of the nobility: that the prelates, barons, magnates and nobles of the Kingdom of Hungary may differ in regard of their dignity and their role in promoting the public good, but they all enjoy *una eademque libertas*, one and the same liberty. While there is a reference to the idea that noble status arises from merit, this is immediately linked with the story of the *lex Scitica*, familiar from Kézai. Conscientiously answering the call to arms issued by the “captains elected by unanimous consent”, some people preserved their freedom while others were relegated in servitude. Also echoing Kézai’s *communitas* theory, in Werbőczy’s account the monarchy arose from the nobility’s voluntary consent to elect a king and transfer to him the power to govern and rule. “There is no prince but elected by the nobility, and there is no nobleman but ennobled by the king”; and the mutual bond expressed in this formula makes all nobles true “members of the Holy Crown”⁹.

This ‘gentry variety’ of the doctrine of the Holy Crown at the same time excluded all others (i.e. those who did not benefit from royal land donation) from privileges, and, by implication, membership in the political body. Chartered towns were more or less regularly invited to send deputies to diets and were occasionally referred to as members of the *regnum*, but Werbőczy clearly distinguished the privileges of burghers from the “golden liberty” of the nobles, the same across the *universitas*, as being merely particular to the localities where they constituted randomly assembled multitudes¹⁰. While most of this has to do with social exclusiveness, rather than the political right of the nobility to be involved in legislation, the thrust of Werbőczy’s argument and the few passages that specifically relate to the structure of the polity support the corporate model. Having repeated that after the power of governance had been transferred to the Holy Crown, kings continued to make law with the consent of the *populus*, he even offers the interesting paradox that whereas normally nobles and non-nobles are both embraced in this category, “for the present purposes we shall disregard non-nobles whom we understand under the name of *plebs*”¹¹. With all of this in mind it is clear that the references in the preface¹² to the ancient martial glory of the Hungarian *natio* served to reassert Kézai’s national paradigm.

Scythianism – which refers to both a theory of national origins and the corporate paradigm of the polity associated with such origins – was a staple of Hungarian

9 I. Werbőczy, *Hármaskönyve* (Budapest, 1897), 55-69. Here and below I refer to this Hungarian edition, but there is a recent English one too, S. Werbőczy, *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary: A Work in Three Parts (the Tripartitum)*, ed. and trans. by M. Rady with J. Bak and P. Banyó (Budapest and Idyllwild: CEU Press and Schlacks, 2005).

10 I. Werbőczy, *Hármaskönyve*, 391, 401.

11 I. Werbőczy, *Hármaskönyve*, 229.

12 I. Werbőczy, *Hármaskönyve*, 5-7.

late baroque noble consciousness, and was also underpinned by the traditional classification of the Hungarian language as one of the 'oriental' languages, along with Turkish and Mongolian, (and Hebrew, and Chaldean, and Arabic, and Armenian, and Persian ...). This classification became seriously challenged in a treatise on the kindred nature of the Hungarian and the Lappian language, written by János Sajnovics and recording the findings of a Nordic expedition whose original purpose was astronomic observation. Sajnovics (himself mainly interested in astronomy, not linguistics) set out on the journey in 1768, in the company of Maximilian Hell, Maria Theresa's imperial and royal astronomer in Vienna¹³. Hell was aware of the widespread preoccupation with Nordic cultures in contemporary Europe, and it was probably upon his encouragement that Sajnovics set out on an empirical investigation of the ethnographic features and the language of the natives in the region of their observation site, including the proposed kinship between Hungarian and Lappian.

Sajnovics' *Demonstratio Idioma Hungarorum et Lapponum idem esse* (Tyrnau, 1771) is considered a landmark in Finno-Ugrian historical linguistics whose methodologically innovative features – especially the fact that beyond vocabulary and tone, he put a great emphasis on grammatical comparison in demonstrating linguistic kinship – eclipse such dilettante aspects of the work as the derivation of the Lappians from northern China, and the further speculation on the kinship of Hungarian and Chinese (prompted by Hell and the recognition, in a Chinese vocabulary, that certain Chinese words when read backwards resemble Hungarian ones). It both fitted into the development of eighteenth-century linguistic studies, and gave them further impetus, which was usually recognized by contemporaries in Europe¹⁴. However, the argument presented in it had been 'in the air' for a considerable while. It is no wonder that its contemporary reception was far from being as uniformly hostile as it should have been its due according to the romantic perceptions of much subsequent historiography on the subject. Ever since the Hamburg scholar Martin Fogel (Fogelius), mainly on the basis of shared etymologies, first raised the idea seriously in *De lingua indole Finica Observationes* (1669), the notion of a Finno-Ugrian community of languages and

13 The two scholars were invited to lead an expedition to north of Norway by Christian VII, to carry out observations of the 1769 transit of Venus before the Sun. The purpose was to provide data which, collated with similar data from several dozens of other observation posts widely scattered over the globe, would yield an exact calculation of the distance of the Earth and the Sun. Hell published the pioneering results of their expedition both in *Ephemerides Astronomicae ad Meridianum Vindobonensem*, the journal of the Vienna observatory, and separately as *Observatio transitus Veneris ante discum Solis die 3 junii anno 1769* (Copenhagen, 1770). I discuss both the astronomical and the ethnographic-linguistic aspects of the expedition in L. Kontler, "Distances celestial and terrestrial. Maximilian Hell's Arctic expedition of 1768-1769: contexts and responses", in A. Holenstein, H. Steinke, M. Stuber (eds.), *The Practice of Knowledge and the Figure of the Savant in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). See also the literature cited there.

14 For a concise discussion in English, see Z. Vladár, "Sajnovics's *Demonstratio* and Gyarmathi's *Affinitas*: Terminology and methodology", *Acta Linguistica Hungarica*, 55, 1-2 (2008): 145-181.

the special relationship of Finnish, Lappian and Hungarian recurred in the work of scholars from several European countries: Swedes (including Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg, the first to focus on the comparison of the ‘most ancient’ stock of vocabulary: numerals, limbs, simple tools and actions), Germans (such as Leibniz), and Hungarians. Among the latter, the remarkable Lutheran antiquarian scholar Dávid Czvittinger was the first to embrace the Finno-Ugrian theory in his *Specimen Hungariae Litteratae* (1711). There were several others to prepare the ground for Sajnovics, including individuals who did so despite their uneasiness with the theory, such as Mátyás (Matej) Bél, who presumed to identify the remnants of the “Hungarian-Scythian” language in Finnish¹⁵. Most recently, in 1768, Johann Eberhard Fischer, a German scholar at that time attached to the University of Göttingen, but in his earlier career recruited to Russia as the secretary of the second Kamchatka (or “Bering”) expedition between 1733-1743 (himself involved in the fieldwork from 1740), completed and published his two-volume *Sibirische Geschichte von der Entdeckung Sibiriens bis auf die Eroberung dieses Landes durch die Russische Waffen* in Saint Petersburg. In this book he reiterated and further contextualized the claim already made in his *De origine Ungrorum* (1756, published 1770) that the Hungarians are a Finno-Ugrian people, and it soon became a reference work in German academic circles¹⁶. Another, much more famous Göttingen scholar, August Ludwig Schlözer, recognized Sajnovics’ achievement already in 1771, and later encouraged Sámuel Gyarmathi’s work, who pursued Finno-Ugrian research beyond Sajnovics in both methodological and empirical terms¹⁷.

15 In this sketch I am relying on P. Domokos, *Szkitiától Lappóniáig. A nyelvrokonság és az őstörténet kérdéskörének visszhangja* [From Scythia to Lapponia. Echoes on the problem of linguistic kinship and ancient history] (Budapest: Universitas, 1998).

16 Fischer’s role is usually understood as subsidiary to the better known German scholars recruited for the expedition, the naturalist Johann Georg Gmelin and especially the historian Gerhard Friedrich Müller. He is also recognized as having written at the request of August Ludwig Schlözer the *Vocabularium Sibiricum* (1747), deposited in manuscript as a gift in the Historical Institute in Göttingen, to be used extensively by later scholars there. The literature on Fischer is meagre, but see passing references in Vermeulen, “Anthropology in Colonial Contexts”, 22-25; Y. Slezkine, “Naturalists versus nations: 18th-century Russian scholars confront ethnic diversity”, *Representations*, No. 47, Special Issue: *National Cultures before Nationalism* (Summer 1994): 170-195, here 186-187. For the Kamchatka expeditions in the context of eighteenth-century Russian voyages of discovery, see E. Donnert, *Russia in the Age of Enlightenment* (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1986; German original 1983), 95-114.

17 He showed that the similarity of suffixes, rather than words, is the really convincing proof of linguistic kinship, and on this basis demonstrated that the Manshi and the Chanti are the closest relatives of Hungarians, while the common Hungarian-Turkic vocabulary stems from intercourse during the migrations, not from supposed kinship. For Schlözer and his Hungarian connections, see É. H. Balázs, “A Magyar jozefinisták külföldi kapcsolataihoz” (About the international connections of Hungarian Josephinists), *Századok*, 97 (1963): 1187-1203; J. Poór, “August Ludwig Schlözer und seine ungarländischen Korrespondenz” in A. Duțu, E. Hösch und N. Oellers (eds.), *Brief und Briefwechsel in Mittel- und Osteuropa im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Essen: Reimar Hobbing Verlag, 1989); I. Futaky, *Göttinga. A göttingeni Georg-August Egyetem magyarországi és erdélyi kapcsolatai a felvilágosodás idején és a reformkor kezdetén* [Göttingen. The Hungarian and Transylvanian contacts of the Georg-August University during the time of Enlightenment and the Reform Era] (Budapest: ELTE Levéltár, 2007).

In fact, strictly academic circles almost invariably welcomed Sajnovics' theory in Hungary itself too. Even the Jesuit György Pray, the greatest contemporary authority in historical research, felt compelled to modify his earlier views on the subject in his *Dissertationes historico-criticae in annales veteres hunnorum, avarum et hungarorum* (1775) – although by simply claiming a Hun pedigree for Finno-Ugrian peoples as well¹⁸. It must also be added that the only linguist to champion the alternative concept in Sajnovics' lifetime, György Kalmár, published his relevant work nearly simultaneously with the *Demonstratio*, so his *Prodrum idiomatis Schytico-Mogorico-Chuno-(seu Hunno-) Avarici, sive apparatus criticus ad linguam Hungaricam* could not have been a response to Sajnovics¹⁹. In other words, the issue here was not (yet) that of an academic debate, the more so as contemporary scholars used the terms “linguistic family” or “linguistic kinship”, if ever, metaphorically at best, and without any clearcut frontlines between, say, the Scytho-Hungarian and the Finno-Ugrian “schools”²⁰. There was, however, one important and influential group on the public intellectual scene, which acutely realized the political stakes of the matter, and reacted accordingly: the men of letters of noble origin who dominated that scene before the 1780s and included, besides figures like Orczy and Fekete, Ábrahám Barcsay, whose poetry gave expression to sensibility as well as anti-court political sentiment, and György Bessenyei, the emblematic figure of the Hungarian Enlightenment as a whole. Together they gave voice to the sentiments of a sizeable elite group whose cultural and intellectual horizons, thanks to their education as members of Maria Theresa's famous Hungarian Guards²¹ were broadly European, but whose vision of the future restoration of the erstwhile greatness of the Hungarian nation was predicated on galvanising their own class to a new dynamism through modern

18 D. Kosáry, *Művelődés a XVIII. századi Magyarországon* [A cultural history of Hungary in the eighteenth century] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980), 575. In the abridged English edition, there are short summaries of eighteenth-century historical and linguistic scholarship, as well as the literary and cultural significance of the noble “bodyguards” (see below): D. Kosáry, *Culture and Society in Eighteenth-Century Hungary* (Budapest: Corvina, 1987), 149-154, 160-162, 195-200.

19 Z. Éder, “Újabb szempontok a *Demonstratio* hazai fogadtatásának kérdéséhez” [New perspectives on the reception of the *Demonstratio*], in Z. Éder, *Túl a Duna-tájon. Fejezetek a magyar művelődéstörténet európai kapcsolatai köréből* (Budapest: Mundus, 1999), 49.

20 B. Hegedűs, “Kalmár György a magyar nyelv származásáról” [György Kalmár on the origin of the Hungarian language], in I. Csörsz Rumen, B. Hegedűs and G. Tüskés (eds.), *Historia litteraria a XVIII. században* (Budapest: Universitas Kiadó, 2006), 300.

21 On the Hungarian Guards, with references to the figures mentioned, see L. Deme, “Maria Theresa's Noble Lifeguards and the Rise of the Hungarian Enlightenment and Nationalism”, in B. Király and W. S. Dillard (eds.), *The East Central European Officer Corps, 1740-1920s: Social Origins, Selection, Education, and Training* (Boulder, CO: Columbia University Press, 1988), 197-212. The Hungarian language literature is respectable. However, historians have hitherto largely yielded the field to literary scholars, whose main preoccupation has been the rise of vernacular literature, and are yet fully to discover the subject and approach it with their own questions. The standard monograph is F. Bíró, *A felvilágosodás korának magyar irodalma* [Hungarian literature in the Age of Enlightenment] (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1994), esp. 69-92, 161-185.

letters and knowledge practices. This was a vision of improvement which, in their own view, depended on maintaining a discourse of identity built on a prestigious pedigree and social exclusiveness, both under serious attack from the mid-1760s on by the Viennese court and government, towards which their attitudes were therefore highly ambivalent. In this atmosphere, the implications of Finno-Ugricism – understood by them as not only linguistic but also ethnic kinship – seemed to them highly disturbing.

Barcsay's poetry abounds in rebuffs addressed to Sajnovics whose "yoke" was perceived by him a vital threat to ancient liberties, established on the cornerstone of the idea that Hungarians are "the valiant grandsons of Scythians". Similarly, in his "The Errors of Star-Watcher Sajnovits and Hell Being Refuted", Orczy casts doubt on the allegation that the progeny of Alexander the Great's brave opponents should be related to mere Lappians munching on dried fish – but recommends "the astronomer" to return to these "kind relatives" of his: a hint at Sajnovics' Slovak ethnic background. This tacit reference to Slavic mischief as a possible background to Sajnovics' work leads us to the political context. Just a few years earlier, the diet of 1764-1765 ended in bitter estrangement between the Hungarian nobility and the Viennese government. At this assembly the Hungarian estates, jealous of their privileges, but also infuriated by a series of publications apparently commissioned by the government and directly challenging those privileges, refused the ruler's demand for increased war tax, a general overhaul of the entire system of taxation, and military reform at their own expense. These were parts of a comprehensive package of administrative and social transformations which drew inspiration from the work of the newly established chairs of cameralist sciences and natural law at the University of Vienna, hallmarked by the names of Karl Anton von Martini and Joseph von Sonnenfels²². In response to the estates' reluctance, Maria Theresa's government decided to implement its plan of abandoning the dialogue with them, and neglecting the diet in its future pursuit of the much needed reforms²³.

During the debates of the diet and afterwards, court propaganda on behalf of the proposed measures received a boost from a treatise by Adam Franz Kollár, *De originibus et usu perpetuo potestatis legislativae circa sacra apostolicorum regum Hungariae*. Kollár, who was proud of his Slovak commoner origins, called into question many of the political and social privileges of the Hungarian ecclesiastical

22 On these initiatives, see K.-H. Osterloh, *Joseph von Sonnenfels und die österreichische Reformbewegung im Zeitalter des aufgeklärten Absolutismus* (Lübeck-Hamburg: Mathiesen Verlag, 1970); Ernst Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement 1700-1800* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), ch. 4; H. Reinalter (ed.), *Joseph von Sonnenfels* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988); G. Klingenstein, "Between Mercantilism and Physiocracy. Stages, Modes and Functions of Economic Theory in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1748-1763", in C. Ingrao (ed.), *State and Society in Early Modern Austria* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1994), 181-214.

23 R. J. W. Evans, "Maria Theresa and Hungary", in H. M. Scott (ed.), *Enlightened Absolutism. Reform and Reformers in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 189-207.

and secular elites, criticizing Werbőczy in especially sharp terms, and causing great consternation among the clergy and the nobility. Characteristically, Kollár's anti-feudal polemics was readily associated by this constituency with anti-Hungarian sentiment, identified in his commentary on *Hungaria*, a work by the sixteenth-century humanist Miklós Oláh (Nicolaus Olahus), which Kollár edited and published in 1763²⁴. These comments, which refer to the statistical minority of Hungarians in the Kingdom of Hungary and predict the gradual demise of the language as well as the nation itself, became European currency through being quoted in Schlözer's *Allgemeine nordische Geschichte*, which in turn seems to have inspired Herder's famous 'prophecy' to the same effect. The latter's prediction that the Hungarian nation, amidst the "ocean" of Slavic peoples, will inevitably perish, was underpinned by his theory (available in publication for the first time also in the late 1760s and early 1770s) on the crucial role of language in the formation of human identities. Herder claimed that "all conditions of awareness in [man] are linguistic" – thus, as language acquisition took place in communities, reason and the capacity of thinking, the very distinguishing feature of the human animal, was bound to have as many modes as there were human communities²⁵. Members of the Hungarian intellectual elite had good reasons for being attentive to his views, and also for taking them as an alarm bell. These developments also established Schlözer's notoriety as an 'anti-Hungarian', apparently confirmed by the fact that his social and political views were based on the same foundations as those held by the Viennese reformers – no wonder that the next, 'Josephist', generation of young enlightened Hungarians cultivated his courses at the University of Göttingen²⁶. In any case, by championing the Lappian cause, for an influential segment of the contemporary enlightened political public, Sajnovics and his mentor Hell seemed to be the Jesuit hirelings of a hostile court, employed in a plot which also involved willing collaborators from the camps of old and new national enemies, Germans and Slavs²⁷.

24 Cf. Evans, "Maria Theresa and Hungary", 196 ff.; D. Dümmerth, "Herder jóslata és forrásai" [Herder's prophecy and its sources], *Filológiai Közlöny* (1963); D. Dümmerth, "Kollár Ádám problémája" [The Ádám Kollár problem], *Filológiai Közlöny* (1967).

25 J. G. Herder, *Treatise on the Origin of Language* [1772], in *Philosophical Writings*, trans. and ed. M. N. Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 131, 150. See also *Fragments on Recent German Literature* [1767-1768], in *Philosophical Writings*, 49.

26 On the central role of the University of Göttingen as a point of orientation and a source of inspiration for the rank-and-file of Hungarian Josephists, see É. H. Balázs, *Berzeviczy Gergely, a reformpolitikus (1763-1795)* [Gergely Berzeviczy, the political reformer] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1967), 86-117. Some of the argument is worked into the same author's *Hungary and the Habsburgs 1765-1800. An Experiment in Enlightened Absolutism* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1997).

27 A Google search on Hell and Sajnovics demonstrates in a few seconds that this representation is still alive and well among a somewhat less enlightened segment of the political public. Late eighteenth-century attitudes to Jesuits, both before and after the dissolution of the order, were diverse. On the one hand, in scholarly circles there was a great deal of mutual respect

In many ways, György Bessenyei (1746-1811) is a category of his own in the history of the Hungarian Enlightenment and national awakening. The scion of a gentry family in eastern Hungary, he was educated as a member of Maria Theresa's above-mentioned Hungarian Guards, and rose to literary fame as a still young man in the 1770s, with a comprehensive programme urging the improvement of public happiness through the cultivation of the arts and sciences, of historical and political knowledge in the vernacular²⁸. His own translations from universal histories by Voltaire and Millot, and global geographies by Malzet and Vaissete, were put in the service of this end: his suggestion that “after all, we had better followed in the footsteps of the greater world” in effect meant that in the study of man and society, the “new learning” predicated on history should be raised on a par with or in place of theology and jurisprudence. With these premisses in mind, Bessenyei wrote several ‘philosophical histories’, whose principles he embraced and set out as follows:

When one reflects on the common rise of a Country, one ought to consider ... whether the great sciences make any progress? Whether the arts and crafts prosper? And whether it has found outlets through which its products and superfluities could be traded to neighbouring Nations, thus augmenting its internal wealth? These comprise the first consideration and knowledge of a Country, wherein the character of the arrangements, negotiations and obligations towards its King in regard of the holding and taxation of property, and the liberty or subjection of persons, must also not be overlooked²⁹.

Accordingly, in his “Hungarian Spectator” (*A magyar néző*, 1778), Bessenyei surveyed the history of the world, from a Hungarian perspective, in a thoroughly Voltairian framework. He proposed to give an account of the successive stages of the “mitigation” of rude manners, resulting from religion and learning, but also claimed that military glory and polite letters, rather than being antagonistic, could mutually supplement one another³⁰. This, of course, nicely dovetailed with his overall conviction that *vera nobilitas* could derive from proficiency in letters

and communication between Jesuits and Protestant scholars, and even personally expressed sympathy by the latter on the occasion of the dissolution. On the other hand, in the public-political domain the old Protestant topoi about the ‘conspiratorial inclination’ of the Jesuits remained common currency.

28 On Bessenyei's project and its different aspects, see F. Bíró, “A szétszórt rendszer (Bessenyei György programjáról)”, in S. Csorba, K. Margócsy (eds.), *A szétszórt rendszer. Tanulmányok Bessenyei György életművéről* [The fragmented system. Studies on the oeuvre of György Bessenyei] (Nyíregyháza: Bessenyei Kiadó, 1998), 25-36. On some aspects of Bessenyei's work in the genre of philosophical history, see Penke, *Filozofikus világtörténetek és történeftilozófiák*, 176-183, 211-218.

29 György Bessenyei, *Összes művei: A Holmi* [Complete works: Paraphernalia], ed. F. Bíró (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983), 323-325.

30 Bessenyei, *Magyarság. A Magyar Néző* [Hungariandom. The Hungarian Spectator] (Budapest, 1932), 17.

as well as armsbearing, a claim he made to urge a re-evaluation of the social roles of the nobility, which he still regarded as the chief repository of improvement – although it also depended on “emulation between the great and the little”³¹. Then, in “The Customs, Manners, Modes of Government, Laws and Important Deeds of the Hungarian Nation” (*A magyar nemzetnek szokásairul, erköltseirül, uralkodásának modjairul, törvényeirül, és nevezetesb viselt dolgairul, 1778*) he again provided a set of present-oriented historical reflections, rather than a narrative of events, intended as a historical underpinning of his programme. Achievement by the sword and by the pen are represented, in a somewhat laboured fashion, as two equally feasible paths to ennoblement – although Bessenyei held that among certain circumstances, such as in eleventh-century Hungary and Europe as a whole, the one took precedence over the other. His point is, ultimately, the parallel development of society in Hungary and Europe in the past, and the consequent chance to re-establish synchronicity for Hungary with European progress in the present. (It is tempting to recognize here an association with the notion advanced by Montesquieu, with whose works Bessenyei was familiar, that the shared ‘deep structures’ of European societies predestine them to progress towards a similar present and future, in spite of the empirical variations within the overall system of monarchy based on ‘intermediary powers’.) “It seems as if the Hungarian nobility originated fully from warfare. It could not have been otherwise, for in old times it was impossible to rise to nobility by writing and the pen in a nation, which could neither write nor read, but only fought, triumphed, plundered and ruled”. But he goes on immediately to say that “[A]ll nations in the world, which have since developed arts and sciences, began their nobilities in this way [...]”³². An appendix on “The Form of the Whole of Europe in the Eleventh Century” (*Egész Európa’ formája a XI^{di}k Százban* – excerpted from Voltaire’s *Essai sur les moeurs*, ch. 39-46) is intended to demonstrate that in those times Hungarians were not any more barbarous than other European nations. “If you observe only Hungary in the eleventh century, you will find that it dealt improperly with its kings; but was there anything other nations did not commit, although they had been Christians for a long time?”³³. Religious war and forced conversion is also described as the order of the day. The ubiquity of violent passions and ignorance was directly related to the overall rusticity of manners: “The sum of customs and manners was excessive eating and drinking, pillage, recklessness in combat, and cruelty”³⁴.

Thus far this is more or less the standard Enlightenment narrative of the feudal past, with the potential of the assessment of the present in equally standard terms of enlightened patriotism. Bessenyei indeed hinted at the anachronistic

31 Bessenyei, *A Holmi*, 16.

32 Bessenyei, *Összes művei: Társadalombölcseleti írások 1771-1778* [Complete works: Writings on social theory, 1771-1778], ed. P. Kulcsár (Budapest: Argumentum-Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992), 96.

33 Bessenyei, *Társadalombölcseleti írások*, 164.

34 Bessenyei, *Társadalombölcseleti írások*, 163.

distribution of social power and privilege in eighteenth-century Hungary: in the beginning, “the ploughman paid taxes to the bearer of arms in return for his own protection. So, in old times everything was based on services; but since servants became masters without bearing arms, the one part always obeys, and the other always commands. [...] This great nobility was once a standing army; now they lay idle in their homes”³⁵. Bessenyei, however, nowhere arrived at the explicit conclusion that noble privileges, being no longer justified, ought to be eliminated, although – as a commissioner of Hungarian Protestants in Vienna – he was more inclined to a compromise with the policies urged at court in social and national as well as confessional issues than most others. On the contrary: assigning an unassailable social pre-eminence to the nobility on account of its historical roles, what he sought was a new justification for these roles, to be found in superior learning, while he still regarded the gulf that separated the nobility from the peasantry as unbridgeable.

He supported this from Werbőczy in his “Of the Course of the Law” (*A’ törvénynek útja*, 1777). As a matter of fact, as the whole of this treatise addressed the relationship of the nation and the ruler in law making, its topic and argument both closely followed Werbőczy, whose work Bessenyei was obviously thoroughly familiar with. His claim that the people raised “captains” and masters above themselves through the voluntary consent of all, echoes the passages of the *Tripartitum* as well as Kézai’s *Gesta* to the same effect – although without explicit reference to the Huns and the presumed continuity with the Hungarians, in its political terminology recalling the staples of Scythianism³⁶. The same applies to the justification of differences between the ‘people’ and the ‘common folk’: more generally, in terms of voluntary subordination of the cowardly to the brave warriors, and specifically by reference to forfeiture of right as a result of rebellion (almost a word-by-word quotation of Werbőczy’s argument from the consequences of the 1514 peasant war)³⁷.

The ideological stakes of the available discourses of origin were thus formidable, and Bessenyei was no less worried about the consequences of the theory put forward by Sajnovics on the basis of linguistic evidence (especially in combination with those of the Herderian ‘prophecy’). Though his relevant statement – significantly enough, contained in a work entitled “The Legal Status of Hungary” (*Magyarországnak törvényes állása*) – derives from the times of his retirement to his estate, some thirty years after Sajnovics’ treatise burst onto the scene, in it he advanced views most probably first developed and discussed

35 Bessenyei, *Társadalombölcseleti írások*, 153.

36 Bessenyei, *Társadalombölcseleti írások*, 175.

37 Bessenyei, *Társadalombölcseleti írások*, 177. For historical studies in Hungary in the age of Bessenyei, see Kosáry, *Művelődés*, 571-584; for the views of Bessenyei and other contemporary writers on history, Bíró, *A felvilágosodás*, 161-186; and Penke, *Filozófikus világtörténetek és történetfilozófiák*, 161-182.

with other opponents, back in the 1770s. (Even though, it must be added that in *The Customs...* he also claimed it was not his intention to derive the Hungarian nobility from the Scythians, because “the foundations of the laws of our land go back to Saint Stephen”)³⁸. His criticism is expressed in considerable detail. Bessenyei bluntly claimed that “it is impossible to displace something of such a great consequence, on the basis of so little a circumstance [as language], and set it on a different footing”, and suggested that “instead of words, one should consider moral character and manners”. This lens shows the ‘Scythian’ and the ‘Lappon’ to be separated by a yawning gap: in the subsequent representation, the latter becomes the target of consistent ‘othering’ by Bessenyei. In contrast to the people of Attila, marked by “its thirst for triumph, valour and glory, as well as its sagacity required for domination”, the ‘Lappon’ was deformed in his outward appearance as well as his manners: on top of his “ugliness of form, the Lappon is vile and fearful, it is such a subterranean mole of a Nation, which loathes the fight, and never wages war”³⁹.

We are dealing here with an interesting paradox. Bessenyei defended a view of national origins which was scientifically obsolete and was under challenge by one that was sound. The former theory, Scythianism, was deployed by him, in the best traditions of Enlightenment social science, with reference to the category of manners and virtues (or the lack of them), while at the same time in the polemic against ‘Lappianism’ coming dangerously close to being conveyed in racial terms. To be sure, this combination was by no means unusual among eighteenth-century scholars: suffice it to refer to the derogatory observations of Cornelius de Pauw to the natives of North America⁴⁰ or – in an academic environment with which late eighteenth-century Hungarians were intimately familiar – the unflattering classification of the ‘Mongol’ race (supposedly giving rise to the peoples of Eastern Asia, North America and Africa) by the Göttingen historian Christoph Meiners⁴¹. However, language, although obviously an important racial

38 Bessenyei, *Társadalombölcseleti írások*, 96.

39 György Bessenyei, *Összes művei. Prózái munkák, 1802-1804* [Complete works: Prose writings], ed. G. Kókay (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986), 231-235. The passage is almost a literal translation from the national characters in Dom J. Vaissete’s *Géographie historique, ecclésiastique et civile, ou description des toutes les parties du Globe terrestre* (Paris, 1755).

40 For the classic exploration on de Pauw’s thesis on the inferiority of native Americans and the debate provoked by it, see A. Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World. The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), Ch. 3; for developments upon Gerbi’s perspective, J. Cañizares Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Historiographies, Epistemologies and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), Ch. 1; S. Sebastiani, *I limiti del progresso. Razza e genere nell’Illuminismo scozzese* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), esp. Ch. 3-4.

41 F. Lotter, “Christoph Meiners und die Lehre von der unterschiedlichen Wertigkeit der Menschenrassen”, in H. Bockmann, H. Wellenreuther (eds.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in Göttingen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 30-75; L. Marino, *Praeceptores Germaniae. Göttingen 1770-1820* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 110-120.

marker – arguably a more inherent one than manners, acquired through socio-cultural intercourse – did no more seriously enter into their considerations than in those of Bessenyei. This sort of ‘enlightened racism’ was tailor-made to the Hungarian writer’s agenda, a programme of elevating the cultural level of the country, in the conviction that while martial valour is capable of being translated into virtue in letters, dumb and smelly fishermen would never attain to this. Kinship with the latter was therefore repudiated in the most violent terms of othering, together with the phenomenon of language as representing any *analytical* value, albeit – to amplify our paradox – its cultivation, as a *tool* of improvement, was deemed by Bessenyei indispensable for the achievement of his ends. However much he claimed, famously, that “as long as her own language remains uncultivated, no Nation in this World will become learned in foreign tongues”⁴² he retained his scepticism about language as the constitutive element of community. Hungarian enlightened patriots like him continued to insist on the role of ‘virtue’ in cementing the community, only they urged that virtue in arms ought to be replaced by ‘virtue in letters’, i.e., promoting improvement. The scientifically sound Finno-Ugrian theory on the other hand gave a boost to ethno-linguistic definitions of nationhood, which started to emerge in the context of efforts by the same enlighteners who dismissed that theory but still fostered the cultivation of the mother tongue with a view to the requirements of socio-cultural progress. Conversely, Hungarian ethno-nationalism, which received an initial impetus from the discovery of Finno-Ugrian theory in the sense that it placed language in the focus of belonging, has yet continued – to this day – to take immense satisfaction in the Scythian myth.

42 Bessenyei, *A Holmi*, 32.

The ethnicity of knowledge: statistics and *Landeskunde* in late eighteenth-century Hungary and Transylvania

BORBÁLA ZSUZSANNA TÖRÖK

This essay discusses the emerging field of statistics in the multiethnic lands of the Habsburg Monarchy. It analyzes how the science of the social realm used ethnographic description (*Völkerbeschreibung*) to underscore the claims to the social predominance of German and Hungarian elites in Hungary and Transylvania. It is known that the end of the eighteenth century corresponds to the institutionalization of a number of scholarly disciplines in the academic centers of the Holy Roman Empire. These disciplines developed in the framework of the German tradition of state sciences (*Staatswissenschaften*), as well as the philological, historical and ethnographic fieldwork of German scholars in the Central and Northern Asian territories of Russia. Ethnography as a descriptive and comparative study of peoples emerged thus from a quasi-colonial context in Siberia, to be adopted later as an academic discipline in the institutions of composite and multiethnic states. Both in Russia and the German and Habsburg context the scientific exploration of the human resources served economic-administrative purposes. It had to be the adequate tool of governing social differences, the latter being ‘translated’ in ethno-cultural terms by ethnographers¹.

1 J. Stagl, “August Ludwig Schlözer and the Study of Mankind according to Peoples”, in Idem, *A History of Curiosity. The Theory of Travel 1550-1800* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), 233-268; H. F. Vermeulen, *Early History of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment: Anthropological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1710-1808* (University of Leiden, Ph. D. dissertation, 2008), http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/vermeulen_summary.pdf (visited on 30.12.2009).

A generic 'symbolic geography' inscribing cultural inequalities in the nascent social sciences about East-Central and Southern-Europe has been duly recognized by Larry Wolff, Maria Todorova and their followers in the 1990s². Usually, these accounts followed the post-colonial thrust of Edward Said, without however tracing the specific dynamics of the contemporary, i. e. late eighteenth-century German-speaking scholarly field. The latter has been a more recent development, where historians of ethnology, linguistics and ethnography have scrutinized more closely the transfer of analytic methods, scientific disciplines, taxonomies and categories, and their impact on ethnic mapping in the imperial context³. A distinguishing aspect of statistical accounts from the region is indeed a hierarchical image of the society, whose constituting elements differ from one another by language, religion, ethnic descent, as well as manners, customs and refinement. Such a social image is reminiscent of the famous categories of Scottish conjectural historians. How can this 'statistical gaze' be characterized, and who were the practitioners of this discipline?

In my essay I focus on the first major modern statistical account of the Kingdom of Hungary, written in German, by Martin Schwartzner (1759-1823), professor of diplomatics and library custodian at the newly founded university of Buda/Pest. Schwartzner had studied at the University of Göttingen, and his major work, entitled *Statistik des Königreichs Ungern*, reflects a profound knowledge of the Göttingen historical statistical school, but also the English political arithmetic. His innovative comparative method, his use of a great variety of sources, was not only a popular read of his time – the book was reedited three times in the lifetime of its author, and translated into French, and in Hungarian. It was also widely read by politicians and experts of the Hungarian Reform Era in the 1830s⁴.

2 Besides the well-known works of Larry Wolff, Maria Todorova, see more recently *Creating the Other. Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, ed. N. M. Wigfield (New York-Oxford: Berghan Books, 2003), W. Höpgen, "Ethnische Stereotype in Südeuropa. Anmerkungen zu Charakter, Funktion und Entstehungsbedingungen" [Ethnic stereotypes in South-East Europe. Notes about its character, function and circumstances of its emergence], in *Das Bild des Anderen in Siebenbürgen* [The Image of the Other in Transylvania], eds. K. Gündisch, W. Höpgen and M. Markel (Köln-Weimar-Vienna: Böhlau, 1998), 7-31.

3 S. Sörlin, "Ordering the World for Europe: Science as Intelligence and Information as Seen from the Northern Periphery", in *Nature and Empire: Science and the Colonial Enterprise*, ed. Roy MacLeod, *Osiris*, 15 (2000): 65-67; L. Koerner, "Daedalus Hyperboreus: Baltic Natural History and Mineralogy in the Enlightenment", in *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*, eds. William Clark, Jan Golinski, and Simon Schaffer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 389-422; Idem, *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1999).

4 M. Schwartzner, *Statistik des Königreichs Ungern. Ein Versuch von Martin Schwartzner, Professor der Diplomatie, und erstem Bibliothek-Custos auf der Kön. Ungarischen Universität zu Pest* (Pest: Matthias Trattner, 1798; 2nd enlarged edition in 3 vols., 1809-11; 3rd edition, 1815; also French edition in 3 vols., 1813-16). See also K. Gönczi, *Die europäischen Fundamente der ungarischen Rechtskultur. Juristischer Wissenstransfer und nationale Rechtswissenschaft in Ungarn zur Zeit der Aufklärung und Vormärz* (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 2008).

Statistics (*Staatenkunde*, in Hungarian *honismeret*) was part of the broader *Staatswissenschaften*. It was a field characteristic for the enlightened ‘statistical gaze’, that is, an encyclopedic mapping of the social realm. It was ‘experiential’ and ‘open-air’, based on empirical perception that distinguished it from the traditional academic practice. As a university discipline studying the state, its creation, order, and government, it was meant to train an emerging bureaucracy⁵. Also, it was inseparable from another ‘modern’ phenomenon, the creation of a scholarly public with its characteristic institutions both in the centers of learning and their provinces in Europe, thanks to a growing educated constituency, that benefited from the intensifying international circulation of knowledge. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, loosely connected networks emerged around German universities, including scholars from Switzerland to Prussia, extending into the Balticum and into Saint Petersburg. Yet, one cannot speak about scholarly modernization without considering its most important local feature, the vernacularization of knowledge. The status of German scholarship is remarkable in this process, since it simultaneously figures as the accepted educational norm (also in university education), but also as part of a policy imposed from above (e.g. in Hungarian-speaking intellectual milieus).

Within this dynamics the role of German-speaking scholars, closely connected to the vanguard of German universities (Göttingen, Tübingen, Halle, Jena) has been obscured by Hungarian historiography, although the latter had an important mediating position between the local and international (i.e. German-speaking) academic milieus. They were the arbiters of the measures of ‘improvement’ of their non-German compatriots, which bordered on arrogant ‘othering’ and orientalizing gestures towards the ‘less cultivated’ citizens. On the other hand, the entire discipline of state science carried a conservative social vision; even the North-German vanguard of its practitioners, including the renown Göttingen professor, August Ludwig von Schlözer, were no advocates of social emancipation⁶. What about the Hungarian adaptation?

5 Schwartner, *Statistik* (Pest: 1798), 5; H. E. Bödeker, “On the Origins of the ‘Statistical Gaze’: Modes of Perception, Forms of Knowledge and Ways of Writing in the Early Social Sciences”, in *Little Tools of Knowledge. Historical Essays on Academic and Bureaucratic Practices*, eds. P. Becker and W. Clark (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 169-171; David F. Lindenfeld, *The Practical Imagination. The German Sciences of State in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997); M. Raeff, “The Well-Ordered Police State and the Development of Modernity in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Europe: An Attempt at a Comparative Approach”, *The American Historical Review*, 80, 5 (December 1975): 1221-1243.

6 For a few examples from the vast literature on the topic, see Holger Krahnke, *Reformtheorien zwischen Revolution und Restauration. Die ‘gesammte Politik’ an der Universität Göttingen im ersten Drittel des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1999); Notker Hammerstein, *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, 2: 18. Jahrhundert: vom späten 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Neuordnung Deutschlands um 1800 (München: Beck, 2005); *Bildung, Politik und Gesellschaft. Studien zur Geschichte des europäischen Bildungswesens vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Grete Klingenstein (München: Oldenbourg, 1978); Lindenfeld, *The Practical Imagination*; J. Van Horn Melton, “From Enlightenment to Revolution. Hertzberg, Schlözer, and the Problem of Despotism in the Aufklärung”, *Central European History*, 12 (1979): 103-123.

Schwartner's *Statistik des Königreichs Ungern*, the first professional work of its kind in Hungary, sets out with a social panorama of a country:

In no other country of the world are more languages, – and because of that, more nations – than in Hungary. Hungary, partly as far as the history reaches back, [was] the residence of the most numerous people of the Slavs, was since the fourth century the receiving place [Gasthof] of the barbarians attacking the Roman world, the refuge of the displaced Romans, the passage way of violent crusades, the comfortable fireplace of the Gipsy, as the frontier of the Christian world, the scene of European courage and Asian-Turkish savageness, but ever since also the Dorado of the German par excellence, especially of the diligent Saxons and the prolific Swabians. Italians and Savoyards must have been more frequent in Hungary than now. Such a large and diverse amalgamation of peoples and nations, of which in the old times none was much more advanced in culture [Cultur] than the other, had to result in a great linguistic diversity. Thus as great as the religious diversity is in today's Holland, it is as much variety in languages in Hungary⁷.

We are in the *medias res* of ethno-linguistic diversity. Indeed, the ethnic distinction is the most dominant feature of Schwartner's categories. Their dynamics are framed by the historically developing Hungarian state, which itself makes part of the great tableau of world history (as known from Schlözer's *Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte*⁸). The vision of Hungary as threshold between civilized and Christian Europe and Asian barbarism and thus a locus of irreconcilable opposites is more than a rhetorical cliché, but the very ideological framework for explaining the country's social diversity. Already in the opening passage, the players of the historical drama, i. e. the enlisted ethnic constituents, are qualified via their morality and status of improvement – they carry permanent adjectives in the manner of the heroes of the classic myths. But history has a secondary role in statistics; the main concern is oriented at the present affairs of the state:

[...] the government triggers the state machine. It is called government-police, government-constitution, and also government administration [...]. The aim of this activity is to be effective. [...] How and through which institutions does the government lead the citizen to his happiness? How close or how far is he from it? [...] What does the government do for the security of the citizen in the state, in regard to the sustenance of his life, for his health? In regard with his proliferation? Through supporting the marriages, through new colonies etc., in respect to his goods, his honor etc. Against his fellow citizens through administration and law, against the foreign citizens via arms, fortresses, peace treaties? [...] (through religion, the sciences, the arts) to make the subject virtuous and enlightened [...] to make him rich, [...] (through supporting agriculture, trade, factories and commerce) to make his life comfortable? [...] and to finance all these institutions, the state needs income.

⁷ Schwartner, *Statistik*, 32-33.

⁸ August Ludwig Schlözer, *Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte* (Halle, 1771).

Where does it come from, how much is it, who pays it, how much cash there is in the cash desk of the state?)⁹.

Indeed, both in the Habsburg Monarchy and the German states, state science and its sub-disciplines were the novel interpretative framework for effective state management. A loosely defined field that varied from university to university, involving lectures in economics, statistics, finance, politics, police science (*Polizeiwissenschaft*, meaning approximately ‘public administration’), agriculture, forestry, mining, ‘technology’, and social policy, it emphasized the comprehensiveness and systematic knowledge of the state. Throughout the eighteenth century, specialization was no priority, but rather the establishment of categories to describe the particularities of the social and physical environment and the historical-legal development of the polity¹⁰. After 1750, state sciences boomed in the German states; until the 1790s nine new university chairs were created despite the general decline of higher education. An alternative curriculum of the sciences of state came out of Göttingen, one that merged cameralism with legal studies, and combined portions of it with history and statistics. Within the larger international field of state science, the systematic description of the state was called *Statistik* or *Staatenkunde* by Gottfried Achenwall, who developed it into a discipline of its own. It was closely connected to politics, and embraced the descriptive investigation of the entire public, legal, economic, financial, military and cultural condition of individual states¹¹.

The discipline owed to the taxonomy of Linneus, also in its preference for the physical: weather, topography, population, natural resources, and animal life, a strong interest in natural science, with an emphasis on the particularities (*Merkwürdigkeiten*) of the fatherland. It was not present-centric, but integrated a historical perspective, whether antiquarian or constitutional – a feature characteristic to the Göttingen tradition. Here history and statistics interconnected (where history did not consist only of the biographies of kings or the chronicles of battles, but also of their agriculture, commerce, legal systems etc. – the very subjects of statistics): “history is continuous statistics, and statistics is static history”¹².

The term *Staatsmerkwürdigkeiten* (meaning “actual state peculiarities”) deserves special attention here. A concept introduced by Hermann Conring (*Exercitatio historico-politica de notitia singularis alicuius reipublicae*) and translated

9 Schwartner, *Statistik*, 7-8

10 See for instance Christian Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedanken von dem gesellschaftlichen Leben der Menschen, und insonderheit dem gemeinen Wesen* (Halle, 1721); Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination*, 14.

11 Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination*, 39-40; Bödeker, “Statistical Gaze,” 172.

12 A. L. von Schlözer, *Theorie der Statistik: nebst Ideen über das Studium der Politik überhaupt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1804); Bödeker, “Statistical Gaze”, 175; Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination*, 44; see also Schwartner, *Statistik*, 2-4.

into German by Gottfried Achenwall, it designated any domain worthy of perception¹³. The definition of what could be classified as a *Staatsmerkwürdigkeit* changed over time – for Conring the criteria was the impact of the documented facts on the well-being of a state – and principally it designated the data that were relevant for the state administration, such as land extension and population. His first group of “state particularities” referred to the territory, and comprised the topography and produces, the second one to the population, which was characterized after its a) numerical extension, b) nature and morality, c) as citizens, inhabitants, and so on. The subsequent groups rendered legal, political, and administrative information¹⁴. Schlözer too endowed every “fact” of the social world with statistical meaning, so *Statistik* became an all-encompassing repository for the study of social life. In a similar vein, Achenwall emphasized the immediate political relevance in governmental practices, of defining and classifying the “state particularities”:

The statistician seeks to pick only those data among the numberless peculiarities on the territory of the state, and to fathom their causes, that indicate certain virtues or defects of the state, which raise or dampen the glory of the crown, make the subjects rich or poor, satisfied or dissatisfied, [make] the government beloved or abominable, that make the authority of the ruler within the state or outside of it more or less feared, which benefits some states and shakes and shatters others, which means stability for one of them and failure to the other, that is, which leads to any extent to the thorough knowledge of the political structure of a certain state¹⁵.

The data were arranged along the administrative map of the country; hence a close connection between geography and statistics. The presentation of facts took place both in narrative form (history) as well as in the shape of descriptions. The methods were ‘plain air’, to be practiced outdoors – hence the preference for scientific hikes and travels – and fostered exchange among the practitioners¹⁶. There was a distribution of tasks, and while engaged amateurs were responsible for the collection of data, trained academics, the *Stubenforscher*, were in charge with the processing and classification. The emerging scholarly societies and learned journals participated in networks of correspondence worldwide, and exchanged scientific data. Based on the information they possessed, they could function as experts, political counselors, and political journalists – following the example set by scholars

13 Arno Seifert, “Conring und die Begründung der Staatenkunde”, in *Hermann Conring (1606-1681). Beiträge zum Leben und Werk*, ed. Michael Stolleis (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1983), 200-214.

14 Dr. M. Hugó, *Schwartner Márton és a statisztika állása a XVIII és XIX század fordulóján* [Martin Schwartner and the state of the art of statistics at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries] (Budapest, 1905), 73-74.

15 G. Achenwall, “Vorbereitung”, in *Idem, Staatsverfassung der heutigen vornehmsten Europäischen Reiche und Völker, seventh edition* (Göttigen, 1790), 9.

16 Bödeker, “Statistical Gaze”, 178, 184; Lowood, “Science for the Fatherland”, 210-211, 239-240.

like Schlözer, they all ran journals to publish their findings and to convey their readers the “useful truths”¹⁷.

The way the pragmatically yet vaguely defined ‘matters of state’ were interpreted by the followers of Conring, Achenwall and Schlözer, including the professors of state science at the university of Pest, is an interesting question in the history of statistics. All in all, the survey of the state consisted of two separate branches of inquiry. While the first one was more engaged with the functioning of the state as a political entity (Herzberg, Remer, Playfair, Peuchet, Donnant, Mannert, Ignaz de Luca), the second concerned itself with the functioning of the social realm¹⁸. Adepts of this second branch (M. Ch. Sprengel, Mader, A. F. Lüder, and John Sinclair) were interested in the synchronic and diachronic description of the population. Schwartner united ambitiously the two perspectives in his analysis, subordinating them to the normative vision of the absolutist state.

II. THE RELEVANCE OF THE STATE SCIENCES IN HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA

As higher learning was needed above all in a growing state bureaucracy under Theresa and her son Joseph II, an interest in university training at the end of the eighteenth century signals the emergence of new social groups in these positions, also in Hungary and the neighboring Transylvania. The reform of state administration opened new chances to the lower social elites, who advocated the ethos of learning as a way of social advancement. The training of clergymen and professors (the two tracks were close and co-dependent) at universities abroad had been an established custom since the Middle Ages, and intensified in an unprecedented way in the decades of the absolutist reforms. By the end of the eighteenth century, the University of Vienna was the most progressive university in the empire. Joseph von Sonnenfels taught here his courses on *Policey- und Kameralwissenschaft*, and his lectures on *Staatistik* were compulsory for future pastors and professors. For all the reservation of the Protestants, the university remained one of the most frequented institutes by students from Hungary and Transylvania – and more influential than its counterparts Jena, Halle, Göttingen, Berlin, Leiden, or Utrecht¹⁹.

17 Lowood, “Science for the Fatherland”, 223, 229-231.

18 J. E. Fabri, *Lehrbuch der Statistik* (Leipzig, 1792); G. Meusel, *Lehrbuch der Statistik* (Leipzig, 1804); Idem, *Literatur der Statistik* (Leipzig, 1790).

19 See I. Futaky, *Göttinga. A göttingeni Georg-August Egyetem magyarországi és erdélyi kapcsolatai a felvilágosodás idején és a reformkor kezdetén* [Göttingen. The Hungarian and Transylvanian contacts of the Georg-August University during the time of Enlightenment and the Reform Era] (Budapest: ELTE Levéltár, 2007); L. Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok németországi egyetemeken és 1789-1919* [Students from Hungary at German universities and colleges, 1789-1919] (Budapest: ELTE Levéltár, 2001); M. Szabó and L. Szögi, *Erdélyi peregrinusok. Erdélyi diákok európai egyetemeken, 1701-1849* [Transylvanian Peregrines. Transylvanian students at European universities] (Tîrgu Mureş: Mentor, 1998), 21, 23-25.

The destinations of university studies too differed by religion and language, although the bulk was of protestant German origin. Lutherans traditionally attended the Pietistic citadels (Halle, Jena, Tübingen and Heidelberg). Towards the end of the century the newly founded and exclusive Göttingen with its distinguished professors became attractive to many non-German Protestants as well. Hungarians joined their German compatriots relatively late at the Northern universities – studies in German were supposedly an extra burden for these students educated in Latin. Also, state science was first and foremost cultivated by Lutheran Germans, having at least some education at a German university – mostly in Göttingen. Hungarians started relatively later, and coined a Magyar-language word for the concept: *honismeret*. Last but not least, German *Staatenkunde/Landeskunde* was more prolific than its Hungarian counterpart; it strove to create an overall map of all the peoples of the country, a project that involved an exchange between Hungarian and German scholars. In contrast to the latter however, the inclusive regional aspect disappeared in Magyar *honismeret*, which served projects of national emancipation in culture and implicitly in politics.

The newly established University of Pest (previously in Nagyszombat, moved in 1777 to Buda and later to Pest) could not compete in fame and competences with the established German and Austrian counterparts. In the post-Josephist decades the university was still a laboratory of state-led reforms, where a curriculum of “political-cameralist sciences”, including historical geography, statistics, Hungarian common law, diplomatics and the history of the Hungarian state remained largely on paper²⁰. However, it did create a venue for scholars of Hungarian state science. Besides Schwartzner, the legal historian Béla Barits (1742-1813) published comparative statistics on Hungary, and the earlier source publications of Mathias Bél (1684-1749), György Pray (1723-1801) or István Katona (1732-1811), applied the methods of state science as well, that is, critical study of historical sources, statistics, comparison, and the employment of auxiliary disciplines such as diplomatics, genealogy, and chronology. However, none of them had the comprehensive and sophisticated view of Schwartzner, who introduced the modern concept of statistics, related to the functioning of state administration.

Schwartzner, who had studied at the university of Göttingen and was personally acquainted with Schlözer, was interested in measuring all the political and social *Merkwürdigkeiten*. As his monographer pointed out, his social analysis united the two separate streams of analysis of contemporary

20 B. Pálvölgyi, “A magyar állam-és jogtörténeti tanszék története a kezdetektől Eckhart Ferencig” [The history of the faculty of Hungarian state sciences and legal history from the beginnings to Ferenc Eckhart], in *Eckhart Ferenc emlékkönyv* [Festschrift for Ferenc Eckhart], ed. M. Barna (Budapest: Gondolat, 2004), 389-409; E. Ferenc, *A Jog- és Államtudományi Kar története, 1667-1935* [The history of the faculty of law and state sciences, 1667-1935] (Budapest, 1936).

scholarship of the state. His work was an inquiry into the population dynamics within the “social and political body”²¹. The combination of description and numerical analysis reflects the impact of English political arithmetic, possibly through the mediation of Süssmilch. Applying a similar conceptual grid and following in the footsteps of Lueder, Gatterer, and Schlözer, Schwartner interpreted his social data from a political-legal and historical perspective: the present state of the art had to be understood as the product of forces operating in the past²².

The most recent still-standing history of a state, that is, the systematic narrative of all state particularities (that is, of those who appear to have an impact on the happiness and value of a state), is called, with a Latin-German word *Statistik, Staatenkunde*, the present state, connoissance politique. Both the ties of this science with the history of states and politics, that is, *Staats-Klugheit*, as well as the differences between them are obvious²³.

This study of “state particularities” is thus an encyclopedic study including several branches of scholarship:

[Statistics] is like a sea, which unites in itself innumerable rivers as well as plants etc. It includes geography, the arithmetics of the country, agriculture, law, from scholarship to coins and mining, (from) church symbols to the army etc., but in particular the specific pragmatic history of a state told with the taste and philosophical mind of a Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Spittler, [Johannes von] Müller, Schmidt²⁴.

Thus, history gained a major role in descriptive statistics, in its capacity to establish causal relationship between the facts of different time segments²⁵. The critical description of the urban environment in Hungary, illustrates well his analytical method. Relating the number of towns to those of villages, he regards the degree of urbanization in comparison with the German states and Austria; and also relates it to the intensity of trade – in a historical perspective. His conclusion is that the social heterogeneity and the feudal binds are the reason for the weak urbanization of the country, and hinder the modernization of production and trade²⁶.

21 Márki Hugó, *Schwartner Márton*, 89.

22 Schwartner, *Statistik*, Vorrede III-VI.

23 Schwartner, *Statistik*, 2.

24 Schwartner, *Statistik*, 3-4.

25 See here the theoretical reference work by Gatterer that claims that the historical explanation of statistics is the only truly scientific method. Next to Schlözer and Achenwall, Gatterer's work constituted the methodological basis of Schwartner's statistics. Gatterer, *Ideal einer allgemeinen Weltstatistik* (Göttingen, 1773), 15.

26 See sub-chapter “Verhältniß der Städten zu den Landleuten”, 112-115.

III. THE ETHNIC TAXONOMY OF SCHWARTNER'S *STATISTIK*

The author classified the population by ethnic categories and stages of education and improvement. The word 'nation' was used here in the sense of a status group demarcated not only by confession and rank in the political system but first of all by a common language and history. Cultural refinement was related to the ability of the national tongues to serve as a vehicle of scholarly communication. What resulted was a hierarchical arrangement of all ethnic constituents according to their level of improvement. Long-standing ethnic *topoi* from earlier descriptions were reinterpreted on the basis of contemporary learned journalism and scholarship, including Schlözer's works. This hierarchic vision made a great career in the ensuing ethnic historiographies from the region, but also in the general domain of scholarly and artistic creation, and was validated by a German-speaking international community of experts.

Similar to his teacher Schlözer²⁷, Schwartner distinguished between "main-nations" and "auxiliary-nations". The former included the most numerous ethnic clusters; Hungarians, Germans, Slavs and "Vlachs", while the latter comprised the lesser groups of Greek-Orthodox Romanians ("Czinczaren"), Macedonians (dealing with agriculture), Armenians, the so-called "Clementiner" (i. e. people of Albanian origins, who in the aftermath of Ottoman domination left via Serbia to Slavonia, and arrived relatively recently to Hungary), Roma and Jews (103). Schwartner did not comment on his taxonomy, but we know that Schlözer used the distinction to differentiate between people with a bearing on the great historical events, while according the lesser nations a mere stunt role. Within the first category, so-called ancient or original Hungarians take the place of pride (although their accurate number cannot be told in the absence of a linguistic statistics, as the author remarks), that is, Hungarian-speaking "Asians" who colonized the Carpathian basin under the chieftain Arpad. The author distinguishes between these 'pure' Hungarians, who dwell in the plains of Hungary (while "in the cold mountains nowhere is the Hungarian language dominant"), and those who adopted the language later, when assimilating to the Hungarian social elite (the nobility). He notes the statistical minority of Hungarians in most of the free royal towns (Calvinist Debrecen is one of the main exceptions) – shocking news for his contemporaries – and explains this with the characteristic preference of the steppe people for the open spaces. He estimates their statistical extension as larger than those of the German, Vlach or Slavic residents (89-90).

The Slavs, the second largest ethnic category, are regarded with distrust and fearful contempt. Schwartner compares the past glory of the medieval Bohemian kingdom with the present domination of the French. He notes that the Slavs – although composed of numerous regional clusters they are taken as a single

27 A. L. Schlözer, *Vorstellung seiner Universalhistorie* (Göttingen/Gotha, 1772-1773), see Lindenfeld, 42-43.

category on the territory of Hungary – are the most prolific nation, and “wherever they strike roots, they wither the Germans and Hungarians around themselves” (90). The Germans constitute the third largest “main-nation”. This ethno-linguistic category unites all the settlers from the early Middle Ages until Maria Theresa’s Swabians, Bavarians, Austrians and other German-speaking segments, disregarding their rank, religion, and political status. The Transylvanian Saxons and the German Lutheran inhabitants of the Zips are all treated as the same ethnic cluster (97-98). They are presented along the known historiographic commonplaces about their industriousness and religiosity; even their still felt “cosmopolitanism” and their role as colonizers and civilizers “from America to India”.

The fourth main category is the Romanians (“Vlachs”) – a remarkable distinction in itself considering the condescending tone of contemporary scholarship. Indeed, the prominent role of the Slavs is not surprising (who do not acquire the empathy of the author, however) given the visibility of Bohemia and Croatia in the Habsburg realm, but much more so the attention accorded to Romanians. Did the author recognize Romanians as a significant political force? The ensuing ethnographic description seems to be at odds with such speculations; as we shall see below, Romanians are presented as numerically relevant, but not in terms of enlightened virtues. However, the sheer number is in itself a political factor, as the author, trained in political arithmetics, continues to repeat. Here we can put our fingers on Schwartner extending the quantitative tools inherited from Schlözer with a qualitative dimension. Indeed, Romanians (as well as Slavs) are seen in their “threatening” demographic growth vis-à-vis the less prolific Germans and Hungarians. Schwartner mentions with skepticism their alleged Roman descent (“is without historical proofs”), especially in view of the widespread German (and Hungarian) bias towards their moral character. Accordingly, “the main virtues and faults of this people, not without importance in the course of men’s history and in Hungarian statistics, are frugality combined with a dislike of work, patience combined with revengefulness, and superstitions without a healthy ethics”. Their allegedly simple lifestyle (corn in the garden, colorful dress and jewelry) is a further “proof” for equating them with exotic “people in faraway parts of the world,” and by no means as co-citizens (100). It would be futile to look for evidence of even so modest, but in itself significant, improvements in the Romanian educational system (more than 2000 new schools only in Transylvania thanks to Theresian and Josephist reforms!) in this schematic and biased look.

Among the “auxiliary people” involved the account there are two groups who intrigue the author, the Jews and Roma (Zigeuner). They figure in the same subchapter because of their “nomad” lifestyle despite the attempt of the emperor to settle them. It is noteworthy that while German commerce is regarded with respect, the Jews earn only contempt as people who “do not saw and do not spin, and whose almost only trade is commerce, especially the peddling in the countryside” (103-104). The trade in money is another common feature of the two groups, although, as the author notes, the lack of education makes the Roma

more perceptible towards Christian values, while the Jews cling to their “senseless superstition”. Otherwise, the Roma²⁸ too are portrayed along the existing historiographical conventions that cast them as the noble savages of the country:

The Gypsies are in Hungary, like everywhere under almighty’s sun, pupils who are recognizable easily and without hesitation, and who are not to be changed either through the contact with the local inhabitants, or through various *polizey*-orders, nor through the fear from the galley and hunger’s torture and contempt. Their main forms of sustenance are the fiddle, the sledgehammer, the horse trade, palmistry and stealing (106).

Besides their legendary musical talent (like the “Zigeuner Orphaeus” Mihály Barna and the “Zigeuner Sappho” Panna Czinka), and emotional compatibility with Hungarians (and alleged lack of “sympathy” with the Germans), Schwartner alludes to an interesting statistical detail, cited also by other contemporaries, namely to their Hungarian assimilation. It is not clear whether the comment “Maria Theresa let them called new-Hungarians, and they are very satisfied with this new name” is meant ironically vis-à-vis Hungarians or not (107).

The diffusion of the *topoi* of ethnic ‘othering’ should be interpreted against the backdrop of a growing scholarly public. The fact that Schwartner wrote his book around the same time with other important works with ethnographic accounts and incorporated them in the later editions of his statistics (Schlözer’s *Kritische Sammlungen zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, *Geschichte des Ungarischen Reichs und seiner Nebenländer* by Johann Christian Engel, *Die Geschichten der Ungern und Ihrer Landsassen* by Johann Aurelius Fessler, or the travelogue by the mineralogist Robert Townson etc.) may be interpreted as a proof for the relatively broad consensus about the staples of ethnic portraiture as common knowledge²⁹. Like Schwartner’s statistics, the works cited above described Hungary and/or Transylvania along very similar interpretative lines. Fessler and Engel too distinguished between the “main peoples” and “subsidiary peoples” of the medieval Hungarian kingdom, according to ethnic descent, religion, habitat, occupation, and improvement – but also legal status, political rights and privileges. The political stance of these authors allows perhaps for more reciprocity: their acknowledgement of the Hungarian political nation rests on the latter’s respect for the ‘natives’ of their land: Germans, Croats, Serbians, Romanians. This is the ground on which, in their opinion, Hungarian national politics could be legitimately represented in the Habsburg Empire.

28 Schwartner, *Statistik*, 106.

29 A. L. von Schlözer, *Kritische Sammlungen zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, I-III (1795-97); *A’ Magyar nyelv-mivelő Tarsasag Munkainak első darabja*, ed. A. György (Szebenben, 1796); J. von Engel, *Geschichte des ungarischen Reiches und seiner Nebenländer*, Halle, 1797-1804. I-IV, vol. 49 of *Welthistorie* (Halle, 1796); Robert Townson, *Travels in Hungary in the Year 1793* (London, 1797); J. A. Fessler, *Die Geschichten der Ungern und Ihrer Landsassen. Erster Theil. Die Ungern unter herzogen und Königen aus Arpad’s Stamme*, 10 vols. (Leipzig, 1815-1825).

Such 'rankings' of the ethno-religious clusters strike today's reader as authoritative and patronizing. Exoticizing the lower ranks of the society can be read as a self-legitimizing rhetoric of the new state-employed elites of learning. Yet, the final purpose was more than that, it was the criterium of governmentality: such stereotypical and standardized depictions "insisted on properties that all people, though culturally different, should have. Such properties were conducive to the realization of a 'civil society'. These criteria served as filters; some people were fit, while others were not fit to participate in the construction of a new society. However, membership to this imagined community of builders of a new society was open to all"³⁰. Thus, the most immediate function of ethnic taxonomies, created by the state-employed experts of state science and in particular, of statistics, was to chart the essential characteristics, in Linnean fashion, of each social cluster, in regard with their capacity to integrate into a functional society.

Thus Schwartzner's social vision is deeply grounded in the values and scholarly convictions of his time. Nevertheless, the handbook is an unprecedented comprehensive reservoir of ordered knowledge about the domestic administration, commerce, educational system, political organization of the state, which is its chief merit. The entire work is permeated by the will to strike a balance – with the aid of critical source analysis – amidst the growing mass of available information and within an extremely variegated learned public, where popular charlatans override the earnest historian, where uninformed but influential scholars abroad (Schwartzner does not stop chastising the fault of French in spreading inadequate or false facts about Hungary) are given more credit than the lesser known but thorough academics at home, etc. Indeed, the author's concern for a comprehensive, up-to-date and verifiable corpus of sources (scrupulously cited and commented in the introductory chapter) shows how difficult it has become by his time to gather and assess each voice in the international cacophony of learned press.

Impartial analysis demanded the use of a great variety of sources, both contemporary and historical, that Schwartzner enlisted in his introduction. These included original documents, after being submitted, according to the latest Göttingen methods, to a critical proof of their authenticity and content (one should note that Schwartzner taught diplomatics, and not state science, at the University of Pest, hence his expertise in the auxiliary sciences of history). He also consulted the contemporary scientific press and books (*Merkur von Ungern*, *Magyar Museum*, *Magyar Orfeus*, *Mindenek Gyűjtemény*), travel accounts about Hungary (by Samuel Benkö, Samuel Tessedik, Benzur), foreign press and literature about Hungary (*Magyar Hirmondó*, *Wiener Diarium*, *Hamburgische Korrespondent*, *Magyar Kurir*, *Magyar Hirmondo*, *Magyar Merkur*)³¹. He also used the results of the conscriptions effected under Joseph II.

30 András Vári, "The Functions of Ethnic Stereotypes in Austria and Hungary in the early Nineteenth Century", in *Creating the Other. Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wigfield (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003). 39-55, 39.

31 Schwartzner, *Statistik* 9.

It also shows his love-hate feelings towards the chief addressee of his book, the Hungarian patriot. These mixed feelings originated partly from his manifest loyalty to the crown (sometimes a rhetorical statement, at other places having the air of political opportunism), but also from the internal logic of his discipline. His statistical gaze was by definition the one of the imperial administrative center, having as its chief priority the happiness of all. In this centralist perspective, the interest of Hungarian patriots was only one, albeit no doubt important, aspect. This is how Schwartzner's fatherly worries and impatience at the enfolding of Hungarian scholarship on the international scene can be explained, his chidings of its "far too narrow domestic horizon", its "biases" and its "incomprehensiveness"³².

IV. TRANSYLVANIAN EMULATIONS

There are no studies on the scholarly exchange between the professors in Pest and scholars in the neighbor Transylvania, but there is evidence of mutual familiarity in the prefaces, introductions and bibliographies. Schwartzner's *Statistik* was widely known, and *vice-versa*, the book betrays a fair knowledge of recent statistical publications on the province in all languages. Especially the Lutheran Transylvanian Saxons had a considerable tradition in the practice of state sciences since the seventeenth century, and since the formidable impact of Martin Schmeizel (1679-1747), who had taught state sciences at the University of Halle in the first half of the century. On this basis, older patriotic histories were broadened and enriched by modern methods of source publication, geopolitical contextualization, and source criticism³³.

The editorial article of the first Transylvanian scholarly journal written in a vernacular *Siebenbürgische Quartalschrift* also began with a similar categorization. Its author, Daniel Neugeboren, classified the Transylvanian population by ethnic categories and stages of education and improvement. Here too, Romanians were situated at the lower end of this cultural scale; presented as a population of noble (Roman) descent, although uncultivated because of their social and political status in Transylvania³⁴. The case of the "two Hungarian tribes", the Hungarians and the Hungarian-speaking Szekler, both "noble nations" (i. e. having political representatives, along the Saxons in the provincial Diet), was more complex. The Magyars were in possession of a glorious scholarly past in the Late Middle Ages, but the centuries-long barbarism of the Turkish Wars, internal conflicts

32 Schwartzner, *Statistik*, 2nd edition (Ofen, 1809), 21.

33 See especially János Szalárdi, *Síralmas Magyar krónikája*, reprint (Budapest, 1980), Georg Krauss, *Siebenbürgische Kronik des Schäßburger Stadtschreibers Georg Kraus 1608-1665*, reprint ed. by the Presidential Committee of the Society for Transylvanian Landeskunde, part I (Vienna, 1862), part II (Vienna, 1864).

34 Neugeboren, "Ueber die Lage und Hindernisse", 6.

and religious skirmishes eroded “taste and scholarship”. Neugeboren closed his survey with the Saxons who, as he suggested, had the best perspectives for “Enlightenment and refining the taste”. Accordingly, Saxon *Nationalgeist* was enhanced by political (Saxon constitution) and ecclesiastic unity (among the Transylvanian “nations” only the Saxons were not divided by confessional differences but belonged to the Lutheran Church). This ‘othering’ ethno-civilizational hierarchy is again familiar from Schwartner.

The focus remained on Saxon history, religion and education, but there was interest in the Transylvanian Hungarian culture as well. Telling is the silence about Romanians – the practitioners of Transylvanian *Landeskunde* had little appreciation for the intellectual achievements of the emerging Romanian scholarship, and for its emancipating scope. Lucas Joseph Marienburg (1770-1821), author of a later treatise on Transylvanian *Landeskunde*, had only a contemptuous half-sentence in regard with the “uncivilized Romanians” and their “foolish political attempts”³⁵. This is but a covert hint to Transylvanian Romanian attempts of political emancipation, and the widespread aversion of the privileged minority vis-à-vis the underprivileged majority³⁶.

The insufficiency of Magyar in scholarly exchange, mentioned by Neugeboren in the *Quartalschrift*, was a chronic concern of Hungarian scholars, as put also by György Aranka (1737-1817), the politically well-connected polymath, demanding “books written about our fatherland, so that all the sons and daughters of the fatherland have the opportunity to read them in their own language without learning with pain foreign languages” but also the works of classical authors³⁷. Aranka pleaded for vernacular learning in order to broaden the circle of the educated. He argued that unless the written sources of scholarly innovation are accessible in the native tongue, the former would be eternally confined to the educated and multilingual elite. Against German advocates of improvement he urged the introduction of Hungarian as the language of administration, legislation and science, in order to raise the “dividing curtain” separating the educated and the ignorant, and to ‘indigenize’ Enlightenment. For the Hungarian emulator of German language reformers, the linguistic issues like translation of scholarly works, the writing of modern grammar, dictionaries and lexica, their diffusion through public libraries and museums, *catalogues raisonnés*, and reading rooms, was as important as the collection and systematization of data on the fatherland³⁸.

35 L. J. Marienburg, *Geographie des Grossfürstenthums Siebenbürgen*, reprint (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1987), 95.

36 See Klaus Heitmann, “Die Rumänen Siebenbürgens aus deutscher Sicht im 19. Jahrhundert”, in *Das Bild des Anderen in Siebenbürgen*, 33-56.

37 Cited by Sándor Enyedi in *Aranka György Erdélyi társaságai* [The Transylvanian societies of György Aranka], ed. S. Enyedi (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1988), 9-39, 12-13.

38 Aranka György, 43-59.

Similarly to the Saxon practice, Hungarian *honismeret* intended to convey an encyclopedic knowledge of the human and physical environment. The more knowledge the state accumulated about its intellectual and skilled capital, argued Aranka, the more effectively material culture could be administered and improved. Thus, “this subject [...] has little benefit concerning the society, but is of great utility concerning the patria, and it is the task of the noble Estates of the Land to publicize it”³⁹. Yet the encompassing supra-national interest disappeared from Magyar *honismeret*. Its narrower focus made it similar to the practice of the Romanian *Școala Ardeleană* (Transylvanian School), initiating studies on national history and language. Hungarian *honismeret* urged self-assertion against the domination of a more advanced German culture, of the perceived cultural and political superiority of Transylvanian Saxons. I know of no Romanian corresponding word to *Landeskunde/honismeret*, and the only contemporary work known to me written in this genre was the one authored by Ion Budai-Deleanu (1760-1820) – and about Bukovina⁴⁰.

What about the lower end of the ethno-civilizational hierarchy? Did the natives ever talk back? Romanian historians challenged the denigrating collective image with politically charged narratives. Sorin Mitu has demonstrated how the subsequent generations of Enlightenment national historiography attempted to come to terms with German, Saxon and Hungarian ‘otherings’. The ethnic histories of Transylvanian Romanians from the mid-eighteenth century until the Reform Era use historical and philological research to demonstrate the political continuity and noble character of this ‘fourth nation’. Their vision too was rooted in the aristocratic vision of society; it was not the existing political order they challenged, but only the relegation of Romanians into the realm of barbarians and thus their discursive and de facto exclusion from political participation⁴¹.

This feature became even stronger in local (i. e. in Hungary) emulations, colored by conflicting political attitudes. The Hungarian case is another proof how easily modern scholarship combined with conservative agendas; its social meliorism did not translate into mobility. Its improvement-oriented vision merely reconfigured traditional hierarchies of the heterogeneous society into new ones, without leveling them out. This ambiguity was clearly visible in a static social vision that classified society according to social and political status, backed state-led reforms of education, but did not intend to introduce a thorough transformation of the society. Ultimately, the ethno-national narratives emerging from this background could not be but polemical and dichotomist. The appropriation of wider European scholarly discourses was closely shaped by the immediate social contexts, and as long as their relationship remained asymmetric and conflictual, there was no chance for rapprochement.

39 Aranka György, 93.

40 “Kurzgefasste Bemerkungen über Bukovina” (manuscript, 1803), published first in Romanian as “Scurte observații asupra Bucovinei” [Short notes about Bukovina], *Gazeta Bucovinei*, IV (1894).

41 Sorin Mitu, *National Identity of Romanians in Transylvania* (New York: CEU Press, 2001).

Les images de l'Espagne chez les économistes napolitains des Lumières: le cas de Filangieri

JESÚS ASTIGARRAGA

I. INTRODUCTION

Il est indiscutable de nos jours que les Lumières napolitaines furent un puissant foyer de création de la pensée des Lumières. Durant une bonne partie du XVIII^e siècle, ses principaux protagonistes, de Giannone ou Vico jusqu'à Galiani, Genovesi, Filangieri et Pagano, se montrèrent capables de rester pleinement en contact avec les principaux centres des Lumières européennes et d'en extraire ainsi la matière première nécessaire pour donner forme à un intense mouvement intellectuel et réformateur doté de caractéristiques relativement singulières. De son sein surgirent diverses productions intellectuelles d'une importance indiscutable, dont l'influence finit, dans plusieurs cas, par franchir les frontières du *Regno delle Due Sicilie*. Bien qu'ayant surtout pour objet le *Regno* lui-même, les principaux traités des Lumières napolitaines sont d'une richesse extraordinaire quant aux informations, aux appréciations, aux jugements qu'on y trouve concernant les autres réalités nationales, y compris celles situées au-delà des confins européens. Des textes comme les *Lezioni di commercio* de Genovesi, les *Dialogues sur le commerce des blés* de Galiani ou la *Scienza della legislazione* de Filangieri peuvent être lus en suivant le fil de l'immense quantité d'informations qu'on y trouve concernant divers aspects de la réalité européenne ou les différences que ses auteurs percevaient entre elle et les réalités asiatique

ou américaine, non moins diverses. Leurs commentaires, qui abordaient les dimensions politiques, économiques, sociales, culturelles ou religieuses de toutes ces réalités, étaient utilisés tantôt pour illustrer leurs idées dans un souci de réalisme, tantôt, à de nombreuses reprises, dans une intention politique: celle de placer le lecteur devant un jeu de miroirs destiné à l'éclairer, sur lequel on projetait des 'images' ou des 'modèles' qui ne concordaient pas forcément avec la réalité des faits, qualifiés par les auteurs de 'positifs' ou 'négatifs' en fonction de l'optique concrète et de l'objectif central de leurs œuvres.

L'Espagne fut en ce sens un objet permanent d'observation et de réflexion pour les auteurs napolitains des Lumières. En ce qui concerne l'objet de ce travail, la question prit une importance particulière lorsqu'à partir des années 1750, l'Économie Politique commença à se consolider et à s'imposer comme l'une des sciences majeures des Lumières napolitaines, du fait principalement de Genovesi et de son enseignement dans la Chaire *intieriana* de *Commercio e Meccanica*. À partir de là, l'Espagne apparut dans l'ensemble de la littérature économique napolitaine comme un objet d'informations, d'analyses et de recommandations. Celles-ci finirent par forger un imaginaire économique de la Monarchie qui circula au sein des Lumières napolitaines durant la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle. Cet imaginaire était de nature composite, car le regard porté par les auteurs des Lumières napolitains sur la réalité espagnole passée ou présente n'était ni unitaire ni statique. Elle alimenta au contraire un ensemble d'images (au pluriel) et se modifia au fil du temps, à mesure que les auteurs napolitains eux-mêmes reformulaient leurs propres désirs de réforme. En ce sens, le bilan sur l'Espagne présenté, par exemple, par Genovesi ou Galiani était bien différent de celui de Longano ou de Filangieri, tout comme celui de ces derniers l'était de Palmieri ou de Galanti.

Si l'on veut expliquer l'intérêt de ces auteurs pour l'Espagne, il ne suffit pas d'évoquer la situation politique du *Regno delle Due Sicilie*, enclave bourbonnienne lié à la branche royale espagnole, ni les similitudes bien connues – perceptibles et même exprimées par les auteurs napolitains et espagnols du XVIII^e siècle – concernant les conditions économiques et sociales de la Monarchie et du *Regno*. Nombreux sont les fils argumentaires communs qui tissent les différents points de vue sur l'Espagne que l'on trouve, par exemple, chez Genovesi, Filangieri ou Galanti. Les allusions à la cruauté de la colonisation réalisée par l'Espagne en Amérique, à la rigidité de ses structures religieuses ou au caractère inadmissible du pouvoir d'intromission de l'Inquisition sont des aspects communément partagés. Cependant, concernant le thème privilégié dans le présent article, la question centrale réside dans la préoccupation commune aux napolitains quant aux raisons pour lesquelles un pays comme l'Espagne, possesseur de terres abondantes, de richesses naturelles, de colonies et de métaux précieux avait fini par devenir pauvre, dépendant du pouvoir manufacturier étranger et relégué au rang de puissance commerciale secondaire. Il s'agissait pour eux d'apporter une réponse à la question primordiale qui, depuis les écrits de jeunesse de Montesquieu, avait traversé toutes les Lumières européennes. Pour cette raison, il n'est guère

étonnant qu'il faille interpréter les différences de vues qui se produisirent dans le *Regno* sur cette question dans le contexte plus large des changements que connut l'image de l'Espagne dans l'ensemble des Lumières européennes à mesure que l'on avançait dans le XVIII^e siècle et que progressait la culture des Lumières.

II. GAETANO FILANGIERI ET SA *SCIENZA DELLA LEGISLAZIONE*

Comme tant d'autres traités fondamentaux des Lumières napolitaines, la *Scienza della Legislazione* regorge de nouvelles, d'informations et de jugements se rapportant à diverses réalités nationales. Ce versant réaliste de l'ouvrage est d'une extraordinaire richesse: bien que l'immense érudition de Filangieri connaisse des failles¹, celui-ci passe avec une relative aisance des peuples anciens aux peuples modernes, ou des réalités éloignées de la Chine et du Japon à celles, plus proches, du continent européen. Au fil des pages, celui-ci se révèle très divers quant au contenu – juridique, politique, économique ou autre – des lois de ses différentes nations, mais apparaît aussi comme profondément remis en cause, dans son essence même, par le processus constitutionnel inauguré par la toute jeune République des États-Unis d'Amérique. Ce regard empirique sur les différentes réalités de son temps ne brouille pourtant pas le point de vue explicitement normatif qui traverse, par ailleurs, toute la *Scienza*. L'ouvrage se donne pour but de proposer une réforme de la législation à même d'affronter la situation "artificieuse, obscure, compliquée et inadaptée au présent état des choses"² qui est celle des codes de lois (en particulier européens) dans la dernière partie du XVIII^e siècle, tout en adoptant une démarche différente du point de vue empirique qui domine à l'époque. Selon Filangieri, celui-ci a en effet pesé sur l'élaboration du livre le plus influent de son époque, *L'Esprit des lois* de Montesquieu, contre lequel, dans une large mesure, il écrit son propre ouvrage³.

Comme cela a été montré à plusieurs reprises, la *Scienza* est organisée autour de l'étude détaillée des deux caractères que doit posséder, selon Filangieri, toute loi correctement énoncée: sa "bonté absolue" (*bontà assoluta*) et sa "bonté relative" (*bontà relativa*). Tandis que la première doit montrer la cohérence des lois avec les principes du Droit Naturel et, par là même, avec un ensemble de règles générales de la morale, communes à toutes les nations et à tous les gouvernements, quelle que soit leur composition politique, économique, religieuse ou autre, la seconde,

1 Ainsi que le montre l'édition critique détaillée et importante de la *Scienza della legislazione*, récemment publiée par le Centro di Studi sull'Illuminismo europeo G. Stiffoni (Venise, 2003), qui a été utilisée pour ce travail.

2 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, *Introduzione*, 18.

3 Comme l'a analysé en détails V. Ferrone dans *La società giusta ed equa. Repubblicanesimo e diritti dell'uomo in Gaetano Filangieri* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2003). Un jugement très intéressant sur l'ensemble de l'oeuvre de Montesquieu, dont Filangieri considère qu'elle se limite à un point de vue reposant sur 'l'être', au lieu du 'devoir être', se trouve dans la *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, *Piano ragionato dell'opera*, 23.

déjà plus éloignée de la logique jusnaturaliste, est entendue comme un “agrégat de ces principes généraux auxquels doivent se référer constamment les [principes] particuliers” et qui est formulée en prenant en compte sept conditions précises: le type de gouvernement, le ‘génie’ et la ‘nature’ du peuple, le climat, le terrain et les conditions naturelles, la situation géographique, l’extension, l’état d’‘enfance’ ou de ‘maturité’ du peuple, et, en dernier lieu, la religion et les coutumes⁴. Plus précisément, l’adaptation correcte de ces principes généraux aux différentes réalités concrètes constitue un parcours obligé si l’on prétend que ces codes soient conformes à la double condition de la bonté ‘absolue’ et ‘relative’ des lois. Pour cette raison même, la *Scienza*, loin d’être un projet strictement rationaliste et absolu, s’apparente plutôt à une méthode relativiste qui oblige à prendre en compte les particularités naturelles, économiques, politiques ou culturelles de chaque pays lorsqu’on veut agir sur la réforme de la législation dans l’un d’entre eux⁵.

En même temps, parce qu’il met l’accent sur le caractère variable des lois et des institutions, Filangieri fait en sorte que son ouvrage ne soit pas une simple reconstruction utopique rationnelle mais un authentique programme de gouvernement, pragmatique et gradualiste, qu’il est nécessaire d’adapter aux différentes réalités nationales. Pour cette raison, son ouvrage, toujours porteur d’un regard qui s’étend au-delà de l’horizon du *Mezzogiorno*, comporte nombre de références concrètes sur des réformes possibles des lois dans une bonne partie des pays européens: le Napolitain s’explique avec la même aisance lorsqu’il se réfère au noyau le plus avancé de la politique et de l’économie dans l’Europe de son temps, c’est-à-dire la Grande Bretagne, la Hollande ou la France, ou à des situations plus périphériques comme la Suède de Gustave III, la Russie de Catherine II, l’Espagne de Charles III ou, bien sûr, la Naples de Ferdinand IV. En fait, cette énorme somme de conseils et de recommandations précises, provenant sans nul doute de la vision profondément cosmopolite avec laquelle Filangieri entreprend son ouvrage, peut expliquer en partie son extraordinaire succès international durant les décennies de transition du XVIII^e au XIX^e siècles⁶ et constitue certainement une bonne raison de réfléchir au sort qu’il connut dans l’aire géographique des Lumières hispaniques.

Comme cela a été récemment démontré, la *Scienza* a connu dans cet espace un succès indiscutable⁷. Le traité y a eu une énorme circulation, qui n’est bien sûr pas

4 Cf. *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, *Piano ragionato dell’opera*, 21 et ss., ainsi que les chapitres IV et V du livre I.

5 S. Cotta, *Gaetano Filangieri e il problema della legge* (Torino: G. Giappichelli, 1954), 104-108.

6 Pour une vision complète, cf. A. Trampus, “La genesi e le edizioni della *Scienza della legislazione*”, en *Scienza della legislazione*, vol. VII, V-LXXXII.

7 Sur cette question et ce que nous exposons par la suite, nous renvoyons à nos travaux: “Victorián de Villava, traductor de Gaetano Filangieri”, *Cuadernos Aragoneses de Economía*, 7 (1997): 171-186 ; “La prima versione spagnola della *Scienza della Legislazione* di Gaetano Filangieri” et “I traduttori spagnoli di Filangieri e il risveglio del dibattito costituzionale (1780-1839)”, en *Diritti e costituzione. L’opera di Gaetano Filangieri e la sua fortuna europea*, ed. A. Trampus (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 61-84 et 231-290, respectivement; avec J. Usoz, “G. Filangieri’s

étrangère à celle des auteurs des Lumières napolitains dans leur ensemble, comme Genovesi ou Galiani. Cette diffusion s'est matérialisée à travers une série d'écrits de différente nature, sous des formats aussi divers que la traduction, la réplique, le commentaire, le compte-rendu de presse ou l'abrégé. La pièce maîtresse du dispositif fut les six traductions, intégrales ou partielles, de la *Scienza*, même si la diffusion profita également des diverses traductions espagnoles de l'*Elogio storico* de Tommasi (1788), des *Riflessioni politiche su l'ultima legge del Sovrano* de Filangieri (1774) et du *Commentaire sur l'ouvrage de Filangieri* de Constant (1822). De plus, comme le fit justement observer Venturi⁸, cette diffusion fut d'une grande portée temporelle, car elle commença en 1784 et se prolongea jusqu'en 1839. La *Scienza* fut en effet l'un des textes du XVIII^e siècle qui connut la plus grande répercussion lors du siècle suivant, au cours duquel parurent cinq des six traductions dont il fit l'objet. Cet ouvrage fut l'un des textes canoniques des générations des Lumières tardives espagnoles, dont l'influence fut également très intense dans l'univers hispano-américain, du Rio de la Plata jusqu'au Mexique et la Nouvelle Grenade⁹. Or, il est fort probable que les nombreux lecteurs qu'eut la *Scienza* dans l'univers hispanique au cours des soixante années qui suivirent sa publication ne restèrent pas indifférents devant les allusions incisives que le Napolitain faisait à l'Espagne dès les premières pages de son ouvrage.

III. L'ESPAGNE COMME 'MODÈLE NÉGATIF'

Tout au long de la *Scienza*, son auteur fait montre d'une étroite proximité avec la réalité espagnole. Cette constatation qui, comme nous l'avons signalé, s'explique par les conditions mêmes de la situation politique du *Regno*, correspond aussi au fait que l'ouvrage fut ébauché durant les années 1770 et 1780, c'est-à-dire au moment précis où la circulation des idées entre l'Espagne et Naples était la plus intense¹⁰. Au vu de la grande proximité entre ces deux situations politiques, il n'est

Political Economy in the 18th-century Spain: *Reflexiones económico-políticas* (1792) by Francisco de Paula del Rey, *Il pensiero economico italiano*, 13 (2005): 51-77; "Regionalismo económico y circulación internacional de las ideas económicas. La *Scienza della legislazione* de G. Filangieri en Aragón (1784-1823)", n^o spécial de la revue *Trimestre* de la Università di Teramo sur *La cultura dell'Illuminismo europeo. Politica, Diritti, Idee*, 28 (2005): 31-72; "La Ilustración napolitana imputada. Críticas y censuras a la *Scienza della legislazione* de G. Filangieri en la España de finales del siglo XVIII", *Nuevo Mundo-Mundos Nuevos* (2007), <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/index6911.html>.

8 "Nota introduttiva", en *Illuministi italiani. Riformatori napoletani*. Gaetano Filangieri. Scritti (Torino: Einaudi, 1962), LV.

9 Une présentation relativement actualisée de cette question se trouve dans les diverses études monographiques publiées par G. Verdo, F. Morelli et E. Richard autour du projet 'La route de Naples aux Indes Occidentales', dans la revue *Nuevo Mundo-Mundos Nuevos*, 6 (2006) et 7 (2007), <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/index1816.html> et <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/index3438.html>. Pour une vision d'ensemble, voir F. Morelli, "Filangieri e l'altra America: Storia di una ricezione", *Rivista storica italiana*, 119 (2007): 88-111.

10 On peut consulter le travail pionnier de F. Venturi, "Economisti e riformatori spagnoli e italiani del '700", *Rivista storica italiana*, 74 (1962): 532-561. Cf. également, J. Astigarraga, "Diálogo económico en la otra Europa. Las traducciones española de los economistas de la

guère étonnant que Filangieri fasse référence à l'Espagne avec une telle aisance, allant jusqu'à signaler, dans un passage de son livre, qu'il est disposé à élaborer un "plan de législation" précis sur les réformes dont ce pays, selon lui, a besoin¹¹.

Le Napolitain semble disposer d'informations suffisantes pour aborder cette tâche: dans son ouvrage, il livre sur l'Espagne des informations et des opinions personnelles de nature très diverse, juridiques, politiques et économiques mais aussi culturelles ou éducatives. S'il existe un trait qui relie toutes ces informations, c'est que l'Espagne y est très souvent présentée comme un modèle 'négatif'. Dans son analyse détaillée des codes législatifs 'anciens' et 'modernes', Filangieri mêle habituellement les éloges et les critiques. Sur le plan strictement politique, on connaît bien son analyse détaillée des systèmes monarchique et républicain, présentant un bilan relativement équilibré de leurs avantages et de leurs inconvénients, ses critiques pointilleuses du 'gouvernement mixte' britannique et ses éloges de la nouvelle réalité républicaine forgée sur le sol américain par les anciennes colonies britanniques. Sur un plan plus strictement économique, ses principaux éloges sont adressés à l'Europe riche de son temps, à la Hollande, l'Angleterre ou Genève ("bien qu'elle n'ait pas [de débouchés sur] la mer"), mais ces pays n'échappent pas pour autant à ses reproches: la vigoureuse république hollandaise, que Filangieri considère comme le pays le plus prospère de l'Europe de son temps, court le risque de voir son hégémonie se restreindre, du fait que le fondement de ses richesses ne réside pas dans l'agriculture. En ce qui concerne la Grande Bretagne, son analyse détaillée sur les avantages qu'entraînerait, pour le développement harmonieux des pays européens, une perte graduelle de son pouvoir commercial et un changement profond de sa façon de diriger ses colonies, se retrouve à plusieurs reprises.

La rhétorique des éloges et des critiques qui traverse toute la *Scienza* n'atteint cependant pas l'Espagne. Celle-ci est dépeinte à plusieurs reprises comme un pays qui a promulgué des lois inadéquates et mis en œuvre des politiques erronées, du fait de la responsabilité de législateurs "peu éclairés (*ilustrados*) et peu cosmopolites"¹². En conséquence de quoi, l'Espagne est non seulement un pays économiquement appauvri et culturellement arriéré, mais également soumis à ce genre de codes de lois 'barbares' que Filangieri s'emploie à censurer sans concession tout au long de son ouvrage. Cela atteint un point tel que, selon lui, l'état de décadence dans lequel se trouve l'Espagne, loin de s'atténuer, semble s'être encore accentué au cours des dernières années. Preuve en est faite lorsque l'on considère l'évolution des autres nations européennes: les "glorieux efforts du présent gouvernement" espagnol n'ont pas été capables de promouvoir une "révolution universelle" à la manière, par exemple, de ce qui s'est passé dans

Ilustración napolitana (A. Genovesi, F. Galiani y G. Filangieri)", *Cromohs*, 9 (2004): 1-21, http://www.cromohs.unifi.it/9_2004/astigarraga.html.

¹¹ *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, chap. XIII, 144.

¹² *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, chap. III, 57.

la Suède de Gustave III ou dans d'autres pays périphériques du continent¹³. Par conséquent, pour affronter son état d'abattement séculaire¹⁴, l'Espagne a besoin d'un traitement spécifique et particulier. Dans plusieurs passages très significatifs de la *Scienza*, son auteur affirme que "les progrès des Lumières et des connaissances (cette barrière nationale contre la superstition) doivent s'accélérer dans cette nation [l'Espagne] plus que dans aucune autre" et, dans le même sens, que "dans cette nation [l'Espagne] plus que dans aucune autre, les innovations politiques doivent être bien préparées et ensuite mises en œuvre avec une grande sobriété"¹⁵.

Dans de nombreuses allusions de Filangieri à la réalité espagnole domine une intention purement descriptive, bien que celle-ci soit toujours réalisée, même dans certains exemples a priori superficiels, d'une façon qui met en avant sa condition de pays très éloigné des "nations les plus cultivées". Sur le plan politique, Filangieri assimile l'Espagne à l'ensemble des monarchies européennes "modernes", dotée d'un territoire "étendu" et de possessions coloniales. Si ces caractéristiques imposent, dans le sens de la logique déjà suivie par Montesquieu, une série de critères destinés à adopter une stratégie de développement correcte (commerce de 'propriété' et de luxe contre commerce 'd'économie', un ralentissement de la circulation d'argent, une acceptation modérée du luxe, etc.), en revanche, dans la réalité, l'expérience historique espagnole révèle un peuple qu'on peut ranger du côté des flibustiers, des Celtes ou des Sarrasins, en raison de sa nature de "guerriers, fanatiques et mus par l'avarice", appétit du lucre, qui, dans le cas espagnol, s'est révélé lourd de conséquences politiques et socio-économiques très pernicieuses, dont l'archétype est Hernán Cortes¹⁶. Cette qualité de "monarchie guerrière" se serait prolongée presque jusqu'au moment où la *Scienza* est élaborée: à côté de l'esprit pacifiste, de l'éloge de la "douceur" du commerce et de sa nature d'activité créatrice d'harmonie internationale, capable d'adoucir les coutumes, qui imprègne toute l'œuvre, l'Espagne y apparaît dans plusieurs de ses pages comme encore soumise à la "jalousie du commerce" et dominée par un irrépressible "esprit de guerre et de conquête" qui, reproduisant les citations textuelles de Raynal, se limite à "garantir ses galions avec des escadres formidables sur une mer immense pleine de sang et couverte de cadavres dans sa guerre contre les Anglais"¹⁷.

Parallèlement, sur le plan culturel, Filangieri souligne le grand retard dont souffre l'Espagne en raison d'un système éducatif archaïque et, comme il le dit à plusieurs reprises, à cause de motifs religieux qu'il présente dans son livre comme indissociables de la superstition et du fanatisme, toujours soutenus par la "terrible et funeste" main de l'Inquisition. Le Napolitain, dans une affirmation

13 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, chap. XIII, 144.

14 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, chap. III, 57.

15 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, chap. XIII, 143-144.

16 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre V, chap. XLI, 289 et ss.

17 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre II, chap. XX, 151.

significative et polémique, explique que “l’Espagne a plutôt besoin d’une Inquisition contre l’excessive crédulité et les imposteurs qui en tirent profit, que d’une Inquisition contre l’irréligion, ce à quoi les Espagnols ne paraissent pas disposés”¹⁸. Pour une bonne part, tout ceci n’est que la conséquence de codes de lois arriérés, en plus d’être imperméables à la culture des Lumières cosmopolite que Filangieri s’efforce de promouvoir. Filangieri fait fréquemment allusion à l’Espagne lorsque qu’il veut donner des exemples de nations encore peu civilisées ou dans lesquelles reste en vigueur ce type de “codes barbares”. Cette question prend un relief particulier dans ses allusions aux lois pénales espagnoles, souvent présentées comme étant à la fois injustes et inhumaines. Filangieri ne semble pas connaître les tentatives de modernisation de la législation qui ont cours dans l’Espagne de Charles III. De fait, il déplore le fait que dans ce pays, un petit larcin suffise à “te précipiter dans les abîmes de la mer ou à te condamner aux déserts de l’Afrique, où le despotisme, la férocité et l’ignorance t’offriront un asile scandaleux”¹⁹. Il en va de même avec le duel, pratique toujours pénalisée par l’utilisation de “codes barbares”²⁰. En somme, aux yeux de Filangieri, l’Espagne reste en marge des courants humanisateurs du droit pénal auxquels il consacre le troisième livre, particulièrement long, de son ouvrage.

IV. L’ESPAGNE ET SES PARTICULARITÉS ÉCONOMIQUES

Si les diverses allusions politiques, culturelles ou juridiques à l’Espagne ne laissent aucun doute quant à la distance et à la position profondément critique avec laquelle Filangieri juge ce pays, cette impression se renforce encore lorsque l’on considère son analyse strictement économique. En réalité, celle-ci est le principal sujet sur lequel l’auteur de la *Scienza* va au-delà d’une information relativement concrète pour se livrer à une étude plus détaillée. De fait, ses principales allusions à l’Espagne sont concentrées dans les deux premiers livres de l’ouvrage et en particulier dans le second, où il aborde très en détails différents aspects de la situation économique espagnole. Tout cela vient confirmer l’importance qu’ont les lois politico-économiques dans la structure générale de l’ouvrage, lois dont la finalité – augmentation de la richesse et de la population de la nation – fait l’objet des 38 chapitres formant le second volume. Cela permet en outre de comprendre pourquoi ce sont les idées économiques qui, dans la *Scienza*, ont suscité la plus grande attention parmi les auteurs des Lumières espagnols (Villava, Foronda, Salas, Paula del Rey, etc.), ainsi que l’importance du langage de l’Économie politique comme vecteur prioritaire de l’arrivée en Espagne des idées des Lumières.

Dans son exposé économique, Filangieri ne renonce pas à son approche duale concernant les conditions que doivent remplir les lois pour être correctes: la

¹⁸ *Scienza della legislazione*, livre IV, chap. XLIV, 163; livre I, chap. XIII, 144.

¹⁹ *Scienza della legislazione*, livre IV, chap. LIV, 302-303.

²⁰ *Scienza della legislazione*, livre III, chap. XI, 94n et 103n.

législation économique aussi possède ses versants ‘absolu’ et ‘relatif’, raison pour laquelle il ne peut exister de modèle unique pour le développement économique. Tandis que la bonté ‘absolue’ des lois implique, pour qu’elles soient correctement promulguées, la reconnaissance de certains principes généraux, il est nécessaire en raison de leur bonté ‘relative’ de prendre également en compte les diverses circonstances politiques, économiques ou naturelles qui conditionnent l’application des principes généraux à chaque contexte: dans un passage très significatif de son ouvrage, Filangieri rappelle que “la science de la législation a ses principes généraux, que le législateur ne doit pas ignorer, mais il doit faire de ceux-ci le même usage que l’orateur fait des préceptes de la rhétorique”²¹. En définitive, dans le deuxième volume de la *Scienza*, se trouvent mêlés des énoncés qui procèdent de la méthodologie abstraite et absolue des physiocrates, bien connues de Filangieri à travers les principaux auteurs économistes (Quesnay, Mercier de la Rivière, etc.) et des sources secondaires (Schmid d’Avenstein)²², ainsi qu’une méthodologie de type relativiste et empirique dont l’autorité principale, comme il le reconnaît expressément, est le Napolitain Galiani.

Étant donné qu’il n’existe pas de voie unique pour le développement économique, le législateur doit être très attentif au choix des lois concrètes les plus adéquates à son pays, en prenant en compte la qualité et la fertilité de la terre, la nature du gouvernement, la situation géographique, le ‘génie’ ou la ‘nature’ de ses habitants, en lien avec leur culture du travail. Une erreur dans ce choix, bien qu’insignifiante à première vue, peut entraîner des troubles temporaires dans la croissance économique du pays, ou pis encore, l’amener à une situation de décadence prolongée. Filangieri considère que l’ouverture du commerce des Indes Orientales et la découverte de l’Amérique a marqué le début de l’étape moderne dans l’histoire du commerce et que, à partir de là, le pouvoir économique international est passé aux mains de quatre ou cinq puissances européennes. Selon lui, le cas de l’Espagne est précisément exemplaire de la façon dont diverses erreurs dans la législation peuvent faire perdre à une nation une situation économique ou commerciale avantageuse et la conduire à une situation d’abattement insurmontable et généralisé.

Dans les pages de la *Scienza*, la décadence économique espagnole se révèle à travers trois logiques distinctes. En premier lieu, vis-à-vis de son propre passé: Filangieri se reporte au règne de Charles Quint pour montrer qu’à l’époque, l’Espagne “mettait toute l’Europe en mouvement”. En second lieu, vis-à-vis de ses potentialités économiques, dérivées de ses conditions naturelles comme de ses possessions politiques: l’Espagne possède les “matériaux adéquats pour jeter les bases de sa grandeur” et bénéficie des “avantages de la plus heureuse position et du terrain le plus fertile d’Europe ainsi que la domination sur les pays les plus

21 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre II, chap. XVIII, 160.

22 Voir en particulier, D. Fiorot, “Alcune considerazioni sulle idee sociali ed economiche di Gaetano Filangieri”, en *Gaetano Filangieri e l’Illuminismo europeo* (Napoli: Guida, 1991), 337-359.

riches de l'Amérique"²³. En dernier lieu, vis-à-vis des puissances étrangères de son époque: l'Espagne est toujours mal dotée lorsque Filangieri compare l'état de son économie avec celui des nations qu'il considère comme les plus puissantes de son temps, la Hollande tout d'abord, mais aussi la Grande-Bretagne, la France ou Genève. En résumé, l'Espagne, qui aurait pu être la nation la "plus heureuse et la plus riche du globe", était devenue un pays très peu enviable, retardé sur le plan économique, dépendante du développement manufacturier étranger, victime du commerce 'passif' et doté d'un pouvoir colonial en pleine décadence. L'exemple le plus proche de l'Espagne est, logiquement, celui du Portugal, mais bien que dans divers passages Filangieri assimile les deux nations à une même problématique économique, dans d'autres il distingue leurs particularités respectives.

Dans son explication des causes de la décadence économique espagnole, Filangieri a recours à des arguments classiques extraits de la littérature *arbitrista* et de l'Économie politique des Lumières espagnoles, qu'il a pu tirer des textes de Fernández de Navarrete, Uztáriz et Ulloa. En premier lieu, il fait allusion à diverses mesures législatives adoptées durant les règnes des Habsbourg, après la découverte de l'Amérique, qui eurent des conséquences négatives très importantes, en particulier pour l'économie de la Castille. L'expulsion des "industriels morisques", l'augmentation "insupportable" des contributions de toute nature, en particulier les impôts sur la consommation – que Filangieri attribue à Ferdinand le Catholique, rendu responsable de ce problème – le processus de reféodalisation que connaît l'Espagne à partir du règne de Philippe II et, enfin, l'abandon progressif du secteur agricole en raison de l'arrivée massive de métaux précieux en provenance des Amériques et du fait que l'Espagne "en vint à concentrer les métaux du nouvel hémisphère", tous ces facteurs ont généré une dynamique économique perverse, qui s'est traduit par la décadence progressive de tous les secteurs économiques productifs et a provoqué une chute démographique.

Dans le même sens, frôlant à plusieurs reprises le lieu commun, Filangieri fait allusion à différentes attitudes et valeurs censées constituer le "génie" des Espagnols²⁴. Le Napolitain admet que le législateur espagnol puisse canaliser quelques-unes d'entre elles en faveur du bien commun, mais dans de nombreux autres cas, il considère indispensable le développement de mesures sociales à même de corriger celles-ci. Tandis que le supposé sens de l'honneur et la bonne foi des Espagnols sont un facteur favorable à l'exercice du commerce, et que leur présumée rudesse de caractère peut contribuer à l'austérité des mœurs et au faible niveau de la dépense privée, en revanche leur attachement aux usages anciens, relevant dans bien des cas de la superstition et du fanatisme, ainsi que leur orgueil, élevé au point de générer une aversion envers le travail et de considérer comme déshonorants certains offices et professions, doivent être corrigés grâce à des dynamiques sociales combinant l'action législative et la réforme des coutumes.

23 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, chap. III, 56.

24 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, chap. XIII, 142-144.

Dans son analyse de la décadence espagnole, Filangieri utilise non seulement plusieurs arguments issus de la littérature économique espagnole des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, mais il se sert de cette analyse pour montrer de quelle façon l'adoption de politiques économiques erronées empêche une nation d'atteindre l'objectif de ses lois politico-économiques, à savoir augmenter simultanément sa richesse et sa population. Le contraste détaillé par lequel, dans un passage très significatif de son œuvre, Filangieri oppose la situation économique de la prospère Hollande à celle de l'Espagne appauvrie – étroitement unie, une fois de plus, au Portugal²⁵ – montre bien que sa logique se situe, principalement, dans le débat ‘pays riches-pays pauvres’²⁶. Cette logique sera l'un des principaux fils conducteurs selon lequel les auteurs des Lumières espagnols liront la littérature économique étrangère. Dans le cas de l'ouvrage de Filangieri, elle possède en outre l'énorme avantage, par rapport aux autres textes de l'époque – d'où son plus grand succès –, de constituer une adaptation de politiques économiques ayant donné de bons résultats dans les pays européens les plus développés à un cadre qui, comme le cadre espagnol, était conditionné par son sous-développement visible, dû en bonne partie à son pesant héritage féodal²⁷. En vertu de cette logique, Filangieri désapprouve la politique espagnole consistant à appliquer des droits de douane excessifs à l'exportation de biens uniques dans le commerce international – par exemple la soude arbustive – provoquant une augmentation artificielle de son prix et une réduction de sa consommation, et entraînant un grave préjudice pour les intérêts de l'agriculteur. Il censure également l'augmentation excessive des prix par les autorités espagnoles, mesure destinée à protéger artificiellement les arts et les manufactures alors qu'elle menace en réalité la compétitivité internationale des biens nationaux. Il critique enfin la tendance de l'État espagnol à contracter une dette publique excessive²⁸, ainsi que la façon erronée dont il administre ses territoires d'outre-mer.

Bien que l'Espagne possède de nombreux traits communs avec les autres pays situés dans la périphérie de l'Europe économique, elle possède néanmoins des caractéristiques si particulières qu'elle ne saurait réussir une politique de

25 *Scienza della legislazione*, livre II, chap. XXXVIII, 263-264.

26 Sur le cadre conceptuel se référant à l'influente Économie Politique écossaise, voir I. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade. International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.-London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 267 et ss.

27 Pour une présentation générale du cas napolitain, on peut consulter J. Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment. Scotland and Naples 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 385 et ss.; Idem, “Political Economy and the ‘feudal system’ in Enlightenment Naples: outline of a problem”, in *Peripheries of the Enlightenment*, eds. R. Butterwick, S. Davies and G. Sánchez (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2008), 71 et ss.

28 Voir, respectivement, *Scienza della legislazione*, livre II, chap. XXVIII, 204; chap. XXVIII, 205; livre II, chap. XXXII, 227n. Il critique également l'Espagne sur des questions fiscales, notamment l'application non équitable de la dîme durant le moment où celle-ci fut sous la domination de Rome (*Scienza della legislazione*, livre II, chap. XXVIII, 206).

développement stable sans les affronter. Le principal objet des réflexions de Filangieri porte sur les conséquences économiques qu'a entraîné pour l'Espagne la découverte du Nouveau Monde. En dépit du peu d'attention qu'il accorde aux questions monétaires dans la *Scienza* – sujet sur lequel il préfère renvoyer le lecteur à l'autorité de Carli, Beccaria et Galiani –, Filangieri analyse en détail les désastres monétaires qui firent suite à cet événement. Fin connaisseur de Hume et de Cantillon, le Napolitain comprend que l'afflux massif de métaux précieux en Espagne a généré un processus inflationniste qui n'a pas eu d'effet d'entraînement sur l'économie réelle – la production ou l'emploi. La prolongation de cet apport a empêché un ajustement automatique sur le long terme, entraînant une perte constante de la compétitivité des produits espagnols sur les marchés internationaux et une dépression consécutive de l'économie nationale. Le problème a été aggravé par les décisions des autorités espagnoles: au lieu de conserver uniquement la partie des métaux précieux qui leur était nécessaire pour incliner en leur faveur la balance des paiements, celles-ci ont entrepris, au nom de "principes d'économie erronés", d'appliquer des lois restrictives destinées à empêcher la sortie des métaux précieux – véritable "cadeau des Amériques" – aggravant ainsi, année après année, une situation économique déjà délicate. Le résultat en est évident: Filangieri voit bien que des pays comme l'Espagne ou le Portugal "ont provoqué leur misère en dépit des trésors qu'ils reçoivent chaque année du Nouveau Monde". En bref, l'Espagne s'est transformé en une espèce de "corps souffrant d'hydropisie" qui, en raison de "sa soif excessive d'or et d'argent [...] ne peut plus retenir les eaux qu'elle n'a pas su boire avec modération"²⁹.

La solution proposée par Filangieri à ce problème central de l'économie espagnole est exposée en détails dans le dernier chapitre du livre II de son œuvre. Le Napolitain y défend l'argument que des pays comme l'Espagne ou le Portugal, pourvus de colonies opulentes, de terrains fertiles et étendus et de mines abondantes d'or et d'argent doivent orienter en priorité leur développement économique vers la mise en valeur de l'agriculture et l'amélioration du commerce colonial, en pratiquant de manière complémentaire une politique de luxe 'passif' consistant à importer massivement des produits manufacturés étrangers, notamment de luxe. Grâce à cette stratégie de développement, on parviendrait à résoudre le problème que provoque dans ces pays l'existence d'une quantité excessive de numéraire, dont la principale origine se trouve dans les riches mines situées dans les colonies – les 80 millions que l'Espagne reçoit annuellement de Mexique et du Pérou sous forme de métaux précieux, selon les estimations de Filangieri – et aussi, bien qu'occasionnellement, à atteindre une balance commerciale positive. Filangieri comprend qu'"il y a une limite que ne peut dépasser la quantité de numéraire dans une nation sans causer la ruine de la population, de l'agriculture, des arts et du commerce"³⁰. C'est précisément le cas dans ces deux pays, pour lesquels il apparaît

²⁹ *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, chap. III, 57-58.

³⁰ *Scienza della legislazione*, livre II, chap. XXXVIII, 254.

indispensable de se débarrasser d'une partie substantielle de la monnaie accumulée afin de ne pas subir les désastres monétaires décrits. Filangieri comprend que toute autre alternative que celle de recourir à l'importation de produits manufacturés étrangers, telle que les guerres et l'expansion militaire – comme cela s'est produit sous les Habsbourg – ou l'importation de biens de première nécessité, aurait pour effet de freiner la croissance de ces économies. Cette dernière mesure constitue un exemple très parlant: un afflux massif de biens étrangers de première nécessité réduirait la consommation des ménages, entraverait les progrès de l'agriculture et de l'industrie nationales et rendrait impossible le développement de celles-ci. Par conséquent, Filangieri fait du luxe 'passif' un élément indispensable pour garantir le développement économique espagnol – et portugais –, obligeant cependant l'Espagne à accentuer sa spécialisation agraire et à occuper un rôle totalement subordonné quant au développement des manufactures qui ne seraient pas strictement nécessaires dans le contexte du commerce international.

L'analyse de Filangieri a des implications profondes. Avant tout, elle représente un tournant notable au sein des Lumières napolitaines qui, auparavant, avaient témoigné sous la plume d'un Genovesi ou d'un Galiani d'un certain courant de sympathie envers l'Espagne (y compris envers la nouvelle Monarchie qui, depuis 1759, se construisait autour du vieux *Carlo de Borbone*) et d'espoir quant à son avenir économique et industriel. Le détenteur de la chaire d'Économie civile, notamment, avait été capable de présenter de façon assez magistrale une vision de l'Espagne relativement équilibrée: en même temps qu'il la désignait comme "la risée du commerce européen", il la présentait également comme un modèle possible pour l'implantation de réformes nécessaires au *Regno*³¹ lui-même. À l'opposé, Filangieri se montre totalement critique envers la réalité espagnole³². Il n'est donc pas très étonnant que le passage où il consacre le plus d'attention à l'Espagne, dans l'ensemble de son volumineux ouvrage, soit ce chapitre polémique sur le luxe où il met ouvertement en doute ses possibilités de croissance industrielle – chapitre qui suscite une réponse immédiate en Espagne³³. De manière détournée, Filangieri semble vouloir souligner

31 On peut le voir dans *Delle Lezioni di commercio o sia di Economia Civile* (1765-1767) (Napoli: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 2005), par exemple dans la II^e partie, chap. VI, n. VI et chap. XI, n. XX.

32 Au sein des Lumières napolitaines, le précédent le plus immédiat de l'attitude critique de Filangieri se trouve chez Francesco Longano. Voir en particulier ses annotations à la traduction de l'Essai de Melon, *Saggio politico sul commercio tradotto dal francese colle annotazioni dell'Ab. Longano*, 2 vols. (Napoli: Vincenzo Flauto, 1778).

33 Les premières voix critiques contre Accarias de Serionne se firent entendre dès 1768, sous la plume du catalan Romà y Rosell. Pourtant, le texte le plus significatif de la réaction espagnole est dans la longue réfutation réalisée par F. P. del Rey sur cette question, comme sur de nombreuses autres idées économiques présentées dans le livre II de la *Scienza*, dans son ouvrage *Reflexiones económico-políticas de Don Francisco Paula del Rey, Abogado de los Reales Tribunales de Castilla y de Navarra, sobre los capítulos VII y XXXVIII del Libro II de la obra intitulada Ciencia de la Legislación, escrita en castellano por el Caballero Cayetano Filangieri, y traducida al castellano por Don Jaime Rubio* (Madrid: Benito Cano, 1792). Pour une analyse détaillée de cet ouvrage, cf. J. Astigarrana et J. Usoz, "G. Filangieri's Political Economy in 18th-century Spain". D'autres critiques importantes

que l'Espagne a très peu à apporter à ce mouvement européen des Lumières qui, à la suite de la révolte des colonies américaines, est à la recherche de nouveaux principes à même de prolonger la vague de réformes entreprises vingt ans auparavant.

Quoi qu'il en soit, ses jugements sont loin d'être originaux; ils reproduisent plutôt les idées de deux traités fondamentaux des Lumières européennes, auxquels la *Scienza* doit beaucoup: *Les intérêts des nations de l'Europe* du Hollandais J. Accarias de Serionne, et l'ouvrage controversé du français G. Th. Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*³⁴. Ces deux ouvrages sont en train de modifier la façon de penser l'économie espagnole dans l'opinion publique européenne. Dans les années 1750, l'image de l'Espagne à l'extérieur s'est adaptée aux impératifs de la stratégie industrialiste, interventionniste et protectionniste exposée dans les ouvrages de G. Uztáriz³⁵ et de B. de Ulloa³⁶, deux textes pionniers dans la nouvelle vague de réformes favorisées par l'arrivée de Philippe V sur le trône d'Espagne. Cette image est due en grande partie à l'influent noyau proto-libéral de l'intendant français V. de Gournay, qui a conféré aux œuvres de ces deux économistes espagnols une valeur "universelle et supranationale", contribuant de manière décisive à ce qu'elles soient connues dans toute l'Europe – y compris dans la Lombardie autrichienne (chez Beccaria ou Verri) et la Naples des Bourbons (chez Genovesi ou Galiani) –, grâce aux traductions réalisées en 1753 par F. Véron de Forbonnais (du traité d'Uztáriz) et J. Plumard de Dangeul (de celui d'Ulloa)³⁷. Bien loin de cette perspective, Filangieri est le premier auteur napolitain de dimension internationale à remettre en cause les aspirations de l'industrialisme espagnol de la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle – aspirations encore si influentes quelques années auparavant dans les *Lezioni* de Genovesi – et à introduire le doute, au cœur de la Naples post-Tanucci, sur la possibilité d'une récupération rapide de l'ancienne puissance manufacturière espagnole.

Sur ce point précis, la dette de Filangieri envers les ouvrages de Accarias de Serionne et Raynal est très importante. Ces livres présentent des thèses

de cette interprétation de l'avenir économique de l'Espagne sont présentées dans J. Astigarraga et J. Zabalza, "La fortuna del *Essai sur la nature du commerce en général* (1755), de Richard Cantillon, en la España del siglo XVIII", *Investigaciones de Historia Económica*, 7 (2007): 9-36.

34 Les principales références à l'Espagne de J. Accarias de Serionne se trouvent dans le chapitre 5 du premier volume de son livre *Les intérêts des nations de l'Europe, développés relativement au commerce*, 2 vols. (Leide: Elie Luzac, 1766). Sur Raynal voir les livres VI, VII et VIII du volume III de son *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, 6 vols. (nouvelle édition, Amsterdam, 1773). L'énorme dette intellectuelle contractée par Filangieri envers Diderot-Raynal au sujet, notamment, de la question coloniale a été étudiée par G. Goggi, "Diderot-Raynal-Filangieri: uno studio di fonti", *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 153 (1976): 387-418; Idem, "Ancora su Diderot-Raynal e Filangieri e su altre fonti della *Scienza della legislazione*", *Rassegna della letteratura italiana*, 84 (1980): 12-160.

35 G. Uztáriz, *Théorica y práctica de comercio y marina* (1724), ed. G. Franco (Madrid: Aguilar, 1968).

36 B. de Ulloa, *Restablecimiento de las fábricas y comercio español* (1740), ed. G. Anes (Madrid: I.E.F., 1992).

37 N. Guasti, "Forbonnais e Plumard traduttori di Uztáriz e Ulloa", *Il pensiero economico italiano*, 8 (2000): 71-97.

très semblables au sujet de l'ancienne puissance manufacturière de l'Espagne, reposant sur l'idée centrale (provenant de *Les intérêts des nations de l'Europe* de Serionne), qu'il existe une frontière très nette, et pratiquement infranchissable, entre, d'un côté, la France, l'Angleterre et la Hollande et, de l'autre, l'Espagne et le Portugal. La longue explication d'Accarias de Serionne au sujet du déclin des manufactures espagnoles et la structure du commerce colonial et des compagnies à charte se fonde sur divers *arbitristas* espagnols du XVII^e siècle, comme Sancho de Moncada et Fernández Navarrete, ainsi que sur Uztáriz et, surtout, Ulloa. Selon lui, la spécialisation de l'Espagne dans le commerce doit s'appuyer sur l'agriculture et les productions naturelles, tout en encourageant en même temps les produits manufacturés de consommation populaire. Cependant, il ne pense pas que l'Espagne soit en mesure de "se passer de l'industrie étrangère", tout comme il lui semble chimérique "d'élever généralement toute sorte de manufactures", en particulier de luxe³⁸. Par conséquent, Accarias de Serionne, tout comme Raynal quelques années plus tard, va mettre en doute, de manière abrupte, ces espoirs de récupération de la structure industrielle espagnole, avec lesquels des auteurs comme Uztáriz et Ulloa avaient analysé l'avenir économique de l'Espagne. Un aspect qu'il convient de souligner est que les sources utilisées par les deux auteurs sont assez anachroniques; l'usage qu'en fait Filangieri dans l'élaboration des deux premiers livres de la *Scienza*, publiés en 1780, les rend par conséquent encore plus anachroniques. De fait, le Napolitain aurait pu s'inspirer dans son analyse des travaux de l'historien écossais W. Robertson, autre auteur bien connu de lui, dont les jugements sur l'Espagne se fondaient sur des sources plus modernes et étaient, surtout, un peu plus équilibrés³⁹.

Plus importantes encore sont les conclusions que tire Filangieri après avoir invité l'Espagne à adopter une politique de luxe 'passif'. Le Napolitain dédie le chapitre XX du livre II de son ouvrage à expliquer en détails que, au delà "delle gelosie di commercio e della rivalità delle nazioni", la prospérité de chaque pays européen se trouve intimement liée à celle des autres: le commerce n'est pas un jeu à somme nulle dans lequel un pays gagne ce que l'autre perd, mais une activité dont les bénéfices sont réciproques. Qui plus est, une activité qui, conformément à la vision pacifiste, philanthropique et européenne qui imprègne toute la *Scienza*, contribue de manière décisive à l'harmonie internationale et à l'adoucissement des

38 Accarias de Serionne, *Les intérêts des nations*, vol. I, 108, 123. On doit insister sur le fait que l'ouvrage du Hollandais est contemporain des *Lezioni* de Genovesi et que l'usage de sources absolument semblables dans les deux ouvrages se traduit, en revanche, par une interprétation très différente sur l'avenir économique et manufacturier de l'Espagne. Le Napolitain, au vu des récentes réformes économiques adoptées par les autorités espagnoles et des propositions de Uztáriz et Ulloa, pense que "dans peu de temps, l'Espagne n'aura plus besoin ou seulement un peu des produits manufacturés étrangers"; voir ses annotations au livre de J. Cary, *Storia del commercio della Gran Bretagna* (1757), in A. Genovesi, *Scritti economici*, ed. M. L. Perna, I (Napoli: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1984), 473.

39 Voir en particulier les pages 133-290 du livre III du tome IV de son *Histoire de l'Amérique*, 4 vols. (2^e édition revue et corrigée, Paris: Pissot Libraire, 1780).

mœurs et qui, de ce fait, se trouve très loin de cette attitude belliqueuse, reposant sur l'“esprit de conquête”, que Filangieri observe dans le passé pas si éloigné de l'Espagne. À la différence de ce qui a pu être pensé jusqu'alors, la prospérité économique espagnole dépend de celle des autres nations et ne peut se réaliser sans “éparpiller dans le reste de l'Europe une portion de ses métaux précieux”, grâce à une politique de “luxé passif” destinée à générer des bénéfices multinationaux.

Pour la réaliser, l'Espagne doit, d'une part, libéraliser son commerce extérieur en abaissant ses droits de douane et en s'ouvrant sans crainte à une plus grande concurrence commerciale et, de l'autre, réformer en profondeur l'administration de ses possessions d'outre-mer. Conscient de ce que la majorité des réformes ‘éclairées’ de l'Europe de son temps n'a pas encore atteint les colonies européennes – “au moment où l'Europe fait sentir le bénéfique influx des Lumières, l'Amérique européenne se trouve pleine d'esclaves”⁴⁰ – Filangieri critique à de nombreuses reprises l'engourdissement séculaire de l'administration coloniale espagnole. En même temps, devant la nouvelle réalité de citoyens “libres, vertueux et éclairés” dépositaires du “droit de se gouverner eux-mêmes” dans les anciennes colonies britanniques, il comprend que sans une libéralisation de son commerce colonial, une plus grande humanité dans le traitement de ses sujets américains et une extension à l'outre-mer des droits individuels récemment conquis dans la métropole, la Monarchie espagnole ne peut s'attendre à un sort très différent, dans ses territoires américains, de celui récemment expérimenté par la Monarchie britannique avec ses anciennes colonies. Ainsi donc, aux yeux de Filangieri, le luxe ‘passif’, la spécialisation agraire, la plus grande compétence commerciale et la réforme de l'administration et du commerce des colonies apparaissent comme des sujets de réformes indispensables pour l'économie espagnole, un ensemble de recommandations qu'il applique également, dans les mêmes termes, au cas du Portugal. Concernant ce dernier, il insiste toutefois sur l'intérêt qu'il aurait à refuser l'état de subordination commerciale vis-à-vis de la Grande-Bretagne, découlant de l'accord commercial de Methuen signé en 1703⁴¹.

V. CONCLUSIONS

La réflexion sur l'Espagne, en particulier sur son passé et son avenir économiques, fut une constante des Lumières napolitaines. Tout au long de la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle, la production napolitaine de traités économiques fit de ce pays un objet permanent d'analyse. Cette production contribua donc de manière décisive à la création d'un imaginaire économique de la Monarchie espagnole qui circula à travers les Lumières napolitaines durant les cinquante années qui précédèrent la dramatique Révolution parthénopéenne. Cet imaginaire n'était ni unitaire ni statique; il se construit des images (au pluriel) changeant au fil du

⁴⁰ *Scienza della legislazione*, livre I, chap. IV, 72.

⁴¹ Voir, par exemple, *Scienza della legislazione*, livre II, chap. XX, 151-153, et chap. XXXVIII, 257 et ss.

temps, et la *Scienza della legislazione* de Filangieri eut une importance capitale dans sa gestation. Au fil des pages de cet ambitieux traité, l'Espagne était décrite à plusieurs reprises comme un modèle essentiellement 'négatif'. Il s'agissait d'un pays éloigné des nations les plus 'cultivées' et gouverné par un ensemble de lois et de politiques erronées. Pour cette raison, aux vues de l'auteur, non seulement il souffrait d'un profond retard sur les plans économique et culturel mais il était toujours soumis à ces codes de lois 'anciens' et 'barbares' dont la critique constituait l'un des principaux fils directeurs de la *Scienza*. Cela peut constituer une explication supplémentaire de l'immense succès qu'allait connaître cette œuvre dans l'espace politique de la Monarchie espagnole: non content de livrer une vision critique et acérée de la structure juridique, politique, économique ou culturelle de celle-ci, le livre donnait une quantité innombrable de conseils précis pouvant s'appliquer à la situation espagnole.

Filangieri réclamait sans ambages une modernisation des codes législatifs espagnols, exigeait de manière péremptoire la fin de l'Inquisition, plaidait pour une modernisation des méthodes éducatives et, en particulier, indiquait des mesures très précises pour que l'Espagne puisse s'engager définitivement dans la voie de la croissance économique et démographique. Cette opération ne pouvait se limiter à une simple application mécanique, à un pays éminemment 'pauvre', de politiques données qui avaient fondé la prospérité des nations 'riches'. Avant toute chose, il était nécessaire de dépasser les conditions particulières du développement économique espagnol, découlant notamment de sa condition de pays possesseur de colonies et récepteur de quantités massives de métaux précieux. L'intensification de sa spécialisation agraire, l'importation de produits manufacturés somptuaires par une politique de luxe 'passif', la libéralisation de la concurrence commerciale et la réforme de l'administration et du commerce coloniaux étaient présentées par Filangieri comme des lignes d'action indispensables pour que l'économie espagnole se modernise, profite des 'douceurs' du commerce et dépasse sa condition de monarchie attachée à un esprit belliqueux et de 'conquête'.

L'insistance de Filangieri pour que l'Espagne adoptât un modèle commercial d'échanges de biens agricoles contre des produits manufacturés de luxe reflétait très bien les changements de fond qui s'étaient produits dans l'ensemble des Lumières européennes entre le moment où Montesquieu, Melon et Cantillon, dans les années 1727-1736, avaient établi les premiers schémas d'explication de l'Espagne comme l'un des principaux modèles 'négatifs' de l'époque, jusqu'aux années 1770-1800, où des auteurs comme Accarias de Serionne et Raynal s'étaient efforcés de persuader leurs lecteurs de l'inaptitude des Espagnols à s'imposer avec succès sur le terrain privilégié du commerce des produits manufacturés. Ce courant d'opinion, issu de l'intense débat mené à la fin du siècle autour de la question coloniale et des critères pour établir la distribution du pouvoir commercial en éliminant la logique guerrière motivée par les "jalousies du commerce", s'imposa dans l'ensemble des Lumières européennes et laissa une trace très profonde dans la *Scienza della legislazione*. Il n'est donc pas étonnant

que cet important aspect de l'ouvrage ait suscité des répliques immédiates et très précises dans l'Espagne de la fin du siècle.

Toutefois, il faut insister sur le fait que la *Scienza* pâtissait de l'absence d'actualisation des sources se rapportant à la réalité espagnole. Écrire sur l'Espagne dans les années 1780 à partir des textes des *arbitristas* du XVII^e siècle et des œuvres de Uztáriz et Ulloa revenait à faire preuve d'une profonde méconnaissance de l'Espagne à l'époque où fut élaborée la *Scienza*. Alors que ces ouvrages dataient, dans le meilleur des cas, de plus de quarante ans, les années 1760 et 1770 constituaient l'apogée de la littérature économique espagnole des Lumières, avec des auteurs comme Campomanes, Romà y Rossell, Ramos, Arriquíbar, Anzano, Danvila et beaucoup d'autres; aucun d'entre eux n'était mentionné dans la *Scienza*. Si l'on ajoute à cela qu'on n'y faisait pas non plus allusion à la croissance économique et démographique que l'Espagne connaissait depuis le début du siècle, ni à aucune des célèbres réformes entreprises par les gouvernements de Charles III depuis environ 1765, on peut en conclure que la connaissance de la réalité espagnole dont faisait preuve Filangieri était partielle, anachronique et façonnée par des sources indirectes. Ce fait était certes révélateur de l'incapacité des auteurs des Lumières espagnoles à être entendus au-delà de leurs frontières, mais il reflétait très bien par ailleurs le succès de l'opération provenant du cœur même de la tradition des Lumières européennes, consistant à tenter de situer l'Espagne en dehors de celles-ci⁴².

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42 Une opération qui, contrairement au jugement communément admis, ne comptait pas pleinement Diderot parmi ses plus illustres inspireurs, comme l'a récemment expliqué G. Imbruglia, "Diderot storico e la Spagna di fine Settecento", en *Dall'origine dei Lumi alla Rivoluzione*, eds. D. Balani, D. Carpanetto et M. Roggero (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2008), 227-244.

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Political economy and the mirror of ‘otherness’: moral and foreign political models in the works of the Spanish economist T. Anzano (1768-1795)

JAVIER USOZ - JUAN ZABALZA

I. INTRODUCTION: ANZANO AND THE EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT

As historians of Spanish economic doctrines, we normally assume as part of our intellectual task uncovering and analyzing economic ideas within the vast economic and non-economic Spanish literature. However, the approach implicitly articulated by the project “Facing Otherness” has prompted us to consider more specifically two interesting questions: on the one hand, the opposite interests of merchants and consumers and big landowners and agrarian workers; and on the other, the impact of foreign influences in Spanish economic thought¹. In other words, we will analyze such influences through an approach that goes beyond economic issues and thus, we will address social, cultural and political questions that are usually neglected in the analysis of the historians of political economy. In doing so, we will focus on Tomás Anzano’s works.

Tomás de Anzano was born in Huesca (Spain) in an unknown date, and he died in Zaragoza in 1795, after a long professional career as a civil servant, translator and

¹ This contribution is based on previous research carried out by the authors: we found a great encouragement by the support provided by the Miur-Interlink research project entitled “European Culture and the Understanding of Otherness: Historiography, Politics and the Sciences of Man in Modern Europe (XVI-XIX Centuries)”, which has highly contributed to give a new dimension to our research.

economist that he conducted in Madrid and other Spanish cities. As a public official he held positions related to food supply and this highly influenced the nature and content of his thoughts, as it was usual for so many European civil servants during this period². Particularly, his economic works were published during the 1760s and 1790s, after Spain had suffered some kind of food crisis. During the 1760s, his works criticized the liberalization of the commerce of grains which was mainly supported by Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, the then Attorney General of the Counsel of Castile. In the 1790s, when occurred the interventionist swift in the food markets as a part of the political involution provoked by the French Revolution in Spain, he published a new monograph on this controversial issue.

In 1768, Anzano published *Reflexiones económico-políticas sobre las causas de la alteración de precios que ha padecido Aragón* (Political and Economical Reflections on the Causes of the Disturbances of Prices that Has Experienced Aragon) and *Discursos sobre los medios que pueden facilitar la restauración de Aragón. Continuación de las Reflexiones económico-políticas* (Discourses on the Means that May Pave the Way to the Restoration of Aragon. Continuation to the Political and Economical Reflections)³. These works tried to frame a response to the food crisis that took place in 1766, which provoked uprisings like the so-called 'Esquilache Riot' in Madrid. Despite Anzano focused on Aragon, the vast region situated in the Spanish northeast interior, he, in fact, was thinking about the entire Kingdom of Spain. In particular, he analyzed the problems arising from the market of wheat, which at the time became a real European problem. On the other hand, it should be said that Anzano's analysis was completely connected to the main issues that had tackled the Spanish Enlightened policy of the 1760s: the 'regalist' reform of the municipal policy and the mushrooming of regional or territorial economic approaches to economic development⁴.

From the doctrinal point of view, Anzano's writings of 1768 must be connected to the emergence of political economy in Europe⁵. They, more to the point, evidence a strong agrarian influence of French Enlightenment of the second half of the eighteenth century. Such agrarianism embraced different elements like the improvements of techniques of cultivation connected to the so-called 'new agriculture' movement promoted by J. Tull and H. Duhamel de Monceau; the doctrinal agrarian schools such as Physiocracy – even if in the practice other approaches were much influential; and finally, the policies of agrarian reformism

2 Anzano was Secretary of the Management Service of the Army and Aragonese Kingdom, Head of the Royal Hospice of San Fernando in Madrid (1771), Treasurer of the Orán Army (1777), Accountant and Commissioner of the Old Castile Army (1783), and, finally, at a certain and unspecified time he became Treasurer of the Army and Kingdoms of Aragón and Navarra and the Province of Guipúzcoa.

3 Anzano (1678 a, b). From now on, *Reflexiones* and *Discursos*, respectively.

4 See Usoz (2008), 24.

5 Hutchison (1988); Groenewegen (2002).

fostered by the Enlightened Despotism particularly between 1760 and 1790. The debate on the commerce of wheat dominated the scene of the European policy in the eighteenth century⁶. The food crisis, however, brought about a remarkable change in the Enlightenment discourse in the European mainland and lively debates among a wide range of different doctrines from radical defenders of free trade to apologists of interventionism⁷.

Nevertheless, mid-point approaches that juggled freedom and regulation to guarantee wheat supply held sway over. These doctrinal debates had as a result the implementation of specific economic policies which were embedded in wider political agendas as Guasti has recently demonstrated with respect to Spain⁸. Anyway, Spain was not the exception regarding the three main currents of European agrarianism (technical, doctrinal and reformist) as the productive conditions of Spain lay claims to⁹. Indeed, growing population demanded growing food supply but the Spanish agriculture growth model based on unproductive land clearing was being exhausted¹⁰. Therefore, during the period 1765-1800 emerged an economic literature focused on agrarian questions whose main authors were Campomanes and Jovellanos. Nevertheless, many other economists such as Romá y Rossell, Arriquíbar, Ramos, Foronda, Arteta or Asso deserve certain attention and demonstrate how such phenomenon had a regional nature.

Such authors were influenced by the hegemonic European doctrines, mainly French, but also Italians, British and Germans. Translations of remarkable European agrarian works by Herbert, Plumard de Dangeul, Mirabeau, Patullo, Galiani, Necker, Filangieri and many others demonstrate the growing interest of Spanish economists for agrarian questions, and at the same time, their connections to such international network¹¹. Translations began in the 1760s and reached a head in the 1780s. The Counsel of Castile, indeed, commissioned T. de Anzano to translate into Spanish J. C. Herbert's *Essai sur la police général des grains* published in 1795. In doing so, Anzano added on an original work of its own

6 Anzano's case fits well into the group of European civil servants concerned with the problem of food supply frequently intoned by Kaplan (1976). Decades later, in 1795, after Anzano had completed a critic and annotated version of Herbert's *Essai*, he still focused on that topic and still maintained the original impulse.

7 Venturi, II (1969). Debates were held by "physiocrates" and "encyclopédistes" according to Venturi's terminology (Venturi 1971).

8 Guasti (2006).

9 Lluçh and Argemí (1985) demonstrated the tempered introduction of the "new agronomy" and Physiocracy into Spain. Anyway, according to recent contributions about the influence of Physiocracy in Spain, there are still a wide number of economic and political questions to be revised for in the second half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century (Astigarraga 2005; Astigarraga and Usoz 2007).

10 De Castro (1987).

11 See the catalogue of translations of economic works into Spanish in the eighteenth century in Reeder (1973) and Llombart (2004).

entitled *Análisis del comercio del trigo* (Analysis of the wheat market) that criticized Herbert's liberalism based on pragmatic and interventionist approaches of authors such as Necker, and particularly Galiani or De la Mare¹².

II. 'NON-ECONOMIC' AND MORAL MOTIVATIONS IN 1768 ANZANO'S WORK

As well as other economists at the time had done, Anzano highly appraised the importance of "non-economic factors" when implementing reforms, and thus, he adopted an approach that merged economic and socio-political questions. Furthermore, Anzano's analysis of the grain market introduced the moral pattern that characterized the scholastic approach. Namely, the principle of justice prevailed over the principle of productivity when Anzano analyzed the relationships between the different economic classes. As a matter of fact, the autonomy of political economy within social sciences emerged during the eighteenth century, but those that played an instrumental role in as F. Quesnay, D. Hume or Adam Smith himself were not, at certain extent, aware of their contribution. On the contrary, later interpretations of the laws or economic relationships stated by the former economists, have contributed to specifically differentiate the economic content.

II. 1. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL OUTLOOK IN ANZANO'S WORK

Therefore, it seems to be the case that Anzano would consider crucial connecting economic policies to their social environment, as well as analyzing the social consequences of such policies. On the one hand, the liberalization of bread market and the free exportation of wheat must not only be implemented depending upon the improvement caused in agriculture, but it should be taken into account their possible consequential damages on consumers and farmers. This approach came into being within his writings in 1769 and raised to a greater height in *Análisis del comercio del trigo* (1795), in which he expressly adopted Necker and Galiani's ideas about food supply, and used the information about the damages caused by liberalization policies – which were implemented on unreal basis – in France, which had been collected by the politician and writer De la Mare¹³. On the other, the importance given by Anzano to the social consequences of economic policy allowed him to capture, unlike other Spanish economists, the social and political diversity of European societies at the time.

The idea that what was good for a certain country might be harmful for Spain was a common place; however, to analyze such argument at a detailed level and to introduce into the analysis elements alien to productive and commercial

¹² See Usoz (2000); Astigarraga and Usoz (2008).

¹³ *Traité de la Police* (1705) by De la Mare was well-known in Spain through T. T. Valeriola's works. See Lluch (1980), who is also the author of the most significant work about the presence of cameralist ideas in Spain (Lluch, 1999).

conditions like cultural, social and political factors was not very common at the time. Anzano deemed the analysis of non-economic factors actually significant from the very beginning in *Reflexiones* and *Discursos* (1768). The criticism of freedom of commerce in *Pragmática* (1765) focuses upon the behavior of economic agents, that coexisted in a specific social environment. Such context was the relatively isolated region of Aragon, which had an inefficient structure of property based on tenancy of the land by a reduced number of economic agents, absence of any commercial tradition and privileged aristocracy that controlled municipal institutions like the public warehouses of wheat.

Therefore, Aragón was really different, for example, from Madrid, which hosted Spanish monarchy, or Catalonia which was endowed with seaports and manufactures and had a much mature institutional and political framework. In fact, Catalan merchants exercised a hegemonic control of large-scale business transaction of wheat. In 1768, Anzano repeatedly remarked how *Pragmática* (1765) was not conceived to be applied to the Aragonese context despite he did not question the abstract and theoretical background of such a law. The liberalization of the agrarian markets has social consequences, but it is mainly an economic policy which normally is backed on the basis of economic arguments. *Respuesta Fiscal* by Campomanes (1764)¹⁴ used Scholastic ideas to defend the goodness of market prices stated under freedom conditions (1764)¹⁵. In 1768, Anzano assumed Campomanes approach, but introduced certain modifications and proposed an alternative political and social-based reform.

For example, even if Anzano did not profoundly discuss the Spanish Ecclesiastical Disentailment or the 'mayorazgo' institution, he strongly criticized the tenancy of agrarian property, as, according to him, it entailed a damaging obstruction between farmers and consumers. He also proposed a wide number of proposals like a detailed scheme for discharging local governments from their census debts which were mainly owed to the Church; a plan of commercial exploitation of public warehouse through franchising private economic agents; and the creation of a commercial and productive company that pooled public and private efforts to promote the advance of the Aragonese economy.

II. 2. THE SCHOLASTIC NATURE OF ANZANO'S ANALYSIS

The transition from Scholasticism to Mercantilism was not actually a break-up and a scholastic vein is clearly visible in mercantilist thought from the dawn of such doctrine until its breakdown on the threshold of the liberal era. As De Roover pointed out burgeoning liberal concepts embedded within mercantilism

14 The legislation on wheat commerce of 1765 was theoretically inspired by this work as it has been analyzed by Llobart (1992), 64.

15 On the Scholastic theory of prices in the eighteenth century, see De Roover (1955 and 1971), Dempsey (1971). On the debate on bread taxation in the seventeenth century, see Gómez Camacho (1992 and 1998).

come from the scholastic influence which became particularly crucial in Italy and Spain. Thereby, the distinction between Scholasticism and Mercantilism became gradually clear as pointed up the transformations of the European societies¹⁶.

It is crucial from our point of view taking into account that whereas Scholasticism focused on distribution and equity, Mercantilism centred mainly upon production¹⁷. Such distinction partially explains why many authors of the eighteenth century proceed in Scholastic terms when they analyze specified markets such as the wheat market. Steeped in a doctrine that gave priority to the growth of national wealth through the intervention of a strong state authority, mercantilists did not cultivate by its own a theory of prices in domestic markets and so they took on the so-called scholastic 'just price theory'¹⁸.

Historians have widely debated about the normative nature of the 'just price theory' and whether scholastics had enough capacity to analyze the operation of the market. In this vein, a first interpretation holds that the concept of 'just price' is similar to the idea of 'market price' as result of the free operation of market forces that rule trade. Consequently, analytical arguments were added on to normative ones in scholastic writings as Schumpeter upheld on¹⁹. In contrast, a second interpretation defends the sole normative nature of the scholastic 'theory of just price' from its very origin. The Aristotelian doctrine on the determination of prices would be categorized, according to such interpretation, as ethical and not analytical, linked to the preservation of crafts and the distributive justice – which was based on social hierarchy – and not connected to the contribution of factors of production. Such interpretation is supported by an 'organicist' and functional approach to society in which there is no room to individual wants as analytical concept²⁰.

Anyhow, both interpretations are not eventually as antithetical if one adopts a dynamic and evolutive approach as, for instance, the vision embraced by Meek. Namely, the approach that upheld that the 'theory of just price' evolved from its normative origins towards a theoretical and analytical vision of the operation of the market – which edged towards a theory of 'competitive price'²¹. Such is the case of the so-called "School of Salamanca". Therefore,

16 On the differences among the societies in Greek polis, Middle Ages city-states and the modern Nation-state and their influence on Scholastics, see Spengler and Allen (1971), 52.

17 See Spengler and Allen (1971), 53.

18 Many others economists of the Spanish eighteenth century such as Mateo Antonio Barberi (Usoz 1998), 514 or Juan Antonio de los Heros (Barrenechea 1989 and 1995) are clearly influenced by scholastics.

19 See Schumpeter (1982), 136.

20 Hollander (1965), 622, Dempsey (1971), 64 and 70, Lapidus (1992), 25-42, Tortajada (1992), 76 uphold this interpretation.

21 See Meek, (1972), 301. According to Grice-Hutchinson (1982), 116, things changed during the first half of the fifteenth century when sprouted a theory of value clearly based on utility whose promoters were Antonino di Firenze and Bernardino di Siena.

one might admit more properly the direct relationship between ‘just’ and ‘market’ prices, which became a commonplace during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Such approach is clear in *Respuesta Fiscal* by Campomanes and *Reflexiones* (1768) by Anzano, who upheld that social environment might keep ‘natural market’ price far from the ‘just’ price²². On the other hand, as the economists of the eighteenth century did, belated scholastics worried about the problem of food supply and their social consequences. Accordingly, there were strong statements, both pro and con, towards the introduction of an intervened ‘tax price’²³. For instance, the Spanish scholastic Melchor de Soria in a dispute with Luis de Molina, put forth the urge of introducing the wheat ‘tax price’ after having carefully analyzed the elements, circumstances and agents that operated in the market.

Anzano, however, did not advocate such wheat ‘tax price’ but he seems to have assumed part of Soria’s analysis, like the hegemony of sellers on consumers due to shortage or the consequences of production on distribution. In *Respuesta Fiscal* (1764), Campomanes had tackled, intending to introduce deregulatory policies, the analysis of ‘tax price’ and the internal and external free movement of goods²⁴. Regarding ‘tax price’ he upheld that the price of wheat, as well as other goods, must be determined by the market, and he based his rejection on the ‘theory of just price’²⁵. Although he admitted that contractual freedom leads to a ‘mean price’ in the long-run, Campomanes, according with Lope de Deza, upheld that price of goods – and so that wheat price – depends upon “its virtue, want, utility, scarcity or abundance, market behavior and cost”, and thereby, he advised against administrative pricing policies²⁶.

Such approach comes from the scholastic controversy on ‘just price’ of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in which intellectual figures such as Luis de Molina and Lope de Deza were unfavorable to ‘tax prices’²⁷. Having assumed such scholastic belief, Campomanes brought forth a proposal for liberalizing agrarian trade in which was crucial to promote abundance of production by means of a market price that would fuel investment in a way that “does justice to sellers” without detriment to consumers. To this end, freedom of commerce

22 There are different works on the economic influence of the School of Salamanca collected by Tedde y Perdices (1999). Among them we will remark Grice-Hutchinson (1999), Rothbard (1976) and Chafuén (1991).

23 On the plurality of Spanish Scholasticism see Gómez Camacho (1992), 57.

24 See Llombart (1992). We will just remark the parts of *Respuesta Fiscal* which had a direct influence on Anzano.

25 Campomanes (1764), 52.

26 De Deza (1618).

27 On *Respuesta Fiscal*’s intellectual sources see Llombart (1992), 168-169.

is needed²⁸. Furthermore, such trade must be practiced by merchants, who are the real agents of agrarian prosperity and not by the inefficient governmental monopolies and public granaries. Government, therefore, should only guarantee the absence of monopolistic powers in markets. Campomanes's proposal ended up demanding a tempered freedom of foreign trade, which should be regulated through a "permission rate".

Reflexiones (1768) was a rejoinder to *Respuesta Fiscal* (1764). Both works tackled similar topics and assumed a suchlike doctrinal background, but conclusions are different. Unlike Campomanes, Anzano upheld that, given certain social and economic framework, the mere abolition of 'tax prices' and the freedom of trade did not necessarily imply the improvement of agrarian production. Such refinement to freedom of agrarian trade comes from the influence of Scholastics on Anzano's thought which is introduced through 'probabilism' and 'causistics' which Melchor de Soria's methodology reeked²⁹. Anzano clustered prices in three groups: "natural price" determined by the market, "legal price" set up by the government and "legitimate price" which tries to observe commutative justice³⁰. "Natural" and "legal" prices are reality-based but "legitimate or just price" is normative and from the latter depends the "latitude [the level] of just price" that allows for observing moral in trade. Anzano's "natural price" embraced items pertaining to both spheres, the demand and the supply, what reeks of De Roover's metaphor of the "pendulum" that, according to him, characterized the scholastic theory of prices³¹. The price should allow for the cost of production in order to basically preserve labor. Admittedly, price is also influenced by "operations that improve such a good", transportation, profit margin of producers and merchants, supply, preferences of economic agents, utility or the number of buyers and sellers³². According to Anzano, "such all factors are 'legitimate' causes to modify natural price", and therefore, "tax price" does not work³³. Summing up, "natural price" based on the justice of trade has not a fixed value but a variable one since it is admitted a margin or "latitude" that included an "infinitesimal" price, a "medium" price and a "bigger" price³⁴.

28 *Respuesta Fiscal*, 81.

29 On this methodology that distinguishes between the main normative and analytical components of natural law, see Gómez Camacho (1999).

30 *Reflexiones*, 24.

31 De Roover (1958), 418-34, refers to an "oscillating pendulum" as a metaphor of the relative market price which is determined by wants, abundance or scarcity, and which can not remain permanently under cost of production.

32 *Reflexiones*, 33.

33 *Reflexiones*, 146.

34 Gómez Camacho (1992), 52, makes explicit that scholastic "natural price" does not fit with Classical Political Economy's "natural price". Classical economists uphold that "equilibrium natural price" is unique. By contrast Scholastics pointed out the existence of different prices of equilibrium.

Anzano used such scholastic conceptual framework to remark how “natural” price will not be “just” if the market is controlled by certain groups of economic agents and in particular by those that imposed their demands such as “tight hands”, “large scale harvesters”, “renters” and speculator merchants or by those that these groups subjugated like consumers or “small harvesters”. Such asymmetry is caused by a social and economic structure in which individuals behave rationally trying to maximize income³⁵. Production is normally carried out by agrarian workers who are not land-owners; on the other hand, “renters” who receive production in return of paying the rent to land-owners and meet their expenses like food³⁶. Such a fact implies that production became concentrated in few hands: “a renter of two or three ‘Tithes’, of three or four ‘First fruits’ [...] comprise the assets of one hundred individuals”³⁷. Something similar suffered “small harvesters” who are land-owners as they are compelled to sell the harvest to merchants by a price which barely is enough to get production rolling. Price finally accorded is always low as sellers, when they sell their products, have not information about the production eventually harvested or the final grain market price³⁸.

Summing up, market of wheat is actually structured as a “homogeneous good oligopoly” whose demand is inelastic as wheat is central in human consumption and there are not direct substitute goods. The strategy of those that hoard wheat is stimulating the increase of wheat prices in order to maximize their profit margin. To this end and having assumed that wheat is an asset vulnerable to speculation, sellers try to promote scarcity building up stocks in hopes that the need of nourishment will increase prices over their “natural” level. Moreover, the high yield does not belong to producers but to those who have had financial capacity enough to wait and to cope with the delay of wheat sale.

Based on the former analysis of the real market of wheat, Anzano proposed the policy measures above mentioned that aimed at safeguarding both consumers of bread – the quintessential nutritional good – and agrarian workers. Both represented the economic sectors which had paid the price of liberalization, and merchants and great renters those that took advantage of such policy.

35 Anzano’s socioeconomic analysis fits with the modern interpretation of agrarian markets by De Castro (1987), 48-49.

36 Pérez Sarrión (1984), 187-232, who has analyzed the economic activities of some Catalan families and companies in Aragón, has shown how renting the land to Lords was one of their most important productive and commercial business as they yielded a profit from the difference between the amount of the paid rent and the price earned by production which themselves carried to the market.

37 *Discursos*, 157.

38 *Discursos*, 16. Manufacture paid also the price of the pernicious behaviour of these merchants. Anzano distinguishes between “good” and “bad” merchants who carried out the following operations: buying in a bulk and then retailing when the producer is not able of doing it; buy the production surplus in a certain location and sell it. Finally, underwriting harvest through buying production before the outcome is publicly known (*Discursos*, 130-131).

III. THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION AS A MODEL IN *ANÁLISIS DEL COMERCIO DEL TRIGO* (1795)

Análisis del comercio del trigo (Analysis of the Commerce of Wheat), published by Anzano in 1795, preserved the dichotomy land owner-merchant *versus* consumer-farmer which was so crucial in 1768 Anzano's analysis. Beyond this, *Análisis* embodies other main component of otherness which will be carefully studied below. In particular, Anzano introduced mixed representations of the society, politics and economy which came from other countries, sometimes, taken from remote latitudes. The economic writings of the Spanish Enlightenment mirror images of other European economic environments, and in particular, images of France, North and South Italy, England, Netherlands, Germany, Austria or even Russia or the Scandinavian countries. Such a picture came into Spain through basically French, Italian, German and British economic works in rank order. The perceptions the Spanish authors derived from those countries were instrumental in the comparison and the making of reformation models. In this context, the different European countries played different roles. In general, France, North Italy and German territories were deemed as exemplary models that had social and political parallels with Spain, but which at the same time were some steps forward. On the other hand, England and Netherlands, whose political constitutions proved to be strange to Spanish national tradition, were more advanced countries in many aspects but politically and socially very distant from Spain. Finally, Southern Italy, and Naples in particular, which in fact was very similar to Spain as it was relatively underdeveloped, was well known in Spain. It should be taken into account that Carlos III ruled there before coming to Spain.

The wide number of French works translated into Spanish proves the significance given to the French model by the Spanish Enlightenment. This is the case of the translation of *Essai* by Herbert which was commissioned by the Council of Castile to Anzano. Despite the close down of national boundaries and the interruption of intellectual connections that took place in the mid-nineties caused by the outbreak of the French Revolution, *Essai* was taken as a model to face the problem of commerce of food, which was a first-order political question at the time. Even if the *Essai's* approach was moderate, after all, it defended freedom of commerce. Such a freedom was called into question by Spanish ruling authority, amongst them Campomanes, who had put forward the liberalization in 1765. When it comes to discussing such a question, Spaniards believed France was the country to be considered for a comparison: Herbert's *Essai* exposed the French standpoint on the question and Anzano aired it in *Análisis*³⁹. France was intensively an agrarian country that had a Bourbon Administration which

39 On the European intellectual atmosphere at the time of publication of Herbert's *Essai*, see Hutchison (1988), 185-191 and 219-227, and Groenewegen (2002), 48-96. On the French case see Meyssonier (1989), Perrot (1992), Murphy (1988) and Larrère (1992). J. C. Herbert (Paris, 1700-1758), whose life is almost unknown, was an intermediate civil servant in the city of Bordeaux.

probably was craved by the most part of the Spanish Enlightened. Such an Administration was able of intervening in any part of its controlled territory. But, France also had food crises, and how to manage them arouse certain doubts among economists who provide with different remedies to solve them. Liberalization or administrative control was actually the question.

Herbert chose a moderate version of liberalization far from the Physiocrats radical proposals. Necker or Galiani, on the other hand, opted for the administrative control of the state, even if they did not renounce to defend the commercial development of French agrarian sector. Anzano chose the last proposal, and he was particularly influenced by Necker's pragmatic and humanitarian doctrine. Anzano highly admired how French Administration had faced famines. On this respect, he mainly got information from De la Mare, the French politician and writer of the first half of the eighteenth century, who had been influenced by German *cameralism*. Both, Herbert's and Anzano's works remarked and carefully examined the intervention proposed by De la Mare to provide Paris with wheat during the crisis of 1709⁴⁰. According to Herbert, such provision was possible thanks to the cooperation of merchants, but according to Anzano was due to coercion more than freedom. Namely, Anzano believed that in order of smothering the food crisis the intervention of political authority against the private goals in the commercial sector was needed. This revised version fits better into De la Mare's approach, from whom Anzano took various quotations in which he accused "rapacious hoarders" of transforming abundance into poverty⁴¹. In conformity with such statement, Anzano criticized the use of inaccurate information by Herbert to back the liberal policy undertaken by Sully's agrarianism instead of Colbert's protectionism⁴². In this respect, regarding such dispute which was well-known in the European economic Enlightenment circles, Anzano professed that he was being inspired by Necker, because his doctrine was a mixture of Sully's liberal agrarianism and Colbert's industrial protectionism.

III. 1. THE ENGLISH POLITICAL MODEL WITHIN ANÁLISIS DEL COMERCIO DEL TRIGO (1795)

Together with the French model which basically promoted interventionism, Anzano also paid certain attention to the English model. As a matter of fact, French literature implicitly bore the English model. Anzano pointed out how De la Mare had questioned himself about the possibility of introducing in France the freedom of commerce of wheat existing in England. He answered stressing that if France would have adopted such policy "[...] would have lost everything, and thus, it is needed to proceed gradually: 'something' must precede the

40 Anzano (1795), 100-106.

41 Anzano (1795), 69, 124, 205, 263.

42 Anzano (1795), 140-143, 179.

exportations and freedom of commerce”⁴³. Undoubtedly, the existence of wheat surplus excess is a prerequisite as De la Mare, and more in general, as the great part of the literature at the time have proposed⁴⁴. Regarding the comparison between France and England, Anzano quoted French economist Plumard de Dangeul who held that English policy of subsidizing exportation of wheat intended for cheapening wheat and for constraining other nations to abandon production of wheat⁴⁵. When comparing French and English caseworks, which was very common in the European literature, Anzano focused on social and political forces which seem to be that “something” – quoted by De la Mare – that must precede the introduction of the commerce of wheat. Such an approach compelled him to face the economic, social and political model that mirrors the particularities of the English casework⁴⁶. As a matter of fact, Anzano is getting closer to the English model and this was not very common within the Spanish Enlightenment movement.

Spanish Enlightened usually focused on economic factors like price of wheat, abundance of production, agricultural irrigation extension, labor, natural conditions and many others. Bearing in mind such questions, Anzano however plugged on emphasizing the social and political bias that characterized the British model, as he himself had pointed out in his writings in 1768. The main hypothesis held by Anzano was that the freedom of the commerce of wheat demands a complex political system which was able of managing the dispute that had arisen about food supply. Therefore, it does not suffice to hold out prospect that in the long-run wheat will be abundant and its price will become affordable or “at ease” for many people, but it is needed to guarantee the wheat supply in the present, and to properly handle its consequences on the public opinion. England got it, but Spain, due to socio-political reasons, was not still in the position of nailing it.

Anzano takes this statement as a premise for his analysis, as he suggested that English political system had certain mechanisms that prevent, almost automatically, of leaving population unprotected. In Spain, however, this

43 Anzano (1795), 209.

44 Anzano (1795), 427.

45 Anzano (1795), 436. Anzano quoted from *Remarques sur les avantages et les désavantages de la France et de la Grande Bretagne par rapport au Commerce et aux autres sources de la Puissance des Etats* (1754). Plumard de Dangeul published it using the pseudonym John Nickolls. *Remarques* is the French adaptation from Josiah Tucker’s *Brief Essay on the Advantages and Disadvantages which respectively attend France and England with regard to Trade* (1749). Together with Herbert’s *Essai* was jointly published in Dresde in 1754. On the particulars of such editions and the Spanish translation of 1755 by F. Quintana, see Llombart (2004).

46 Anzano (1795), 311-312, referred to the Chinese model, from which he praised its high population, the groomed agriculture, the industry of workers, and in contradistinction to Herbert, he stressed that cheapening food does not lead to idleness, but it is the foundation of the national economic leverage. China case study was very common in the economic literature of the eighteenth century, and, according to Lutfalla, remarkable authors like Cantillon o Montesquieu had used it (Lutfalla 1981), 90-95.

protection depends upon political authorities themselves. On the other hand, the former hypothesis is connected to an intensively moral and humanitarian approach that defended that policies can not lead to success based on the squalor of vast strata of population. Anzano defended this approach in the 1860s, but thanks to Necker's influence, his arguments became much more congruent. According to Anzano, England agriculture is much more advanced than "any other in the world" due to technical advances, the improvement of transportation, low interest rates, "unequaled industrious natives" and to "agrarian laws which if would have to be observed in Spain, would be regarded as an act of execrable violence". He referred to English reformation of tenancies favoring settlers and to land enclosures laws. The whole affair together with a pragmatic commercial policy – that, for example, merged free commerce of wheat with harsh protection of wool – makes clear that, according to the Valencian Enlightenment thinker E. Ramos, who was quoted by Anzano, "[...] whether we compare English system to the current state of our policies, England is heads and Spanish is tails"⁴⁷.

Anzano, however, thinks that such achievements are also caused by extra-economic factors proceeding from the rich British social and institutional fabric. He admired the spirit of commerce, "the good will towards economy", "the cool, severe and circumspect national temper", which, according to Galiani, possessed countries like England or Netherland⁴⁸. In other excerpt, he also praised from English people their "goodwill when paying, their justice when demanding, their discretion in rumors, the formality of public records and census, and another convoluted questions", but also, that they were "the sureties of their credit". Under those personal traits and social virtues it is possible to introduce freedom of commerce, what it is even easier if the country is the earliest nation in adopting such a policy at the right time. In this vein, historical factors are essentials. What England did successfully "almost two centuries ago" can not be "completely imitated" as circumstances change. Anzano summarizes his formulation using a Latin aphorism: "distingue tempora et concordabis iura"⁴⁹.

Together with the attributes above mentioned, Anzano strongly points out an express political factor in the socioeconomic advance of England: "the hyper-complicated political machine nowadays existing in Europe and possibly in the world at any epoch", and thus, being the "government the most plural and artificially compounded ever"⁵⁰. This idea recurs when he mentioned that English people "forced nature, overrefined politics, reduced the individual rights in order to make prevail general rights". Undoubtedly, these comments on the political constitution of the nation as the crucial variable involved in productive and

47 Anzano (1795), 216.

48 Galiani (1770), 35 and on.

49 Anzano (1795), 227.

50 Anzano (1795), 209-210, which is textually transcribed from Galiani (1770), 48-49.

commercial growth are not superfluous. Unfortunately, according to Anzano, “[...] such conditions, some natural, others political and skillfulness” do not take place in Spain⁵¹. He even deemed that the “differences were not of a real nature but moral” and brought these ideas into steadfast arguments to argue against the implementation of liberal economic policy in Spain as the country had not political conditions to successfully put in place them⁵².

IV. OTHER POINTS OF REFERENCE: CHINA, THE ANCIENT WORLD AND CIVIC HUMANISM

Anzano repeatedly emphasized, based on Necker, that protection of disadvantaged people had priority in the agenda of the State. He held that there was a “natural law” that prevented prices going beyond a “prudent and lawful” level. This *Ius-naturalist* principle entails that the guarantee of food supply and low prices became a priority of the agenda of the State, and thus, it has consequences even on the scope of property rights, which according to Anzano and Necker, in contrast with Physiocrats, was not an inviolable natural law⁵³. This approach was an open invitation to other models of society different from French, English and Dutch ones⁵⁴.

China provoked a profound fascination in the European Enlightenment thought, and in particular, after Montesquieu’s significant contributions. Such fascination was due to a considerable extent to the ignorance and to the profound differences between the European and the Chinese strands of thought. Anzano praised on any one occasion China. For example, when he held that low prices were not traces of underdevelopment, and he justified it according to the principle that “[...] the country that can guarantee maintenance at a lesser cost is superior to the other nations”⁵⁵.

Anzano paid more attention to Ancient World. His comments on Ancient World must be connected to the old tradition of Civic Humanism, which experience a real resurgence in the European eighteenth century⁵⁶. Even if Anzano did not explicitly use the original sources of such resurgence such as Montesquieu, or later on, Republicans like Mably or Rousseau⁵⁷, he rebutted Herbert’s criticism to the policy of public provisions characteristic of Ancient Civilizations through ideas emanating

51 Anzano (1795), 218.

52 Anzano (1795), 226.

53 On the Gençevan ideas on property, see Necker (1775), I, XXV-XXVII, Spengler (1954), 307-308, and Grange (1974), 98-99.

54 The Dutch case is less common in a similar way than England as a maritime country, politically sophisticated and commercially much developed (Anzano, 1795), 211.

55 Anzano (1795), 321.

56 According to the denomination labelled by Pocock (2002). Skinner (2001) calls it “neo-Roman theory of freedom”.

57 A recent analysis of this topic in Linton (2001), 80 and on.

from Civic Humanism⁵⁸. Anzano defended that such policy was not complete, and was not entirely adaptable to Spain, but its implementation should not be entirely excluded⁵⁹. In fact, some principles that inspired them had a remarkable currency⁶⁰: the mistrust towards the wish of individual profit, preference of agriculture and low prices of food; austerity as principle of a right public moral; appropriateness of legal systems based on a residue of universal laws which must be rigorously fulfilled. In particular, Anzano's preferences addressed the food supply policy of the Roman Republic, which was unsuccessful due to mismanagement, just when the spirit of "greed, pomp and luxury" transformed the grain into an object of bribery and imbued the entirety of the socioeconomic system.

These concepts belonged to the defense of public provision of Civic Humanism, which were strongly criticized by Herbert. The political influence of Ancient World on Anzano was also demonstrated through a long excerpt at the end of *Análisis*, which reproduces a discourse by Lisias of Athens in which the Greek asked for a sanction to grain speculators⁶¹. This excerpt displayed ideas that Anzano had assumed regarding the commerce of grains like the need of protecting it and the "moderate profits", the possibility of receiving the help of foreign and state "stores", and the requirement of avoiding "corruption" and the hazard that involves "the starving population"⁶². This remarkable reference made by Anzano to the Athenian democracy included an appeal to the Enlightened Republicanism and its agrarian and egalitarian mentality, which perfectly fits with the humanitarian principles that characterizes Necker's work.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The European and Spanish Enlightenment were not an exception regarding the discovering of 'otherness' which characterized such period. The case analyzed in this article shows certain highlights of this phenomenon, strongly worsened if anything, by the fears of food crisis and their political effects. One of these highlights was the clear economic and moral boundaries between the vested interests of the different social groups. In particular, Anzano used the dichotomy land owner-merchant *versus* consumer-farmer since he was concerned with the consequences of decision-makers

58 Herbert (1795), 18-22.

59 Anzano (1795), 25. In this vein, it was a commonplace of Anzano's works overlaying N. De la Mare's work and their numberless by-laws. This fact portrayed the existence of a new opposition to Herbert – his work was branded by Kaplan (1976), 101, as a "manifest anti-De la Mare" –, in this case coming from the ideas emanating from *cameralism*.

60 Anzano (1795), 23-38.

61 Anzano (1795), 468-487. In all probability, the Aragonese economist translated into Spanish the French compilation of various Greek orators, among them Lisias, which had been completed by Abbé Auger.

62 Anzano (1795), 486-487.

and the behavior of powerful groups on consumers of food and agrarian workers. In 1768, Anzano criticized the liberalization of the real market of wheat based on the scholastic interpretation of this market. Particularly, he opposed the official version by Campomanes, the then General Attorney of the Counsel of Castile. Nevertheless, Anzano was given support by those groups of enlightened that were suspicious of deregulation. In fact, the Count of Aranda, the great Aragonese Noble that would be the leader of such critics, had close political connections to Anzano. Anzano's rejoinder posed the oligopolistic nature of wheat market and the speculative ability of the so-called "strong hands". According to him, such market structure compelled to the control of the real surplus before introducing the free operation of merchants and the exportation of wheat guided by the information provided by prices.

The other main issue posed by this article is concerned with the influence of foreign models in Anzano's socioeconomic and political vision, and particularly in the monograph that he had published in 1765. The Spanish Enlightenment was not an exception regarding the discovering of 'otherness' that characterizes such an epoch. In particular, the approach of international circulation of economic ideas within the subject of the History of economic thought discloses a broad variety of 'gazes' towards other social, political, scientific and economic national environments, and more frequently towards neighbor countries. Undoubtedly, attention was paid beyond that, like colonies, but this work does not tackle this last question. If anything, this process involved the discovering of ruling patterns which were shared by different European countries, but also the perception of their differences. Concomitantly, some countries became points of reference or models for others, and definitely Europe provided a mirror which each single country could look into and measure itself.

A huge number of works give testimony of this process. On the one hand, the works that implicitly or expressly embodied ideas taken from foreign works. On the other, the wide number of translations and adaptations of foreign works – or even plagiarism – completed in Spain at the time. This article has focused on T. Anzano, who we actually believe is exemplary. Anzano was a Spanish economist and translator who published a variety of works in the 1860s and 1890s on food crisis and commerce of grains. Economic differences, but also and in particular social and political differences, gained importance in his writings of 1768, in a form that they led him to seriously qualify the possibility of applying to Aragon the *Pragmática* deregulatory legislation. In 1795, he translated into Spanish the main work of the French economist Herbert, which he published adding on the work *Análisis del comercio de trigo* by himself. According to his previous contributions, Anzano advocated for intervention of food markets in order to guarantee food supply and low prices of raw materials, which was an alternative proposal to the policies included in *Informe de ley agraria* by Jovellanos also published in 1795⁶³.

63 Astigarraga and Usoz (2009). On the political and intellectual atmosphere that surrounded the making of *Informe* see Domergue (1971), Varela (1988), Anes (1995) and Llobart (2000).

In defending so, Anzano evidenced a remarkable knowledge of Spanish (Campomanes, Arriquíbar, Ramos or Jovellanos) and European literature on such topics, from Physiocracy to the more interventionist wings. In fact, he used, among others, Necker, De la Mare and Galiani's doctrine to better criticize the moderate liberal Herbert. In particular, he took from Necker his interventionist, pragmatic and humanitarian approach⁶⁴. At the same time, as he brought forward in 1768, Anzano assessed the diverse performance of the different political frameworks, and thus, in *Análisis* he focused on Chinese, Dutch, French and British societies, stressing the comparison between France and England. French model is taken from Herbert's *Essai*, but also, as mentioned, from his critics, and in particular, from Necker. But the idea of feasibility of a consistent, strong and liable French Bourbon monarchy to intervene when crisis occurred comes from the cameralist economist De la Mare.

Regarding English model, Anzano's approach is connected to the European political tradition that emerged, specifically, from Montesquieu's works, that had highly appraised British political model, and in particular, its parliamentary tradition and division of powers which were a decisive factor of equilibrium. Indeed, Necker and Galiani, the most influential economists on Anzano, belonged to British national tradition. From 1780, just when began the constitutional debate and when Montesquieu's works spread over, Spanish demonstrated warm feelings towards Britain, and it seems that they gain currency when French revolutionary scene burst forth. During the 1790s, in full effervescence of French Revolution, the refined and sophisticated English political system embodied parliamentary control on food supply and taxation, or the possibility of implementing agrarian reformation. Therefore, it might have been a point of reference for the moderate governmental Spanish Enlightenment, seized by panic in front of the French revolutionary events. Anzano's silence on French events, but also on Federal Republicanism and popular democracy established in the United States of America on the basis of British colonial territories some years before, portrayed that spirit of temperance.

64 On the Necker's doctrine, see Spengler (1954), 300-308, Grange (1974) and Kaplan (1976). On the presence of Necker in Spain see Astigarraga (1998 and 2000). On the other hand, *Dialogues* by Galiani were well-known, as they were published in Spanish in 1775 promoted by Campomanes and completed by J. A. de las Casas (*Diálogos sobre el Comercio de Trigo, atribuidos al Abate Galiani*, Madrid: J. Ibarra, 1775). Finally, on the international success of Necker's writings, see Carpenter (1975), 22-24.

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Your beggarly commerce! Enlightenment European views of the China trade

ASHLEY EVA MILLAR

This paper examines the European confrontation with and conceptualization of the China trade in the early modern world, and in particular during the Enlightenment. International trade was of central importance to Enlightenment conceptions of wealth. As Daniel Defoe – the famed champion of the merchant class – wrote, “the rising greatness of the British nation is not owing to war and conquests, to enlarging its dominion by the sword, or subjecting the people of other countries to our power; but it is all owing to trade, to the increase of our commerce at home, and extending it abroad”¹. European philosophers and a broader set of commentators that included popular geographers and merchants hotly debated international trade. These debates portrayed China as having a more cautious, restricted view of foreign trade. No lesser authority than Adam Smith succinctly expressed this view:

The Chinese have little respect for foreign trade. Your beggarly commerce! was the language in which the Mandarins of Pekin used to talk to Mr. de Lange, the Russian envoy, concerning it. Except with Japan, the Chinese carry on, themselves, and in their own bottoms, little or no foreign trade; and it is only into one or two ports of their kingdom that they even admit the ships of foreign nations. Foreign trade therefore is, in China, every way confined within a much narrower circle than that to which it

¹ D. Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (London: printed for Charles Rivington, 1726 [1725]), 382-3.

would naturally extend itself, if more freedom was allowed to it, either in their own ships, or in those of foreign nations².

John Hobson labeled the traditional narrative that China turned inward during the Ming Dynasty as “China’s great leap backward”³. Proponents of this view maintain that China’s decline relative to Europe began in 1434 when the Emperor Xuande, following the ‘Confucian traditions’ of his father, the Emperor Hongxi, imposed restrictions on foreign trade and navigation. According to this view, by the end of the eighteenth century Europeans recognized the limitations of the Chinese system of political economy, particularly with regards to international trade. Adam Smith’s advocacy of the free market in 1776 and the 1793 failed British Embassy to China under Lord Macartney led to a dominant image of an arrogant China, resistant to the progress of the modernising European world⁴.

Frustration with Chinese policies of isolation, however, dated as far back as Ancient Rome, thus was not a reaction to the rising European faith in the mutual benefits of free trade expressed most famously through Smith. Further, the narrative of Chinese isolation was only part of a wider eighteenth century discussion of the China trade. In fact, early modern European observers and commentators were not assured of their superiority and reflected a range of views on the China trade beyond simple frustration. Recent scholarship examines the interaction between the Qing Dynasty and European states as the encounter of imperial forces, indicating a comparable balance of power⁵.

This paper begins by examining the early modern European sources of information and commentary on the China trade. These sources include the first-hand reports about China (largely written by European missionaries, men of war, merchants and emissaries); the works of Enlightenment philosophers; and the popularisers of information primarily in world geographies. European

2 A. Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. E. Cannan (New York: Bantam Dell, 2003), 864-5.

3 J. M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 62.

4 David Porter describes the eighteenth-century encounter between the Europeans and the Chinese, where the former believed in the importance of international trade, and the latter strictly limited international commerce, leading to “a widespread perception among British observers that an unnatural tendency toward blockage and obstructionism was an integral, defining feature of Chinese society as a whole”. D. Porter, “A Peculiar but Uninteresting Nation: China and the Discourse of Commerce in Eighteenth Century England”, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33 (1999-2000), 181-199; James L. Hevia describes the historiographical tradition (from Euro-America as well as China) of viewing the early modern trade relationship between China and Europe as a clash between tradition and modernity. J. L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 242; Joanna Waley-Cohen argues that Sinophilia ended, in part, because “the restrictive Canton system of trade went directly against the free world market advocated by Adam Smith in 1776”. J. Waley-Cohen, *The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 92- 99.

5 See Hevia’s *Cherishing Men from Afar*.

ambitions of achieving a bountiful trading relationship with China, met with the reality of Chinese restrictions. The interplay between optimism and rejection led to a consistent narrative of frustration in many European sources. The remainder of this paper analyses the other prominent narratives attached to the China trade. In addition to a view of Chinese restrictions on foreign trade, which certainly existed, three additional themes were conspicuous. First, Europeans attempted to understand China's unique ability to restrict international trade. Second, they identified obstacles to trade that originated in Europe. Finally, these sources discussed the nature of the trade that did exist, debated the implications of the balance of trade with China, and demonstrated an awareness of China's place in a global trading system. This paper concludes that the overarching image of China was that of a uniquely large and independent country that had the ability to restrict international trade, and when they did partake in it, they maintained a formidable position. Concurrent to this image was the view held by many (but not all) that China would benefit from expanding its international trade, a view supported by the idea that their history of fluctuating trade policies indicated that increasing foreign trade was possible. Further, criticisms of European trade policies reveals that Europeans did not assume the perfection of their own practices.

I. FROM EL DORADO TO IMPERVIOUS: TRAVEL AND TRADE LITERATURE ON CHINA

Little information travelled, and even less trade took place, between Europe and China in the period between the collapse of the Sino-Roman trade in the fourth century and Marco Polo's account of Cathay at the end of the thirteenth century. It was only with the expansion of the sea route to the coast of Southern China in 1514 and the rise of the printing press that the demand for goods from – and information on – the Middle Kingdom could be met. In this period, trade, religion (Catholicism), and information on China were intertwined. Portugal, for example, received the *padroado* (patronage) with the *Jus patronatus* granted by a papal bull in 1514, vesting exclusive control of European missionary, political and economic activity in the East with the Portuguese monarchy. Their control of European engagement with the East did not last long, and the Dutch and English quickly expanded their commercial interests. Catholic missionaries from other European states such as Italy, Spain, France and Germany continued to travel to and transmit information on China. In their roles as translators and influencers of Chinese opinions, these European missionaries acted in the interest of their own missionary orders, and at times in their national interests. For instance, in 1697 and 1698 a group of French Jesuits urged the French government to develop a chartered company for the China trade to search for alternative trade routes from those controlled by the English and Dutch⁶.

6 D. F. Lach and E. J. van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe*, 3 vols., 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 432.

Although the Jesuit missionaries were primarily concerned with their religious mission, they did provide information highly relevant to the China trade⁷.

Another group that provided information about the China trade – merchants, explorers, men of war and emissaries – was less interested in the Christianizing agenda of the missionaries. The attempts to develop a trading relationship with China led to the arrival of ambassadors from states such as Russia, the Netherlands, France, and England as well as representatives from their respective East India Companies. Between 1552 and 1800 there were 926 Jesuits in China. As early as 1563 there were already 700 Portuguese non-missionaries in Macao⁸. Although these secular travelers offered less insightful commentary than the Jesuits who gained access to the Chinese court, many of these sources were continuously referred to and had a transformative effect on European thought. They were also first-hand witnesses to China's restrictive trade policies and thus, on this topic in particular, their point of view is germane. In the seventeenth century, merchant accounts from China were primarily Dutch, as the Netherlands began to dominate the China trade⁹. By the eighteenth century, British travelers made the most significant contribution to the expansion of non-missionary accounts of China¹⁰. The interaction between European national interests, missionary activity, commercial concerns, and Chinese policy from the sixteenth century onwards was of great importance to the formation of primary sources, and ultimately European views of China as a political, economic and cultural entity.

These primary sources provided information for the editors of geographies. The growth of these popular works over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was in large part driven by the desire for information pertaining to the prospects for international trade, and many of these sources had commercial ideologies embedded in their texts¹¹. Richard Hakluyt commissioned Robert Parke's 1588

7 In particular, the Jesuits Matteo Ricci, Nicolas Trigault, Louis Le Comte and Jean Baptiste Du Halde (who himself had never actually travelled to China, but did have access to Jesuit information), provided first-hand information on the Chinese Empire.

8 A. Rowbotham, "The Impact of Confucianism on Seventeenth Century Europe", *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, 4 (1945): 50.

9 The Dutch fort in southern Taiwan was established in 1624, and though they were anxious to trade with China, the embassies they sent to Peking in 1656, 1667 and 1685 all failed. One of the most widely cited and translated works was Johan Nieuhof's *An Embassy from the East India Company* (1665 Dutch edition, published in English in London, 1669). Nieuhof's work was based on a Dutch East India Company delegation to China, which he took part in from 1655-57.

10 The most popular example in this genre is George Anson's *Voyage Around the World* (1748). The first edition had over 1800 advanced subscribers, by 1776 there had been fifteen editions in Britain alone and it had been translated into French, Dutch, German and Italian, C. Mackerras, *Western Images of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 47.

11 R. Markley, *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 270.

English translation of the Spanish Augustian Juan González de Mendoza's description of China, which demonstrates this type of demand. Parke dedicated his translation to the English explorer Thomas Cavandish who, he hoped, would find a new trade route to Asia. Parke also praised the teenage King Edward VI for his encouragement of the beneficial trade with the East 35 years earlier¹². Another example of the connection between trade and information on China is found in the first English translation of the Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's description of China, translated by Richard Brookes and printed by John Watts in 1736. While it was the less reliable of the two English translations, of interest here is Brooke's motivation for the quick translation of the work. Brookes dedicated the fourth volume "To the Directors of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies"¹³. In this dedication, Brookes noted: "It is a fond mistaken Notion of some" that Britain is self-sustainable and does not need anything from the rest of the world when "the most common Repast must be supply'd with Ingredients from the remotest Parts of the Globe"¹⁴.

The final group of interested commentators was the philosophers of the Enlightenment who debated the implications of the China trade. Douglas Irwin's intellectual history of free trade is divided into two parts: the pre-Smithian protectionist view culminating in the mercantilist literature of the seventeenth century, and the post-Smithian period of the triumph of the arguments for free trade¹⁵. While these periods certainly overlapped, the eighteenth century in particular represents a transitional period, which is situated between the apogee of the mercantilist view and the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776). Prior to the establishment of a largely consensus view in favor of free-market trade, philosophers debated policies of international trade.

The primary, geographical and philosophical sources oscillated between optimism and disappointment in their discussions of the China trade. On the one hand, there was an air of hope for the potential wealth that the China trade could generate. The sixteenth century witnessed the start of a search for distant lands that could offer easy profits. Popular literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries expressed the hope of finding foreign lands that offered bountiful trade relationships. Voltaire commented on the dreams of easy profits in his popular novel *Candide* (1759). Upon leaving El Dorado, Candide exclaims: "if we return to our own world with only a dozen of El Dorado sheep, loaded with

12 J. Gonzales de Mendoza, *The Historie of the Great and Mightie Kingdome of China*, translated by R. Parke, printed by I. Wolfe for Edward White in 1588 (Reprint: Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1973), 2.

13 J. B. Du Halde, *The General History of China. Containing a geographical, historical, chronological, political and physical description of the empire of China*, translated by Richard Brookes from the Paris edition, 4 vols., 4 (London: printed by and for John Watts, 1736), Dedication.

14 Du Halde, Vol. 4, Dedication.

15 D. Irwin, *Against the Tide: An Intellectual History of Free Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3.

the pebbles of this country, we shall be richer than all the kings in Europe”¹⁶. The reports of the grand scale of the Chinese Empire, and its significant wealth, came to represent another El Dorado, and a tangible object for the European desire for profits.

However, Europeans expressed a concurrent frustration with the practicalities involved in the China trade. The earliest descriptions of China by European authors reveal a long history of the theme of Chinese isolation. Ancient Romans described a place known as Serica (believed to refer to the north-eastern part of modern day China). Pliny the Elder, for example, claimed “The Seres are of inoffensive manners, but, bearing a strong resemblance therein to all savage nations, they shun all intercourse with the rest of mankind, and await the approach of those who wish to traffic with them”¹⁷. This history was not lost on eighteenth century commentators, as a popular compendium about China, *The Chinese Traveller* (1772), addressed the antiquity of the view of Chinese isolation: “It is remarkable that the manners of the modern differ not much from those of the ancient Chinese [...] [Pliny] says that the Chinese [...] like wild animals industriously shun any communication with strangers [...]. They are at this day courteous and gentle, but will not suffer merchants of other nations to penetrate into their country”¹⁸. Indeed, China’s restrictive policies continued into the early modern world. In 1517, Tomé Pires led the first official embassy from a European state (Portugal) to China. The reality of China’s foreign policy quickly moderated the Portuguese enthusiasm when after their long journey the Portuguese emissaries were not granted an audience with the emperor. The Portuguese conquering of Malacca (a tributary state of the Chinese), as well as their thieving and disruptive behavior around Canton led to the Chinese constraints¹⁹. China sentenced Pires to death because of the actions of his compatriots, and he took his own life in prison. The recurrence of this archetypal embassy by the English, French, Dutch and Russians, despite continuing failures to gain significant trade concessions, demonstrated the European determination to expand the China trade²⁰.

16 Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), *Candide*, translated by Norman Cameron (London: Penguin, 2001), 52.

17 Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, eds. J. Bostock and H. T. Riley (1885), Book VI, Chapter XX, “The Seres”, ed. G. Crane (The Perseus Digital Library, Tufts University), 2036-2037.

18 Author/Editor Unknown, *The Chinese Traveller [...] Collected from Du Halde, Le Compte, and other Modern Travellers*, 1 (London: Printed for E. and C. Dilly, 1772), v.

19 J. E. Wills Jr., *Embassies and Illusions: Dutch and Portuguese Envoys to K’ang-hsi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1984), 19.

20 Between 1655 and 1795 there were approximately seventeen Western missions that reached the emperor (six from Russia, four from Portugal, three or four from Holland, three from the Papacy, and one from Britain). J. K. Fairbank, “Tributary Trade and China’s Relations with the West”, *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, 1 (1942): 148-149. For more information on failed trade negotiations see Markley, *The Far East and the English Imagination*, Ch. 3 and Wills, *Embassies and Illusions*.

The failure of early modern European trade missions reflected China's ability to resist the foreign overtures. Unlike other parts of the world, threats of violence were insufficient to achieve the European desire for open trade with China. Rather, Chinese trade concessions were erratic and highly dependent on the emperor. The Chinese, according to John Wills Jr., never had anything resembling "a coherent or effective foreign policy"²¹. These inconsistencies were increasingly difficult for Europeans to understand as they rationalized international trade as ordained or natural. Despite the idiosyncrasies of Chinese policy, Europeans attempted to understand the principles behind their reluctance to engage in international trade.

II. UNDERSTANDING CHINESE TRADE POLICY

Early descriptions of the Chinese, including those by the Jesuits, depicted an arrogant nation who believed they were the center of the world. Addressing the reluctance of the Chinese to partake in international trade, the Jesuits Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault concluded that "[Chinese] pride, it would seem, arises from an ignorance of the existence of higher things and from the fact that they find themselves far superior to the barbarous nations by which they are surrounded"²². Or, as Thomas Salmon argued in his popular compendium, they looked upon "the rest of mankind as little better than brutes"²³. This assertion was supported by the knowledge that the Chinese had access to the compass before the Europeans, and yet explored little in comparison. However, Europeans sought to understand China's motivations for restricting trade beyond simple arrogance.

In the seventeenth century, numerous European observers respected China's policy of limiting international trade. The expansion of European interests overseas, concurrent with internal wars, revolutions and the spread of disease, reminded many early modern observers of the lessons from Ancient Rome, and concerns about overexpansion led some to admire China's restraint. One of the early Iberian accounts of China by Gaspar da Cruz described how the Chinese had a large empire earlier in their history, ruling over Malacca, Siam and Champa in Southeast Asia. He explained their motivations for reducing this empire and turning inwards: "the King of China, seeing that his kingdom went to decay,

²¹ Wills, *Embassies and Illusions*, 20.

²² Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault's *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas* was an important source of information about China at the time, and was one of the most widely cited (or plagiarised) early modern primary accounts of China. First published in 1615, it had 4 Latin editions, 3 French editions, 1 edition respectively in German, Spanish, Italian and English excerpts were reproduced in S. Purchas, *His Pilgrimes [...]* (1625). N. Trigault and M. Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: the journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610* [The compilation by N. Trigault] translated from the Latin by Louis J. Gallagher (New York: Random House, 1953), 23.

²³ T. Salmon, *Modern History: or, the present state of all nations [...]*, 3 vols., 1 (London: Printed for T. Longman, T. Osborne, et. al., 1744-46³), 15.

and was in danger by their seeking to conquer many other foreign countries, he withdrew himself with his men to his own kingdom”²⁴. Edward Gibbon chronicled this notion of internal decay from overexpansion in his influential *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776). Several European geographers and philosophers praised China’s policy as wise. In *Relazioni Universali* (1591-1598), Giovanni Botero explained China’s motivations for restricting foreign interaction to protect their customs and government. He commended the Chinese disinterest in international expansion because the author believed “there can be no greater folly than to hazard our own goods, on hope to gain others”²⁵. By the eighteenth century a few European philosophers and geographers also explained China’s caution towards entering into relationships with foreign states. For instance, Guillaume-Thomas Raynal reminded his readers of the problems in the Sino-Portuguese encounters during the time of Tomé Pires; under those circumstances, what incentive did the Chinese have to expand their foreign relations²⁶? However, by the eighteenth century overseas trade and exploration increased and the potential risks associated with it were outweighed by the perceived benefits.

Another explanation for China’s restrictive policies gained prominence in the eighteenth century, though it originated in earlier sources. It was based on the belief that China’s domestic trade made their Empire self-sufficient thus they had no need for international commerce. Mendoza, who had never been to China himself, was one of the first European authors to popularize this explanation. He described how China’s isolation from international trade was possible because they have sufficient of all things necessarie to the maintaining of human life”²⁷. The reports about the activity on China’s rivers and canals astonished Mendoza: “In my opinion it might be said with greater truth and without fear of exaggeration, that there are as many boats in this kingdom as can be counted up in all the rest of the world”²⁸. This argument was popularized in the eighteenth century by Du Halde who controversially stated the vastness of China’s domestic

24 *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, O.P., Fr. Martin de Rada, O.E.S.A.*, ed. C. R. Boxer (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2004), 67.

25 G. Botero, *Relations, of the most famous Kingdoms and Common-weales through the World* [...] (London: Printed for John Jaggard, 1608⁴), 300 and 295. This excerpt was accurately translated from the original Italian, see G. Botero, *Delle Relazioni Universali* (Venetia: Nicolò Polo, 1602), Parte Seconda, 66.

26 Though in the final edition these paragraphs were found in chapter twenty-one (which has been attributed to Denis Diderot), the paragraphs in question were also in an earlier edition in a section attributed to Raynal. G. T. Raynal and D. Diderot, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, translated by J. O. Justamond from the 1780 French edition, 8 vols., 4 (London: printed for W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1783), 192-193. For the original French see G. T. Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes (Tome I. Livres I-V)*, eds. Anthony Strugnell, et.al. (Paris: Centre International d’étude du XVIIIe Siècle and Ferney-Voltaire, 2010), 15.

27 Mendoza, *Historie* [...] of China, 69-70.

28 Mendoza, *Historie* [...] of China 12-13.

trade compared to that of the whole Europe: “The inland trade of China is so great, that the commerce of all Europe is not to be compar’d therewith; the princes like so many kingdoms, which communicate to each other their respective productions”²⁹. Made during a period of rapid expansion of European trade, this bold assertion was repeated numerous times in popular compendiums³⁰.

Philosophical sources differed in their assessment of the claim that China’s domestic trade was larger than Europe’s. Montesquieu believed the argument was irrelevant. In *De l’esprit des lois* (1748), he described the implications of European global expansion. He argued, “Europe has reached such a high degree of power that nothing in history is comparable to it”³¹. Immediately after claiming European power and dominance, he felt the need to challenge the relevance of Du Halde’s contention about the relative size of China’s domestic trade, indicating his view that the claim challenged European supremacy. He argued that China’s internal commerce might be larger than Europe’s but European foreign trade was, in fact, much greater³².

A fellow Frenchman, François Quesnay, vehemently contested Montesquieu’s view of China. In a section entitled “Commerce Viewed as Serving Agriculture” in *Le Despotisme de la Chine* (1767), Quesnay used China as a model to attack the belief that “nations must trade with foreigners in order to grow rich in money”³³. He repeated Du Halde’s assertion that China’s internal trade was greater than Europe’s and that each Chinese province specialised in particular products, making commerce between them necessary. Opposed to the mercantilist view, Quesnay believed foreign commerce was injurious and served only to profit the merchant class. He could not find an example of a nation attached to foreign commerce and provided an example of prosperity. The Chinese system, according to the Physiocrat, represented the Natural Order and thus he praised their elevation of domestic trade above foreign commerce.

29 J. B. Du Halde, *A description of the empire of China* 2 vols., 1 (London: printed by T. Gardner for Edward Cave, 1738), 334. Accurately translated from the original French see J. B. Du Halde, *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l’empire de la Chine*. 4 vols., 2 (La Haye: Chez P. G. Le Mercier, 1735), 169.

30 For instance a direct quotation can be found in *The Chinese Traveller*, 189; C. F. Lambert, *A Collection of curious Observations on the Manners, Customs, Usages, different Languages, Government* [...], 2 (London, 1750), 386.

31 C. L. de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, eds. A. M. Cohler, B. C. Miller and H. S. Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 393. Accurately translated from the original French see C. L. de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *De l’esprit des lois* (Genève: Barillot et fils, 1748), 71.

32 Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 393. For the original French see Montesquieu, *De l’esprit des lois*, 71.

33 F. Quesnay, *Oeuvres Économiques et Philosophiques*, ed. Auguste Oncken (Paris: Jules Peelman and Co., 1888), 603. For the English translation see L. A. Maverick, *China a Model for Europe* (San Antonio: Paul Anderson Co., 1946), 208. Quesnay published *Despotisme de la Chine* in four consecutive editions of the journal *Ephémérides du Citoyen*.

Adam Smith, who had a great deal of respect for the French économiste, also believed China was uniquely situated for domestic commerce and disagreed with the mercantilist view of wealth, however he did believe in the benefits of foreign trade. Smith argued China's geography deterred it from foreign trade because its neighbors were not rich and

the great extent of the empire of China, the vast multitude of its inhabitants, the variety of climate, and consequently of productions in different provinces, and easy communication by means of water carriage between the greater part of them render the home market of that country of so great extent, as to be alone sufficient to support very great manufactures, and to admit of very considerable subdivisions of labour³⁴.

Following Du Halde's and Quesnay's assertion that Chinese products were diversified, Smith argued that China had significant subdivisions of labor. From the Scottish philosopher this was a great compliment indeed, as he asserted in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) that the division of labour was key to economic growth. However, Smith moderated the assessment of the size of China's domestic trade claiming it was "not much more inferior to the market of all the different countries of Europe put together"³⁵. By the end of the eighteenth century with European commerce rapidly expanding, even the tempered claim that China's domestic market was near the size of all of Europe's and the view that China had significant subdivisions of labor from its internal commerce were both complimentary of the Chinese system.

Recognizing China's self-sufficiency did not mean abandoning hope for its engagement in an active international trade. Smith argued that "a more extensive foreign trade [...] could scarce fail to increase very much the manufactures of China, and to improve very much the productive powers of its manufacturing industry" as well as offering externalities such as extensive navigation, technology transfer and "other improvements of art and industry"³⁶. It was possible to understand China's reasons and respect its ability to limit foreign trade, and still believe that a profitable trade was in its interest, and indeed was possible.

Primary authors, geographers and philosophers ruminated on China's unique reasons for restricting international trade, as well as its unusual ability to garner significant wealth from internal commerce. China offered a different model for growth that depended almost entirely on domestic consumption and production. European observers and commentators demonstrated a more complex understanding of Chinese policy than ignorant, arrogant isolationism, and they were not assured of the superiority of their own trade practices.

³⁴ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 865-6.

³⁵ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 866.

³⁶ Ibid.

While Europeans attempted to understand and even, at times, appreciate China's restrictions on international trade, the policies of the Middle Kingdom also offered an opportunity to analyze European trade practices. Indeed, many observers maintained that the European system itself was at fault for limiting the China trade.

National rivalries, particularly between the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English, led to competing European interests hindering advancements in East Asian trade. During the first half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch began to make their presence in East Asia felt. Unlike the Spanish and Portuguese, the Protestant Dutch (and later the English) were not as concerned with spreading Christianity, but focused their empires largely on commerce. The Dutch East India Company (VOC), formed in 1602, was in direct conflict with the Portuguese-declared monopoly of Asian trade. As such, the VOC was given authority to "wage defensive war, negotiate treaties of peace and alliance in the name of the States General, and build fortresses"³⁷. This led to several VOC attacks on the Portuguese establishment at Macao. Ultimately, the Dutch gained a monopoly in the Japan trade and increased their presence in East Asia throughout the seventeenth century. By 1685, with the opening of Canton to foreign trade, the English began to assert their standing in the China trade. The divided London and English East India companies formally united in 1708 giving the British a strong position in the East Indian trade.

The descriptions of European observers reveal the nationalism involved in international trade with China – and the East Indies in general. In the seventeenth century Johan Nieuhof, a VOC purser of a Dutch embassy to China, publicized the tension between the Dutch and the Portuguese in the Far East. He argued his mission to negotiate a free trade with the Chinese government was doomed from that start because the Portuguese at Macao and the Portuguese Jesuits in Peking had portrayed the Dutch as people dwellers without a country who "got their livings by stealth and piracy"³⁸. Raynal repeated these descriptions in the eighteenth century, reminding his readers how in 1607 the Dutch tried to open up the China trade but "The Portuguese found means, by bribery, and the intrigues of their missionaries, to get the Hollanders excluded"³⁹. It became evident to European commentators, through these sources, that conflicts between European countries greatly affected trading relationships with China.

37 Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 45.

38 J. Nieuhof, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces*, trans. John Ogilby (London: Printed by the author at his house in White Friars, 1673²), 154.

39 Raynal and Diderot, *A Philosophical and Political History*, Vol. 1, 246. For the original French see Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique*, 160.

England expressed similar frustrations over conflicts with the Portuguese and the Dutch. Direct conflicts such as the 1623 Amboyna massacre of twenty men, ten of whom were members of the British East India Company, by agents of the VOC undoubtedly contributed to the tone of tracts on the China trade. The national competitiveness led to a mistrust of information circulating on the China trade: “The difficulty of trading with the Chineses in their own Country, is not so difficult as the Portingals and Hollanders would perswade the World for their own advantage”⁴⁰. The anonymous author of this tract on the East India Company argued that, despite the hindrances by the Portuguese, the English have traded in Canton with great success.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, national rivalries were less prominent explanations for the inability to establish a flourishing China trade. European commentators began to argue the largest problem on the European side of the trade was not the competition between countries, but rather the lack of competition between companies, and the inability of any one European power to impose a monopoly over the trade of China against rivals. This was a result of the rising power of the European East India companies. The debate over the impact of chartered companies and monopolies in the China trade featured prominently in eighteenth century British popular sources, where many argued against the monopolies and for the rights of individual merchants. For instance, a letter addressed to the Aldermen of the City of London in 1754 attacked the claim that free merchants did not have the ability to carry on the East India trade in the same manner as the East India Company. The anonymous author argued that “every one knows, that the trade to China may be carried on from Britain directly, as it is from Sweden, and that, without a Company the same may be done from all other parts”⁴¹. The high level of country trade (local trade that took place in the East Indies) conducted by free merchants indicated their ability to be successful and “they do not ruin themselves, nor do they lose the trade, or give away all the profits to the natives”⁴².

In contrast to the idea that China was solely responsible for limiting the number of ports where international trade could be conducted, some believed this was a decision made by European East India companies. Joshua Gee, an English merchant, argued that the English East India Company was at fault for limiting the China trade, and in particular, the number of ports at which international trade was conducted. He believed that although the sales of British woollen goods would be higher in the colder, northern Chinese provinces, the

40 Unknown Author, *The East-India trade* [n. p.] [1641?] (The Making of the Modern World, Thomson Gale, University of London Research Library Services), 8.

41 *Letters relating to the East India Company* [...] (London: Printed for W. Owen, 1754), 24. This work has been attributed to John Campbell.

42 *A Third Collection of scarce and valuable Tracts, on the most interesting and entertaining subjects* [...], 4 vols., 3 (London: Printed for F. Cogan, 1751). 212.

English captains chose to stay at Canton. According to Gee, private traders knew better: “But when private traders had liberty to go to China, they were of another opinion; they went to those places where they could get most money”⁴³. Indeed, in reality, the East India companies hindered the China trade. E.H. Pritchard points out that the English abandoned their factories at the ports of Amoy and Chusan in 1707 and 1710 respectively because of the favorable possibilities of trade at Canton. This was well before the 1757 official Chinese restriction of foreign trade to Canton⁴⁴. A popular dictionary of trade in the eighteenth century described the “inducement which the European merchants have to frequent Canton” in comparison to Amoy, namely that whole fleets “may be freighted in a short time there, and are not in danger of being delayed til the monsoon sets in [...]”⁴⁵. By 1740, the British met with a solid monopoly in Canton, the Hong Merchants (a small group of elite merchants who dominated the entire Canton trade). By 1762, to combat the strength of the Hong monopoly, the English East India Company created one unified council to regulate all of its ships. Thus the trade was a dual monopoly where the interests of both China and Britain were represented, and vehemently defended.

Enlightenment philosophers, especially those of the Scottish Enlightenment, devoted a great deal of time to analyzing the distorting nature of these chartered companies. David Hume was one of the first prominent scholars to point out those European actions that hindered the China trade (particularly as expressed by the varying prices in gold and silver): “Thus the immense distance of China, together with the monopolies of our India companies, obstructing the communication, preserve in Europe the gold and silver, especially the latter, in much greater plenty than they are found in that kingdom”⁴⁶. Later, Adam Smith also pointed to the negative impact of the monopolistic system. If, as he argued, “rich and civilized nations can always exchange to a much greater value with one another than with savages and barbarians”, he had to explain how Europe has “derived much less advantage from its commerce with the East Indies from that with America”. To answer this puzzle he did not turn to descriptions of

43 J. Gee, *The Trade and Navigation of Great Britain considered [...] A new edition [...] by a merchant* (London: printed for J. Almon, 1767), 61; A. Dalrymple, *A Plan for extending the Commerce of this Kingdom, and of the East-India-Company* (London: printed for the author, 1769), 7 also describes the high demand for wool in China but being limited by the trade at Canton, which was further away from the cold areas of the empire.

44 E. H. Pritchard, *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750-1800* (1936), reprinted in *Britain and the China Trade, 1635-1842*, ed. P. Tuck, 10 vols., 5 (London-New York: Routledge, 1999), 114.

45 R. Rolt, *A New Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, compiled from the Information of the most eminent Merchants, and from the works of the best writers* (London: printed for T. Osborne, J. Shipton, et. al., 1756), 130.

46 D. Hume, “Of the Balance of Trade”, in *Essays Moral, Political, Literary*, ed. E. F. Miller, with an appendix of variant readings from the 1889 edition by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, revised edition (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987).

isolationism, but rather blamed the fact that the “Portuguese monopolized the East India trade to themselves for about a century” and when the Dutch began in the seventeenth century to expand in that area, “they vested their whole East India commerce in an exclusive company”. He continued on:

The English, French, Swedes, and Danes have all followed their example, so that no great nation in Europe has ever yet had the benefit of a free commerce to the East Indies. No other reason need be assigned why it has never been so advantageous as the trade to America, which, between almost every nation of Europe and its own colonies, is free to all its subjects⁴⁷.

While Smith recognized the Chinese reasons for restricting foreign trade, he also attributed some of the blame to the European system of national monopolies.

European observers and commentators recognized the European policies that hindered the China trade, particularly the influence of national rivalries and the existence of competing monopolies. The China trade was used to reflect on the flaws in their own theories and policies. Europeans did not assume their foreign trade practices were superlative. Smith believed China would improve if it expanded its foreign trade. However, he also argued European countries would grow if they revised their own trade practices.

IV. POWER DYNAMICS IN THE CHINA TRADE

Although the primary sources, geographers and philosophers attempted to understand the limitations of the China trade (both from the Chinese and European perspectives), they were also aware that some international trade did exist. In this trade China maintained a strong position and Europeans debated whether this commerce hindered or helped expand the wealth of their own countries.

From knowledge of active Chinese encouragement of foreign trade, to the numerous ways in which Europeans and Chinese merchants could exchange goods without formal permissions, Europeans of the Enlightenment realized that while China restricted its trade, the country it was never completely isolated. During the Ming Dynasty, European sources described how some foreign trade with China occurred under the guise of tribute, a context that gave the Chinese a dominant position in the relationship⁴⁸. However, the Europeans sent few missions to the court of China, and the missions that were sent did not submit to tributary status. There was also an understanding that policies did not always dictate reality and subterfuge trade existed. For instance, Richard

⁴⁷ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 564.

⁴⁸ For instance see O. Dapper, *Atlas Chinensis*, trans. John Ogilby (London, 1671), 2. Note the title page misattributes this work to Arnoldus Montanus, whose text on Japan was published by Ogilby the previous year. Dapper's work was a second edition to Nieuhof's account of the Dutch East India Company embassy to China.

Rolt in a dictionary on trade and commerce noted “the exportation of gold is prohibited in China; but the magistrates, notwithstanding, will privately sell it to the Europeans”⁴⁹. Finally, primary reports indicated the Chinese took part in country trade⁵⁰.

With the transition from the Ming to Qing Dynasty in 1644, primary sources of information reported China’s active encouragement of international trade. The Jesuit Louis Le Comte’s *Nouveaux Mémoires* (1696) was one of the first sources to explain the effect that dynastic change had on the China trade. He described the tenth “principle maxim” of Qing policy “to encourage trade as much as possible thro’ the whole empire [... and] to increase commerce, foreigners have been permitted to come into the ports of China, a thing till lately never known”⁵¹. In the eighteenth century, Du Halde reiterated these changes in Chinese policy and pointed out that the ports had been opened to all nations, though adding the qualifications that it was only the port of Canton that is open to Europeans, and then only at certain times of the year, and even then they must anchor outside the port⁵². In spite of these limitations, a belief remained that China still offered opportunities for trade. The secular primary authors also described China’s active encouragement of foreign trade. For instance, a description of Laurence Lange’s envoy to China in 1717 published in John Green’s *A New General Collection of Voyages* (1745-7) claimed the Kang-Hsi Emperor gave money from his own treasury to encourage Chinese merchants to trade with the visiting Russians. He also reported that when the Russians could not find vent for their goods the Emperor removed duties on trade, which cost him 20, 000 ounces of silver⁵³. Thus, Europeans were aware of the trade that existed and of the changes in the Chinese policy.

Whether the China trade was beneficial to European countries, however, was a more contentious topic. From 1699 to 1751 an estimated ninety percent of British exports to China was silver⁵⁴. In exchange for the silver, the English primarily

49 Rolt, *A New Dictionary*, 130.

50 L. Le Comte, *Memoirs and Observations typographical, physical, mathematical, mechanical, natural, civil, and ecclesiastical, made in a late Journey through the Empire of China [...]*, translated from the Paris edition (London: Printed for B. Tooke and Sam Buckley, 1697), 290. Accurately translated from the original French see L. Le Comte, *Nouveaux mémoires sur l’état présent de la Chine*, 2 vols., 2 (Paris: Chez Jean Anisson, 1697²), 74; Thomas Salmon’s reiterated this point in the eighteenth century, describing how the Chinese carried merchandise within the Indian seas, particularly to India, Japan, the Philippines, and Java, where they then trade with Europeans. Salmon, 461.

51 Le Comte, *Memoirs and observations*, 290. For the original French see Le Comte, *Nouveaux mémoires*, Vol. 2, 73.

52 Du Halde, *A Description of the Empire of China*, Vol. 1, 335. For the original French see Du Halde, *Description géographique*, Vol. 2, 173.

53 Astley and Green, *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels*, Vol. 4, 579.

54 H. B. Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635-1834*, 4 vols., 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926-29), 307-313.

received luxury goods from China such as porcelain, silk and tea⁵⁵. The China trade was large enough that it enabled the development of a *chinoiserie* trend in Europe, and caused some concern over the balance of trade⁵⁶. Though antithetical to the idea that China was isolating itself from significant European trade, the commerce with China occasioned debate over the implications of the massive influx of Chinese luxury goods in exchange for European precious metals.

Before the sea route to East Asia was sufficiently opened to expand the China trade in the seventeenth century, there was little discussion about the balance of trade. For instance, in the sixteenth century, Mendoza did not express concern about the influx of goods from China, but this is not surprising as the significant flow of goods from China was yet to begin, and there was still hope that China would begin to accept European manufactured goods (not just silver). However, as trade increased, the debate over balance of trade intensified and by the seventeenth century, foreign trade was an extremely divisive topic. The group referred to as the mercantilists were diverse and the common traits that bind them historiographically are disputed⁵⁷. A sub-category of mercantilists labeled “bullionists” viewed the outward flow of silver in terms of the export of wealth (an idea that originated in earlier Spanish debates).

The varying views of the intrinsic value of money fundamentally shaped the balance of trade debate. Revisionist economic historians argue that silver should be regarded as a commodity rather than ‘money’. Many primary authors and Enlightenment geographers and philosophers agreed with this perspective and recognized the arbitrage profits from the silver trade to China. Thomas Astley’s popular travel collection described how Europe’s increasing trade with China led to goods such as “cloths, crystals, swords, clocks, striking-watches, repeating-clocks, telescopes, looking-glasses, etc” becoming “as cheap as in Europe [...] so that at present there is no trading to Advantage with any-thing but Silver in China; where considerable profit may be made by purchasing gold, which is a commodity there”⁵⁸.

55 H. Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800*, 2 vols., 2 (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 127 and 175.

56 The extent to which China was isolated is debated by a group of global economic historians deemed “Eurocentrists” such as E. L. Jones, *The European Miracle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and D. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1998) who maintain that China turned inwards; and “revisionists”, such as J. M. Blaut, *Eight Eurocentric Historians* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2000), who admits that the Chinese government discouraged, and at times prohibited, oceanic trade, but nonetheless argues an intense level of trade occurred in spite of these restrictions.

57 See D. C. Coleman, “Mercantilism Revisited”, *The Historical Journal*, 23 (1980): 773-791 for a review of the historiographical problems surrounding the study of mercantilism. E. F. Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, ed. E. F. Söderlund, 2 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1955²).

58 Astley and Green, *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 4 vols., 125. The same argument was made in *The modern part of an universal history* [...], 44 vols., 8 (London: Printed for S. Richardson, et. al., 1759), 238.

The drainage of specie to China did not concern Adam Smith, as the staunch anti-mercantilist viewed silver as a commodity. He argued that there were two consequences of the annual exportation of silver to the East Indies: the first was that plate was somewhat more expensive in Europe, and the second that coined silver rose in value. However, Smith maintained that these consequences were “too insignificant to deserve any part of the public attention”⁵⁹. Not all philosophers agreed. In 1732 Richard Cantillon, an Irish author, argued for maintaining a favorable balance of trade, which to him meant exporting manufactured products⁶⁰. He believed the East India trade was profitable to the Dutch Republic, at the expense of the rest of Europe, because the Dutch traded the Eastern goods to Germany, Italy, Spain and the new World in return for money, which they sent to the Indies to buy more goods. While his view on the balance of trade slowly lost currency, Cantillon was an early observer of the global dimensions of the trade network and the place of the East India trade within it⁶¹.

Popular geographies also identified the importance of China in global trade. For instance, a geography by Joseph Randall, a schoolteacher and agriculturalist, published in 1743 demonstrated awareness that trade was not bilateral and deficits should not be considered in isolation of the global system. Describing the East Indies trade, he argued British exports to China, India and Persia, which included bullion, clothes and several other items were exchanged for goods such as china-ware, tea, and cabinets “of which, ‘tis supposed, as much is re-exported to foreign nations, as repays all the bullion carried to these places, and a considerable balance besides”⁶². Discussion of global trading linkages reveals the integral part that China had in the international trade system. In this sense, Eurocentrism and Sinocentrism both misrepresent the diversity of European worldviews in the eighteenth century, where many contemplated the multiple poles involved in global trade.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, as the support for mercantilism waned, there was less concern over the negative balance of trade with China. Although China sold European luxury goods in exchange for precious metals, the trade was recognized as part of a larger system of global commerce. Views of the China trade were not stagnant over the early modern period. European observers also understood that China’s trade policy changed and the Middle Kingdom was not as absolutely chained to their ancient maxims as previously supposed. The actual trade reflected an image of China as powerful and not entirely inflexible.

59 Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 565.

60 R. Cantillon, *Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en général*, ed. and transl. H. Higgs, C. B. Reissued for The Royal Economic Society by Frank Cass and Co., LTD. (London, 1959), Part III, Chapter I: ‘Of Foreign Trade’.

61 Montesquieu also described the global trade system that connected the Americas, Asia, Africa and Europe. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 392. For the original French see Montesquieu, *De l’esprit des lois*, 71.

62 J. Randall, *A System of Geography; or, a Dissertation on the Creation and various Phenomena of the Terraqueous Globe [...]* (London: printed for J. Lord, 1744), 344.

VI. CONCLUSION

By the end of the eighteenth century Europeans were still looking for solutions to expand the China trade. Alexander Dalrymple – a Scottish born East India Company traveler and researcher who spent time in Canton tirelessly trying to develop a more open international commerce – argued in 1769 that the China trade should be moved from Canton to Balambangan Island, near Borneo, where the duties would be less and trade would be freer. He pointed out this was also in the interest of the Chinese merchants who could be freed from the Hong Merchants, whom they had to pay to preserve their privileges⁶³. In a neutral land, *both* the British and Chinese merchants would benefit from independence from their respective governments. This perspective allies the interests of the British and Chinese governments against British and Chinese merchants. Dalrymple's suggestion reflects how the linear story of Europeans entering the modern world with Smith's advocacy of the free market while the Chinese stagnated due to isolationism, fails to capture the nuanced views and various agendas of eighteenth century observers.

The comments in geographical, philosophical and primary works available in Europe indicate a well-rounded and complex understanding of China's policy towards foreign trade. First, there was an appreciation of China's motivations and unique ability to focus inward and rely on internal markets throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Second, the problems contributing to the difficult trade relationship were not always seen as stemming from the Chinese. National rivalries and the monopolistic system of the European trading companies were deemed hindering forces on the European side. Finally, there was awareness of actual trade and of active Chinese encouragement of foreign trade, as well as knowledge that China's formal policy did not always dictate reality. The debate over the balance of trade with China reveals an understanding of the multiple poles involved in global commerce. The narrative of Chinese isolation was not a post-Enlightenment construction; however, it reflects only part of a wider context of the early modern discussion on the China trade that points to European commentators and observers who understood China's unique capacity to gain wealth from domestic trade; who did not assume the superiority of their trading policies; and who recognized China's integral place in the early modern world.

⁶³ Alexander Dalrymple, *A Full and Clear Proof that the Spaniards can have no Claim to Balambangan* (London: J. Nourse, 1774), 13-16 and 96.

The power of apprehending ‘otherness’: cultural intermediaries as imperial agents in New France

PAUL COHEN

I. INTRODUCTION

Facing otherness was not merely an inevitable feature of life in France’s culturally diverse North American empire, it stood in some fundamental sense at its very center. I propose to begin this reflection on those implications of the European confrontation with human diversity that were specific to French America by considering an experiment in cultural exchange engineered by Samuel Champlain. In 1610, early in his tenure as leader of the Québec colony, Champlain sent several young Frenchmen to live with Amerindian communities, ranging from nearby Algonquin groups to the considerably more distant Huron settled along the Great Lakes, and in return welcomed the children of Amerindian leaders into the French settlement. Champlain hoped that his emissaries would familiarize themselves with their hosts’ cultures, learn their languages, and glean valuable information about the fur trade, local politics, geography, and a possible northwest passage, so that they could subsequently serve him as interpreters and informants¹.

Traditional historiographical treatments of New France accorded Franco-Amerindian encounters like these little emphasis, focusing instead on the

¹ See Gilles Havard, *Empire et métissages. Indiens et Français dans le Pays d’en Haut 1660-1715* (Paris: Septentrion-Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), 65, 389.

origins and growth of European settlement and political institutions. These historians founded their work on the notion that the history of French North America and of Amerindians represented two separate (albeit related) histories². For much of the twentieth century, Québécois historians were preoccupied with tracing the contours of the *Belle province's* distinct society and uncovering its distinctively French roots, and therefore relegated the history of Amerindians and their relations with the French to an even harder to reach back burner³.

Beginning in the 1960s, as scholars increasingly turned their attention to the history of the native peoples of the Americas, they likewise began to think about the history of European-Amerindian contact in new, more complex ways – and to credit them with growing historical significance. Historians developed concepts like ‘frontier’, ‘borderlands’, ‘backcountry’, and Richard White’s influential ‘middle ground’ in order to problematize these interactions in ways which acknowledge the phenomenon of European empire, the structuring influence of power, and the historical reality of violence on the one hand, and the spaces for cooperation and collaboration, negotiation and compromise, Amerindian agency and autonomy on the other⁴. Their work not only drew attention to areas

2 On how the historiographies of Canada and of Amerindians developed separately, see James W. St. G. Walker, “The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing”, *Historical Papers / Communications historiques*, 6, 1 (1971): 21-51, and Bruce G. Trigger, “The Historian’s Indian: Native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing from Charlevoix to the Present”, *Canadian Historical Review*, 67, 3 (1986): 315-342; and in the French Canadian context in particular, Sylvie Vincent, “Les Manuels d’histoire sont-ils porteurs de stéréotypes sur les Amérindiens, ou Que sont devenus le ‘bon Huron’ et le ‘méchant Iroquois?’”, *Bulletin de la Société des Professeurs d’Histoire du Québec*, 16, 2 (1978): 25-28, and Christian Laville, “Les Amérindiens d’hier dans les manuels d’histoire d’aujourd’hui”, *Traces*, 29, 2 (1991), 29-33. For parallel developments in the historiography of the United States, see James H. Merrell, “Some Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians”, *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 46, 1 (January 1989): 94-119, Bernard W. Sheehan, “Indian-White Relations in Early America: A Review Essay”, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 26, 2 (April 1960): 267-286, and James Axtell, “Europeans, Indians, and the Age of Discovery in American History Textbooks”, *American Historical Review*, 92, 3 (June 1987): 621-632.

3 For reviews of the historiography of New France, see John C. Rule, “The Old Regime in America: A Review of Recent Interpretations of France in America”, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 19, 4 (October 1962): 575-600, Allan Greer, “Comparisons: New France”, in *A Companion to Colonial America*, ed. Daniel Vickers (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 469-88, and Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, “Making New France New Again: French Historians Rediscover their American Past”, *Common-Place*, 7, 4 (July 2007), www.common-place.org/vol-07/no-4/harvard/ (consulted 7 May 2010).

4 For overviews of the frontier/borderland historiography, see David J. Weber, “Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands”, *American Historical Review* 91, 1 (February 1986): 66-81, Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History”, *American Historical Review* 104, 3 (June 1999): 814-841, and the forum published in the subsequent issue, esp. Evan Haefeli, “A Note on the Use of North American Borderlands”, John R. Wunder and Pekka Hämäläinen, “Of Lethal Places and Lethal Essays”, and Adelman and Aron’s response, “Of Lively Exchanges and Larger Perspectives”, *American Historical Review*, 104, 4 (October 1999): 1222-1225, 1229-1234 and 1235-1239. Weber returned to the problem in “The Spanish Borderlands, Historiography Redux”, *History Teacher*, 39, 1 (November 2005): 43-56. On the “middle ground” concept, see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge

long neglected by scholarship, it demonstrated that the history of New France in particular, and of the colonial Americas more generally, could not be understood without taking Amerindians into account⁵.

These scholars assigned considerable prominence in their research to Amerindian-European interactions like the exchange of French and Amerindian youths imagined by Champlain. Underscoring how frequent and intense such exchanges were, their work mapped the complex contours of European-Amerindian contact. They construed such encounters to be components of the frontier experience, liminal situations in which the distinct worlds of French settlers and Amerindian societies met, a phase of coexistence that was both initiated and bounded in time by the steady imposition of European control in the Americas.

By situating these interactions within the broader context of the construction of European Atlantic empires, their work drew particular attention to the crucial role of cultural intermediaries in brokering such relationships – and in providing imperial authorities the information and tools they needed to establish and expand their authority⁶. Perhaps the most striking illustration of how Europeans

University Press, 1991), as well as the forums on “A Historian Who Has Changed Our Thinking: A Roundtable on the Work of Richard White”, in *Western Historical Quarterly*, 33, 2 (Summer 2002), and on “The Middle Ground Revisited” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 63, 1 (January 2006).

5 James Axtell argues that indigenous peoples shaped the history of colonial America in decisive ways in “Colonial America without the Indians: Counterfactual Reflections”, *Journal of American History*, 73, 4 (March 1987): 981-996. For reviews of Amerindians’ evolving place within the historiography, see Daniel Richter, “Whose Indian History?”, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 50, no. 2 (April 1993): 379-393, and Ian Steele, “Exploding Colonial American History: Amerindian, Atlantic, and Global Perspectives”, *Review in American History*, 26, 1 (March 1998): 70-95. For recent overviews of New France’s history which follow this perspective, see for example Philip Boucher, *Les Nouvelles Frances. France in America, 1500-1815. An Imperial Perspective* (Providence, R. I.: John Carter Brown Library, 1989) and *France and the American Tropics to 1700: Tropics of Discontent?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), and Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, *Histoire de l’Amérique française* (2003), 2nd ed. (Paris: Flammarion, 2006).

6 Cultural and social anthropologists have contributed to a substantial body of scholarship theorizing the complex roles cultural intermediaries play. See for example Clifford Geertz, “The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, 2 (1960): 228-249 and Irwin Press, “Ambiguity and Innovation: Implications for the Genesis of the Culture Broker”, *American Anthropologist*, 71, 2 (1969): 205-217. More specifically, historians of early modern and modern empires are increasingly underscoring go-betweens’ roles – see for example Ralph A. Austen, and Jonathan Derrick, *Middlemen of the Cameroons Rivers: The Duala and their Hinterland, c. 1600-c. 1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), Jeremy D. Cohen, “Cultural and Commercial Intermediaries in an Extra-Legal System of Exchange: The *Practicos* of the Venezuelan Littoral in the Eighteenth Century”, *Itinerario*, 27, 2 (2003): 105-124, Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*, eds. Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), and Natalie Rothman, “Between Venice and Istanbul: Trans-Imperial Subjects and Cultural Mediation in the Early Modern Mediterranean”, Ph.D dissertation (University of Michigan, 2006). In the context of the colonial Americas, see for example Daniel

mobilized go-betweens to further their imperial interests is Hernan Cortés's conquest of Mexico. When Cortés landed in the Yucatán, he could draw on the local knowledge and linguistics skills of a Spanish priest who had been shipwrecked on the peninsula seven years before, and who during his time in captivity among the Mayans had learned their language, to win the cooperation of Mayan groups. When the conquistador marched on Tenochtitlan at the head of a Spanish-Mayan army, he turned for help to *La Malinche*, an Aztec noblewoman who had been sold to the Mayans as a slave, and who had been given to Cortés as a gift. Her mastery of her native Nahuatl proved decisive in helping the Spanish decipher internal Aztec politics⁷.

While such perspectives have shed crucial light on the importance of native-European relationships in the history of the early modern Americas, my goal in this brief article is to suggest that they do not adequately represent the full importance of coexistence in the case of New France. I argue here that cultural intermediaries played an especially important role in French North America, and contributed to the establishment, extension and perpetuation of French imperial power in decisive ways. I argue further that intermediaries' particular prominence was specific to the French case, far surpassing that enjoyed by their counterparts in the other European powers' spheres of American influence.

Why did cultural intermediaries enjoy special prominence in New France? This article briefly traces a twofold explanation. Champlain's project to embed young Frenchmen among well-disposed Amerindian communities is telling for two reasons: first, it testifies to how concerned French colonial administrators were to train or recruit intermediaries to help them cultivate and maintain relationships with neighboring Amerindian groups; second, it illustrates that the close proximity of French and Amerindians in New France made this not only an urgent imperative, but one which was relatively straightforward for the French to meet. By helping French and Amerindian interlocutors bridge a multitude of difficult language and cultural barriers, intermediaries satisfied a host of important cultural, commercial, social and political functions within the spheres of French influence in North America. A variety of middlemen, ranging

K. Richter, "Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics: New York-Iroquois Relations, 1664-1701", *Journal of American History*, 75 (1988): 40-67. On linguistic intermediaries in particular, see *The Language Encounter in the Americas, 1492-1800*, ed. by Edward C. Gray and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Stephen Greenblatt, "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century", in *Learning to Curse Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1990), 16-39, and Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

7 See Frances Karttunen, *Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors* (Piscataway, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 1-22, and Cortés's own testimony, in *La Conquête du Mexique*, Désiré Charnay (trans.) (Paris: La Découverte, 1991), letter 1, 55. See also Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud, "La lengua: problemáticas del encuentro en la conquista de Méjico", in *Diálogo y conflicto de culturas: estudios comparativos de procesos transculturales entre Europe y América Latina*, eds. Hans-Otto Dill and Gabriele Knauer (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert Verlag, 1993), 27-36.

from interpreters, soldiers, diplomats, fur traders, Jesuit missionaries, and French-Amerindian *métis*, mobilized their cultural knowledge to assist French and Amerindian leaders in brokering diplomatic agreements, Amerindian hunters and French fur traders in fixing peltry prices, and French and Amerindian soldiers in coordinating military operations.

I will develop two points in my discussion of intermediaries within France's continental North American empire:

First, the very character of France's presence in North America – sparsely populated French settlements in close proximity to Amerindian groups, commercial activity grounded in the fur trade, and missionary campaigns aimed at bringing the Christian gospel to the native populations of the Americas – guaranteed that French and Amerindian communities entered into a variety of strong relationships. This fact defined the environment within which cultural intermediaries learned the kinds of knowledge which made it possible to bridge cultural gaps.

Second, the character of the French presence in North America also defined an environment which made intermediaries' skills invaluable. Go-betweens played a crucial role not only in making French-Amerindian coexistence possible, but in extending and sustaining French influence.

II. FRENCH-AMERINDIAN COEXISTENCE IN NEW FRANCE

The history of French empire in North America is one of frustrated ambitions and unlikely successes. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the French monarchy shared with the other major European powers a clear set of ideas concerning empire in general, and the shape it intended its future American empire to take in particular⁸. The crown, chief officials like Jean-Baptiste Colbert, apologists for royal authority and empire, theoreticians of the mercantilist system, and wealthy investors in the monopoly trading companies founded their imperial ambitions upon three distinct goals. First, the Americas were seen as the site for potentially profitable commercial ventures, regions from which natural resources as varied as Brazilian redwood, Canadian peltries and Caribbean sugar could be extracted and brought to the metropole for transformation, resale and consumption. Second, the Americas were viewed as a *tabula rasa* upon which the crown could develop ambitious projects of colonial settlement, aimed at reproducing forms of social organization, legal regimes, property ownership, agricultural development, religious practice, and political authority modeled on Old France. Third, the crown was committed to assisting the Catholic church in evangelizing the new continent and bringing the Christian gospel to its Amerindian inhabitants. The monarchy took concrete steps to achieve all three of these objectives: it chartered trading companies

⁸ See Anthony Pagden's examination of European ideologies of empire in the early modern period, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c. 1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

with monopolies over commerce in commodities like peltries⁹; it conducted sustained campaigns to recruit French subjects to migrate to New France and settle in the young colony, and it imposed seigneurialism and Paris's customary law code upon New France¹⁰; and it threw its moral and financial weight behind the Catholic church's missionary enterprise¹¹.

By many measures, this enterprise was a great success. Beginning in the later decades of the seventeenth century, a Catholic, agrarian, feudal settler society took shape along the St Lawrence river, with smaller outposts in Acadia and the Illinois country. Savvy merchants and investors in the fur and salt cod trade took in healthy profits. The Society of Jesus established a network of missions deep into the Great Lakes region. At its geographical zenith, Versailles commanded a vast North American empire stretching from Newfoundland and the Gaspé peninsula to the Mississippi river valley.

By many of the crown and colony's elites' own criteria, however, New France was to a certain extent a failure. Royal efforts to recruit settlers notwithstanding, only a small number of French subjects crossed the Atlantic to live in Canada. In the period between 1660 and 1759, a mere 75,000 Frenchmen migrated to New France; by comparison, in the period between 1700 and 1775, nearly 500,000 people settled in the thirteen British colonies in North America¹². The long-term corollary to this migratory imbalance was a stark divergence in the two kingdom's American colonies' demographic fortunes. New France remained sparsely populated, counting only 3,215 white inhabitants in 1666, and a mere 42,000 in 1730 (including the Louisiana colony); in 1730, Britain's thirteen colonies counted 400,000 souls¹³.

9 Commerce is probably the most thoroughly studied aspect of France's presence in the Americas. See for example Cameron Nish, *Les Bourgeois-Gentilshommes de la Nouvelle-France, 1729-1748* (Ville Saint-Laurent: Fides, 1968), Dale Miquelon, *Dugard of Rouen: French Trade to Canada and the West Indies, 1729-1770* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), Miquelon, *New France, 1701-1744: A Supplement to Europe* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), Miquelon, "Canada's Place in the French Imperial Economy: An Eighteenth-Century Overview", *French Historical Studies*, 15, 3 (Spring 1988): 432-443, and John F. Boshier, *The Canada Merchants, 1713-1763* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

10 See for example Leslie Choquette, *Frenchmen into Peasants: Modernity and Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), Louis Dechêne, *Habitants and Merchants in Seventeenth Century Montreal* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), and Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

11 See Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America, 1632-1650* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000) and Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire. Les missions françaises au XVIIe siècle (1600-1650)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

12 Compare figures in Choquette, *Frenchmen into Peasants* with Aaron Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700-1775: New Estimates", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 22, 4 (Spring 1992): 691-709.

13 Population figures in James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 31, 321, and 423-427.

French settlements' low population densities had important consequences for French relations with Amerindian communities. Unlike the dynamic, robust, and densely populated colonies of British North America, engaged in intensive agriculture and commerce, and which progressively pushed native groups to their boundaries, New France's inhabitants generally lived in close proximity to Amerindian communities. The French colony's white settlers could not avoid coming into frequent contact with Amerindians, even in urbanized centers like Québec and Montréal.

The French colony's broader objectives generated three distinct 'push factors' which drew Frenchmen away from French settlements on the St Lawrence and into the largely Amerindian world beyond. The first was commercial: initially founded by trading companies with monopolies on the fur trade, New France's economic fortunes depended upon the maintenance of lasting relationships with Amerindian suppliers of peltries. *Coueurs des bois* lived in close proximity with Amerindians to hunt and trap animals, trade for furs, and supply the French merchants in Québec and Montréal who then resold furs to the hungry French market.

The second was geopolitical. Faced with the menace of Britain's North American colonies and its substantially greater population, wealth, and military power, the French sought out Amerindian political allies and military auxiliaries to complement their own limited financial, demographic and military resources. Indeed, for the French monarchy, the establishment of diplomatic agreements and military alliances with Amerindian communities stood at the very heart of its strategy to defend its North American colony¹⁴. The crown's financial investment in establishing and sustaining these alliances made up nearly a quarter of its total expenditures in the colony¹⁵. As Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, who served as governor of New France from 1703 to 1725, put it, "The policy of a governor of Canada does not consist so much in taking care of the French who are within the scope of his government as in maintaining a close union with the savage Nations that are his Allies"¹⁶. Strategic imperatives thus sent royal officials to negotiate alliances with Amerindian groups, French soldiers to fight alongside native allies and man French forts and trading posts along the Great Lakes and the Mississippi.

14 On the role of France's Amerindian diplomatic and military partners in conflicts with Britain, see Richard R. Johnson, "The Search for a Usable Indian: An Aspect of the Defense of Colonial New England", *Journal of American History*, 63, 3 (December 1977): 623-651, White, *Middle Ground*, and Denys Delâge, "War and the French-Indian Alliance", *European Review of Native American Studies*, 5, 1 (1991): 15-20.

15 Catherine Desbarats, "The Cost of Early Canada's Native Alliances: Reality and Scarcity's Rhetoric", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 52, 4 (October 1995), 609-630.

16 Archives Nationales de France, Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer (Aix-en-Provence), Colonies, F3, vol. 7, fols. 178, 252-253, quoted here from Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century*, Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott (trans.) (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 181.

The third push factor was religious. French Catholic religious orders, including the Recollect Friars, the Ursuline sisters, and the Society of Jesus, and with the direct assistance of the crown, set the Christian evangelical imperative to work by establishing missions aimed at converting Amerindians to Christianity. Jesuit priests in particular settled among the Huron, Iroquois and other groups, to build missions and begin the challenging, long-term task of converting Amerindians to Catholicism.

Furthermore, a number of 'pull factors' encouraged various inhabitants of the French colony to leave of their own initiative and integrate Amerindian communities in varying degrees. The extremely skewed sex ratio within the French colony – the 1666 census indicated that two-thirds of New France's white inhabitants were men, a situation which did not reach equilibrium until the eighteenth century –, and Amerindian sex ratios skewed in turn towards women among communities whose male populations had been decimated by warfare, created strong incentives for French men to flee poor marriage prospects on the St Lawrence and instead seek female companionship among the Algonquin or Huron. The booming fur trade likewise created economic incentives for young men to abandon the life of peasantry and agricultural labor that awaited them within the colony to chase the substantial profits which could be made in the peltry exchange. The fur trade and the Amerindian sexual economy convinced many to become *coureurs des bois*.

New France thus took shape as a modest, thinly peopled European-style settlement which constantly bled large numbers of colonists, who left to spend substantial stretches of time among Amerindian communities in what was called the *Pays d'en haut* (which the British would later call Upper Canada)¹⁷. It thus differed in fundamental ways from its British neighbors to the south. It also diverged from the hopes and goals which the French crown had set for it. The monarchy repeatedly attempted to set the colony back on its alleged course. Louis XIV's program to offer passage and dowries to 700 unmarried women hailing from modest backgrounds to be married to French colonists was aimed at equalizing the colony's skewed sex ratios¹⁸. The monarchy also regularly tried to close the *Pays*

17 On French and Amerindian coexistence, see White, *The Middle Ground*, Jan Grabowski, "Searching for the Common Ground: Natives and French in Montreal, 1700-1730", in *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society, Montréal, May 1992*, ed. James Pritchard (Cleveland: French Colonial Historical Society, 1993), 59-73, Grabowski, "The Common Ground: Settled, Natives and French in Montreal, 1667-1760", Ph.D dissertation, Université de Montréal (1993), Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), Havard, *Empire et métissages*, and Denys Delâge, "L'Alliance franco-amérindienne des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles. Spécificités, changements de régime, mémoires", in *Actes du Colloque international Expériences et mémoire. Partager en français la diversité du monde*, University of Bucarest, 12-16 September 2006, <http://www.celat.ulaval.ca/histoire.memoire/b2006/Delage.pdf>.

18 See Choquette, *Frenchmen into Peasants* and Yves Landry, *Orphelines en France, pionnières au Canada. Les filles du roi au XVII^e siècle* (Montréal: Lémeac, 1992).

d'en haut to French men, by prohibiting them from leaving the St Lawrence. The fact that these latter measures were largely failures testifies to the Amerindians world's considerable political, social and commercial importance for the French presence in North America – and the considerable force of attraction this world exercised over many of the colony's inhabitants¹⁹. It illustrates the paradox of an imperial venture which, though conceived as an attempt to reproduce a white, European, Catholic, sedentary and largely agricultural society on the American continent, found itself compelled to abandon much of this ideal and instead pursue coexistence and cooperation with Amerindians²⁰.

III. GO-BETWEENS

In a thinly peopled empire, built upon the fur trade and imbued with a religious ethos oriented to the conversion of the other, and whose good conscience, prosperity and, indeed, very survival were predicated on cultivating and maintaining close relationships with Amerindian partners, intermediaries and go-betweens of all sorts fulfilled decisive functions. Diplomats negotiated treaties and military alliances, *coureurs des bois* brought Amerindian fur trappers and French fur traders together, *métis* helped Jesuit priests master local tongues and make sense of Amerindian religious beliefs, cultural brokers smoothed over misunderstandings, and interpreters helped people bridge intractable language gaps²¹. It was France's capacity to recruit and train go-betweens that made it possible to project French influence far into the interior of the North American continent.

The need for intermediaries – particularly interpreters capable of bridging language barriers – manifested itself from the very beginning of contact. As everywhere in the early stages of European colonization in the Americas, one of the earliest solutions was to convince or coerce Amerindians to cross the Atlantic to spend an extended period in France, learn French, and then serve as interpreters upon their return to North America. Jacques Cartier, for example, kidnapped the sons of an Indian chief and forced them to winter in Saint-Malo (although Cartier ultimately convinced the chief to grant his approval)²². As time went on, the French succeeded in enticing Amerindians to make the trip to France voluntarily, thus forsaking kidnapping²³.

19 See Havard, *Empire et métissages*.

20 For a similar argument, see Havard and Vidal, *Histoire de l'Amérique française*, 12.

21 See for example Victor E. Hanzeli, "De la connaissance des langues indiennes de la Nouvelle France aux dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles", *Amerindia: Revue d'Ethnolinguistique Amérindienne*, 6 (1984): 209-225.

22 Jacques Cartier, *Relations*, ed. Michel Bideaux (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1986), 2nd relation, ch. 2, 135-138, and ch. 3, 142.

23 On the kidnapping of Amerindians to train interpreters, see Bruce G. Trigger and William R. Swagerty, "Entertaining Strangers: North America in the Sixteenth Century", in *The Cambridge*

The French also set out to master Amerindian tongues for themselves. The authors of many early travel accounts took pains to transcribe Indian words as they learned them – like Cartier, who notes in passing that the Algonquian “call a hatchet in their language *cochy* and a knife *bacan*”²⁴ – and to include rudimentary lexicons. Such evidence illustrates not only how rapidly a minimal knowledge of local cultures was acquired, but also their authors’ concerns to transmit this knowledge and accelerate the process of training intermediaries. Only extensive immersion in Amerindian societies could make possible the genuine acquisition of a deeper familiarity with their languages and cultures – a fact, as we have seen, that Champlain clearly recognized. It was precisely those Frenchmen who spent long periods of time among Amerindians, like fur traders, soldiers and missionaries, who could ultimately serve as effective intermediaries.

Like Champlain, French officials in general clearly understood the importance of locating and retaining competent and reliable interpreters. They frequently offered regular interpreters long-term, remunerated offices. Particularly valuable linguistic intermediaries were sometimes thanked for their services with substantial titles or rewards. The Brittany native Olivier Letardif, who had learned Montagnais, Huron and Algonquin while working with the Jesuits, served Champlain and the royal superintendant of New France as clerk-interpreter, purchased a share in the seigneurie of Beaupré and ultimately served as seigneurial judge²⁵. Charles Le Moyne, born in Normandy, served the Jesuits in Huronia, before working as an interpreter and a soldier for the French army, was subsequently granted a *seigneurie* and a noble title²⁶. In the culturally social and fluid world of New France, where social barriers could be porous and interactions with Amerindian groups a commonplace fact, cultural intermediaries could parlay their skills into an upward social trajectory that would have been unthinkable in Old France.

Cultural intermediaries’ skills made them indispensable actors in the mediation of European-Amerindian diplomatic, commercial and social relations, which in turn gave them considerable influence as individuals. Well aware of

History of the Native Peoples of the Americas, vol. I, *North America*, [1996], pt. 1, 325-398, es 337-338, James Axtell, “At the Water’s Edge: Trading in the Sixteenth Century”, in *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 144-181, and Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), es 12-15.

24 Cartier, *Relations*, 1st relation, ch. 18, 113: “appellent ung hachot en leur langue *cochy* et ung cousteau *bacan*”.

25 Marcel Trudel, “Olivier Letardif”, in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 1, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id__nbr=407&interval=25&PHPSESSID=s1u60pa61pe005rfv55ciubia6 (consulted 25 May 2010).

26 Jean-Jacques Lefebvre, “Charles le Moyne de Longueil et de Châteauguay”, in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, vol. 1, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id__nbr=426&PHPSESSID=s1u60pa61pe005rfv55ciubia6 (consulted 25 May 2010).

their importance in brokering Franco-Amerindian relationships, intermediaries naturally sought to capitalize on their role, and were jealous of their precious cultural knowledge. French Jesuits who at the start of their missions worked hard to acquire Amerindian tongues so as to be equipped to preach the Christian good news, often found interpreters – whether Amerindian, French, or *métis* – extremely reluctant to help them learn local idioms. Jesuits filled the pages of their *Relations* with desperate laments concerning recalcitrant interpreters and language teachers. In one example, Pierre Biard complained that “This Interpreter had never wanted to communicate his knowledge of the language to any one, not even to the Reverend Recollect Fathers, who had constantly importuned him for ten years”²⁷. In another instance, the same Jesuit threw up his hands concerning an Amerindian who had traveled to France, learned French and been baptized a Catholic there, but had given up Christianity after returning to Canada: “the perfidy of the Apostate, who, contrary to his promise, and notwithstanding the offers I made him, was never willing to teach me, – his disloyalty even going so far as to purposely give me a word of one signification for another”²⁸. Here, an intermediary furnished false linguistic information in order to throw his eager pupil off the cultural scent. For intermediaries, to disseminate mastery of their skill set would have been to debase their own value and importance.

Their functions as indispensable linchpins and facilitators of intercultural dialogue made it possible for intermediaries to manipulate their skills in more surreptitious ways as well. For French officials, merchants and missionaries who were largely or even entirely dependent on go-betweens in their dealings with Amerindians constantly faced the possibility that their intermediaries were not working in good faith on their behalf. Interpreters for example could conceal, mistranslate, invent or modify messages across language barriers. Such actions could lead to serious misunderstandings, modify the outcome of trade negotiations, or influence diplomatic conversations. In one episode which took place during one of Jacques Cartier’s Canadian expeditions, when the French had intended to exchange European goods they considered to be of little value for peltries, they learned to their chagrin that their interpreters had revealed to their Amerindian interlocutors that “what we bartered to them was of no value, and that for what they brought us, they could as easily get hatchets as knives”²⁹.

27 See Biard, *Relation* (1616), quoted here from *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901), vol. 4, 210-211: “ce Truchement n’avoit jamais voulu communiquer a personne la cognoissance qu’il avoit de ce langage, non pas mesme aux RR. Recolects, qui depuis dix ans n’avoient cessé de l’en importuner”.

28 Le Jeune, *Relation* (1635), in *Jesuit Relations*, ed. Thwaites, vol. 7, 112, 283n: “En tant d’années qu’on a esté en ces païs, on n’a jamais rien pü tirer de l’interprete ou truchement nommé Marsolet, qui pour excusé disoit qu’il avoit juré qu’il ne donneroit rien du langage de des Sauvages à qui que ce fût”.

29 Quoted from Axtell, “At the Water’s Edge”, 160.

Amerindian groups likewise recognized the advantages that could accrue from limiting European access to knowledge of their own cultures. Controlling the mediation of cultural difference made it possible for natives to more successfully define the terms of their relationships with Europeans. Le Jeune summed up his frustration with Nicolas Marsolet, a native of Rouen who had learned the Montagnais and Algonquin languages while in Canada, as follows: “In all the years that we have been in this country no one has ever been able to learn anything from the interpreter named Marsolet, who, for excuse, said he had sworn that he would never teach the Savage tongue to any one whomsoever”. Marsolet’s remark points to the possibility that Amerindian communities themselves sought to restrict the dissemination of their linguistic knowledge, by imposing oaths upon interpreters not to reveal their philological secrets. Even if Marsolet’s defense was merely a self-serving fiction, he clearly expected it to be plausible to the Jesuit, suggesting that this was a familiar phenomenon in New France³⁰. In seventeenth-century New Netherlands, for example, a Dutchman observed precisely this phenomenon:

that they [local Indian communities] rather try to conceal their language from us than to properly communicate it, except in things that have to do with everyday trade, saying that it is sufficient for us to understand them to this extent³¹.

Likewise, Amerindian leaders and shamans sometimes counseled their communities to refuse to teach their languages to Jesuits, recognizing in missionaries’ linguistic curiosity a prelude to future attempts to carry out a wholesale transformation in their belief systems. Le Jeune for example recalled having to face “the malice of the sorcerer [a shaman], who sometimes prevented them from teaching me”³². These examples suggest that Amerindians sought to control the training of go-betweens and intermediaries, so as to resist outside influence over their communities and manage the character of their relationships with the French.

A comparison of the history of cultural intermediaries in Britain’s North American colonies throws the specificity of the French case into sharp relief. The inhabitants of British North America experienced considerably greater difficulties in training and recruiting go-betweens than the French. In the period following first

30 Le Jeune, *Relation* (1635), in *Jesuit Relations*, ed. Thwaites, vol. 7, 30-31: “la perfidie de l’Apostat, qui contre sa promesse, & nonobstant les offres que le luy faisois, ne m’a jamais voulu enseigner, voire sa déloyauté est venuë jusques à ce point de me donner exprez un mot d’une signification pour un autre”.

31 James H. Merrell, “‘The Customes of Our Country’: Indians and Colonists in Early America”, in *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, eds. Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 117-156, quote on 129.

32 See for example the Jesuit Paul Le Jeune’s complaints in Le Jeune, *Relation* (1635), in *Jesuit Relations*, ed. Thwaites, vol. 7, 30-31: “la malice du sorcier qui defendoit par fois qu’on m’enseignast”.

contact, the British case followed that of the other European powers, and whenever possible Englishmen themselves served as intermediaries or interpreters, or local authorities sought out competent go-betweens. Subsequently, however, British colonial authorities began to demand that Amerindians who did business with them learn the English tongue themselves. In the 1670s, the government of Virginia required that Amerindians furnish their own interpreters. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, colonial authorities fixed knowledge of English as a prerequisite for Amerindians who wished to submit to British rule as settlement Indians. In Maryland, for example, the Piscataway chief began to study English, rejected polygamy, adopted English dress, and embraced Christianity³³. In their relations with their powerful Iroquois neighbors, British authorities in New England experienced substantial difficulties in scaring up effective interpreters and intermediaries. At the start of the eighteenth century, the government of New York does not appear to have been aware of a single Englishman who could speak the Iroquoian tongue. They instead named Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen, a Dutchman who had become a fluent Iroquois speaker after being taken into captivity in the 1690 Iroquois raid on Schenectady. The fact that Claessen knew no English made this a particularly awkward arrangement, and British officials had to call upon a second interpreter to translate their Dutch interpreter's rendering of Iroquois from the Dutch language into English³⁴.

The British 'failure' to mediate cultural difference with the Amerindian groups with which they came into contact stems from divergences in local conditions in the two sets of North American colonies. As we have already seen, Britain's colonies differed from France's territories in fundamental respects: land-hungry, densely populated, based upon European-style agriculture, and less committed to disseminating the Christian faith among America's indigenous peoples, Britain's relationships with neighboring Amerindian groups were in general substantially more hostile than those of the French. Surer of its military power and demographic resources, its society organized at greater remove from the Amerindian world, its economy more autonomous from Amerindian partnerships, and less engaged in the cross-cultural missionary dialogue, the British simply did not need or rely upon go-betweens to anywhere the same degree that the French did.

4. CONCLUSION

What does this discussion of the importance of cultural intermediaries tell us about the nature of France's North American empire? I would argue that it should draw our attention to four important characteristics of this historical experience.

33 Merrell, "The Customes of Our Countrey", 129-130.

34 See Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), *passim*, and esp. 220.

First, go-betweens played crucial roles in situations of cultural contact like that which prevailed in New France. Trade, intercultural dialogue, coexistence, political and military cooperation all depended upon the training and ready availability of culturally and linguistically competent intermediaries. This was a generalized phenomenon throughout the early modern Americas wherever and whenever Europeans and Amerindians faced off.

Second, the specific character of France's North American empire lent intermediaries particular importance in facilitating those activities and functions most important to its survival and vocation: commerce, diplomacy and military alliances with Amerindian partners, and the Catholic missionary enterprise. In this New France, composed of small colonial settlements located amidst independent and powerful Amerindian communities, whose prosperity and vitality depended upon the French-Amerindian peltry exchange, and whose strategic security in the face of rapidly growing British colonies likewise rested upon the assistance and cooperation of native military partners, intermediaries were kept busy doing indispensable work. To a certain extent, their capacity to successfully negotiate otherness stood at the very heart of the French imperial project.

Third, not only was intermediaries' work central to New France's security, prosperity, stability and day-to-day social life, it was nothing less than the key which made the extension and maintenance of French influence in North America possible. No asset was more valuable for the French with which to perpetuate their presence on the continent and protect it from Britain than the capacity to confront 'otherness', to attain a substantive understanding of the languages, cultural attitudes, political systems, intentions, and commercial interests of a range of actual and potential Amerindian partners. France's success in establishing a vast North American empire which, at its zenith, reached from the Gulf of Mexico north to the Great Lakes, and east to the Atlantic depended upon the mobilization of go-betweens in order to broker partnerships with native allies. As we saw in the episode with which we began this article, Champlain displayed from the colony's very beginnings a clear understanding of the importance of establishing cooperative relationships with Amerindians and of cultivating go-betweens when he sent French men off to join Amerindian communities. Cultural intermediaries should be seen as the 'weapons of the weak' for a fragile empire³⁵, a precious imperial 'force multiplier', a form of 'soft power' which allowed the French crown to leverage modest demographic, economic and military resources into a set of Franco-Amerindian partnerships which, when taken as a whole, represented something substantially more formidable.

And finally, the crucial, and as yet not fully understood, role of go-betweens in the history of French America throws into sharp relief essential features of France's North American empire which distinguish it from the other European

³⁵ The notion of "imperial weapons of the weak" is a nod to James Scott's concept of *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), who defines it in an entirely different context.

empires in the Americas. The formal conceptions of empire which European theorists developed on behalf of their patrons – including those who planned, promoted and defended the French imperial project – fixed as their objective the emergence of empires organized around European settler societies at their core. This was precisely what took shape in Britain's thirteen North American colonies, and in a more modest scale in the French settlements which grew up along the St Lawrence. But, as our discussion suggests, it would be a mistake to consider this the true 'core' of France's imperial presence. Rather, it was the arc of military posts, trading stations, and Jesuit missions which, in spite of their location along the very edges of French colonial settlement in the Americas, made it possible to link the Great Lakes, the Mississippi river valley and Louisiana together into a loose network capable of representing and promoting French interests. The soldiers, interpreters, *coureurs de bois*, fur traders, *métis* and Jesuit priests who could mediate the various French and Amerindian cultural worlds between which they shuttled, helped to broker the associations, compromises and agreements which allowed Franco-Amerindian coexistence and cooperation to take place. To a very real degree, then, France's 'empire' was not a form of colonial or imperial domination over native peoples at all (despite the fact that this is what the French crown had initially intended). Rather, it was both constituted and perpetuated by a loose web of partnerships and interdependent relationships between the French and Amerindian allies. In this world, decision-making could not be centralized in Versailles, or even in colonial capitals like Québec. Power was instead disseminated diffusely and widely in a complex and multipolar environment, shared between royal officials, fur traders, missionaries, settlers, and the Amerindian partners with which they interacted and upon whom the success of their commercial, religious, political and military enterprises depended. In a world built upon intercultural negotiation and cooperation – however vexed and problematic –, cultural intermediaries were the linchpins of the French imperial system, the sites and sinews of French power in New France, the real core of an imperial configuration quite unlike that of the other European empires in the Americas.

L'expérience de l' 'Autre' des missionnaires et le discours anthropologique. À propos des *Nouvelles de la presqu'île américaine de Californie* (1772) du missionnaire jésuite Johann Jakob Baegert

HANS-JÜRGEN LÜSEBRINK

I. TRACES BIOGRAPHIQUES ET DISCURSIVES

“La característica más marcada del libro de Baegert: [es] la de ser, en su parte etnográfica, esencialmente una monografía tribal basada en las observaciones personales del autor”, écrit Paul Kirchhoff, professeur à la Escuela Nacional de Antropología de la ville de Mexico en 1942 dans la préface de la première traduction en espagnol des *Nouvelles de la presqu'île américaine de Californie* (1772) du missionnaire jésuite alsacien Johann Jakob Baegert. Selon Kirchhoff, l'œuvre de Baegert caractérisée par son talent exceptionnel d'observateur¹, n'est pas seulement remarquable par le fait qu'elle constitue la première étude ethnographique sur les habitants de la presqu'île de Californie; elle s'impose aussi comme un travail pionnier dans le domaine de l'anthropologie ayant apporté un éclairage nouveau sur certains stades de l'évolution historique de l'humanité: “una fuente cuyo conocimiento resulta indispensable para el

1 P. Kirchhoff, “Las tribus de la Baja California y el libro del P. Baegert”, dans *Noticias de la Península Americana de California por el Rev. Padre Juan Jacobo Baegert. Con una introducción por P. Kirchhoff*. Primera edición española. Traducidas directamente del original Alemana publicada en Mannheim en 1772, por P. R. Hendrichs (México: Antigua Librería Robredo de José Porrúa e Hijos, 1942), xiii-xxxvii, ici xix.

estudioso de formas primitivas de la vida humana”². Un compte rendu de la traduction américaine, publiée en 1952, des *Nouvelles* de Baegert paru dans la *American Historical Review*, met également en avant la valeur de cette œuvre sur le plan de l’histoire culturelle, soulignant qu’elle constitue non seulement une source inégalable pour l’histoire des missions jésuites en Californie mais aussi un “document authentique” sur la vie des ethnies indiennes de Californie³.

Ces *Nouvelles* constituent l’œuvre majeure de Johann Jakob Baegert, né en 1717 à Schlettstadt dans le sud de l’Alsace, qui fut missionnaire à San Luis Gonzaga sur la côte est de la presqu’île californienne appartenant au vice-royaume de la nouvelle Espagne – une des missions jésuites les plus excentrées au sein de l’empire colonial espagnol⁴. Il séjourna dans cette mission de 1751 à 1768, date de l’interdiction de l’ordre des jésuites en Amérique du Sud et de l’expulsion de ces derniers des colonies espagnoles. Baegert, fils d’un artisan gantier et quatrième d’une famille de sept enfants, entra dans l’ordre des jésuites en 1736, en même temps que son frère cadet Georg, avec lequel il entretenait un échange épistolaire régulier tout au long de son séjour en Amérique⁵. Il fut ordonné prêtre en 1747 après des études de philosophie à Mayence puis de théologie à Molsheim et occupa d’abord un poste d’enseignant dans un collège jésuite à Hagenau en Alsace du Nord, avant d’être envoyé, en 1749, comme missionnaire en Amérique du Sud. Après un long voyage d’une durée de 14 mois qui le conduisit vers le sud de l’Espagne en passant par Augsbourg, Innsbruck, et Gênes, il se retrouva bloqué pour plusieurs mois dans le port de Cadix. Ce n’est qu’en mai 1750 qu’il atteignit enfin, en passant par Veracruz, la ville de Mexico d’où il entama la dernière étape de son long périple terrestre et maritime, le trajet en canoë qui le mènera jusqu’à son poste de mission en Basse Californie, sur la côte est de la presqu’île de Californie: il y restera jusqu’à l’interdiction de l’ordre des jésuites en 1768. Contraint, de même que tous ses frères jésuites, de quitter les colonies espagnoles, Baegert parvint, en 1768/69, à atteindre Cadix en passant par Veracruz et La Havanne, et rejoignit ensuite l’Alsace, à

2 Kirchhoff, “Las tribus”, xix.

3 H. Aschmann, *Observations in Lower California*. By Johann Jakob Baegert. Translated with an Introduction and notes by M. M. Brandenburg and Carl L. Baumann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), dans *American Historical Review*, 32, August (1957): 396-397, ici 396: “Father Baegert’s report on California has a unique place in the literature concerning Jesuit activities on that peninsula, in that it is the only comprehensive account written by an actual participant. As a story of the whole mission project it has many inadequacies, omissions and inaccuracies, but as a description of the lands and people under Jesuit control from 1751 to 1768, it is an authentic document by an eyewitness”.

4 Kirchhoff, “Las tribus”, xx: “la misión de San Luis Gonzaga, donde trabajó Baegert, era la más aislada de toda, no por la distancia que la separaba de otras, sino por encontrarse fuera de las rutas que conectaban las misiones más importantes [...]”.

5 Cf. la biographie de Baegert, J. Gass, *Elsässische Jesuiten* (Strassburg, 1918), 43-79; U. Schaefer, “Father Baegert and his *Nachrichten*”, dans *Mid-America*, 20, July (1938): 151-163; P. M. Dunne, “Baegert’s pictures of a Lower California Mission”, dans *Mid-America*, 30 (1948): 44 suiv.; ainsi que *The Letters of Jacob Baegert, 1749-1761. Jesuit Missionary in California*. Translated by E. Schulz-Bischof. Introduced by D. B. Nunis, Jr. (Los Angeles: Davis Book Shop, 1982), “Introduction”, 19-28.

partir de ce port espagnol en passant par Ostende et les Pays-Bas espagnols. Après un court séjour dans sa ville natale de Schlettstadt, il exerça les fonctions d'enseignant et de confesseur au collège jésuite de Neustadt an der Hardt, jusqu'à sa mort en 1772.

L'œuvre majeure de Baegert, les *Nouvelles de la presque île américaine de Californie*, parut en 1772 sans faire mention de l'auteur, chez l'éditeur des Princes Electeurs de Mannheim. On trouve uniquement sur la page de titre la mention suivante: "écrit par un prêtre de la Compagnie de Jésus qui y a vécu longtemps pendant ces dernières années. Avec la permission de son supérieur". Une seconde édition posthume – encore corrigée par Baegert – parut également à Mannheim en 1773. On trouve en 1863/64 une traduction partielle en anglais dans une collection publiée par la Smithsonian Institution à Washington D.C. qui fut la première à attirer l'attention des cercles scientifiques sur l'œuvre de Baegert (Baegert 1863/64)⁶. En 1872, une contribution publiée par Oloardo Hassley dans le *Boletín de la Sociedad de geografía y estadística de la República Mexicana* fit l'éloge du travail de pionnier accompli par Baegert. Hassey publia en 1872 dans la même revue une traduction espagnole du 10ème chapitre du livre (Hassey 1872/73). Ce n'est qu'au 20^{ème} siècle que furent publiées des traductions de l'œuvre complète: tout d'abord en 1942 en langue espagnole⁷, puis en anglais (Baegert 1952). En Allemagne, où il n'existe jusqu'à présent que les très rares éditions originales, il n'a été prêté quasiment aucune attention à l'œuvre de Baegert⁸.

Les expériences américaines de Baegert se sont répercutées dans deux formes de discours et de textes très différentes mais étroitement liées. Tout d'abord dans un corpus de six longues lettres – rédigées pour une part en latin puis traduites et pour l'autre en allemand⁹ – envoyées à son frère Georg et à sa mère entre mars 1749

6 J. J. Baegert, "An Account of the Aborginal Inhabitants of the California Peninsula". Translated by C. Rau, dans *Annual Reports of the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, D.C.), Vol. XVII (1863): 352-369; Vol. XVIII (1864): 378-399.

7 O. Hassey, "Dictamen de socio honorario de la sociedad de geografía y estadística de la Republica Mexicana, sobre la obra anónima escrita en Aleman por un misionero Jesuita, bajo el título: Noticias sobre la peninsula Americana de California, impreso en Mannheim, 1773", dans *Boletín de la Sociedad de Geografía y Estadística de la República Mexicana*, Segunda Época, IV (1872): 337-341; O. Hassey, "De la lengua Waicura de la Baja California, traducido del aleman, de una obra anónima de un jesuito misionero, publicada en 1773", dans *Boletín de la Sociedad de Geografía y Estadística de la República Mexicana*, Segunda Época, IV (1872): 31-40.

8 Cf. en outre, "Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz: Baegert (Begert), Jakob", dans *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Vol. 1 (1990), 337; J. Gény, "Jakob Baegert", dans *Jahrbuch der Jesuiten zu Schlettstadt und Rufach* (Strassburg), 2 (1896): 699 s.; C. Sommervogel, "Baegert, Jacques", dans *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*. Nouvelle édition (Bruxelles: Oscar Schepens-Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1890), Vol. I, 760.

9 Cf. à ce sujet sa remarque à la fin de sa 6ème lettre du 26 septembre 1761: il aurait commencé la lettre en allemand, mais il aurait trouvé cela si difficile qu'il l'aurait terminée en latin. Cf. Baegert, *Letters*, 236; ainsi que sa remarque à la fin de la préface dans Baegert, *Nachrichten*, s. p. [p. 9-10]: "Wann meine Schreibart nicht allzu eben und etwas anstößig, auch hier und da gegen die Orthographie etwas gefehlet ist, so denke man, daß ich in 17 Jahren, nämlich von 1751 bis 1768, die Gelegenheit deutsch zu reden selten gehabt, und folglich meine Muttersprach ziemlich vergessen hab. Was aber verschiedene Neuerungen angeht, die ich in eben dieser

et septembre 1761. La troisième et la plus longue de ces lettres, datée du 11 septembre 1752, qui contient une description géographique et anthropologique très précise de la Basse Californie, fut publiée en 1777, cinq ans après la mort de son auteur, dans la revue strasbourgeoise *Der Patriotische Elsässer* (Baegert 1777)¹⁰. Une édition complète et commentée des lettres de Baegert à son frère et sa mère (dont les originaux sont conservés à la bibliothèque municipale de Strasbourg) parut en 1982 en traduction anglaise chez un petit éditeur de Los Angeles¹¹. Il existe des liens directs entre les lettres de Baegert à son frère – que ce dernier lui a rendues à son retour en Europe – et son œuvre postérieure. Les lettres constituent une première version, ordonnée chronologiquement, des expériences américaines de Baegert et retracent de façon détaillée, sous une forme à la fois très structurée mais souvent aussi très personnelle, ses expériences de voyage et de rencontre de l'autre¹². Les *Nouvelles* se fondent sur ce vécu de Baegert, mais elles sont construites systématiquement et non chronologiquement. Elles élargissent surtout la dimension géographique, ethnologique et anthropologique de sa représentation textuelle et proposent une réflexion critique sur la littérature existante sur la Californie.

II. CONTRE-DISOURS ETHNOGRAPHIQUES

Les *Nouvelles de Californie* doivent leur naissance – très paradoxalement – au retour forcé de leur auteur en Europe. En effet, ce n'est que l'expulsion des Jésuites des colonies espagnoles qui a incité Baegert à reprendre les ébauches de description ethno-géographique contenues dans les lettres à son frère, en les développant et les ordonnant systématiquement. Sa motivation pour ce travail fut accentuée par le vif intérêt manifesté par son frère devant ce récit de voyage entamé à travers la correspondance épistolaire et poursuivi ensuite par le dialogue personnel¹³. Son retour en Europe permit à Baegert d'avoir accès aux bibliothèques et d'effectuer

Sprach bey meiner Ankunft am Rheinstrom gefunden, in diese hab ich mit Fleiß mich nicht wollen schicken, weil deren einige etwas affectiert, und andere aus dem verjähreten Alterthum ohn alle Noth wieder hergeholt mir scheinen wollen”.

10 J. J. Baegert, “Brief eines Elsässers aus Californien in Nord-Amerika an seinen Bruder in Schlettstadt”, dans *Der patriotische Elsässer, eine Wochenschrift*, 2^{ème} semestre (1777): 86-112; 115-176; 189-192; 204-208; 222-224; 237-240; 252-256; 267-272.

11 *The letters of Jacobs Baegert, 1749-1761. Jesuit Missionary in California*. Translated by Elsbeth Schulz-Bischof. Introduced by Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Los Angeles, Davis Book Shop, 1982; original paru en latin sous le titre: *Litterae in insula California partis mundi americanae ac fratri suo charissimo a Jacobo Baegert S.J. missionario in Alsatiam missae. Perinent ad Fr. Xav. Baegert, parochium in Duningen* (1764), in-4°, 271.

12 Baegert, *Letters*, 113, précise au début de sa lettre du septembre 1752 à son frère Georg qu'il avait, comme d'habitude, subdivisé sa lettre en trois parties: selon ses expériences personnelles de voyage, les réalités en Californie et enfin son activité de missionnaire.

13 Baegert répondait explicitement aux questions de son frère – avec un grand décalage temporaire à cause de l'acheminement postal qui prenait presque un an – et l'engageait sans cesse à poser de telles questions afin qu'il puisse les traiter. Cf. Baegert, *Letters*, et al. 161, 210.

une lecture critique de la littérature ethno-géographique existante sur la Basse Californie, à laquelle il n'avait eu que très partiellement accès lors de son séjour comme missionnaire¹⁴, et dont il se distança clairement. Dans ses lettres à son frère ainsi que dans ses *Nouvelles de Californie*, Baegert évoque presque exclusivement – aux côtés des Sermons de Bourdaloue, des *Aventures de Télémaque* et des *Cartas eruditas y curiosas* de Feijóo – des œuvres concernant l'histoire ou la géographie de l'Amérique du Sud: des atlas et des cartes tel le *Grosse Atlas* (1734) de Seutter et une copie réalisée par lui-même de la carte de la Californie dessinée par le missionnaire jésuite Fernando Consag¹⁵, l'*Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Séville 1590) de José de Acosta, l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (1744) de Charlevoix, et enfin les trois volumes de l'œuvre des jésuites espagnols Miguel Venegas et Andrés Marcos Burriel *Noticia de la California y de su conquista temporal y espiritual hasta el tiempo presente* (Madrid 1757)¹⁶. Ce dernier ouvrage a fait l'objet d'une critique très vive et approfondie de la part de Baegert, qui l'avait lu en partie pendant son séjour en Californie.

Le sous-titre même, “avec un double supplément de fausses nouvelles”, choisi pour son œuvre majeure, exprime d'emblée et de manière programmatique les visées critiques de l'auteur, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'analyse des sources. La publication des traductions anglaise et française – ainsi que d'une traduction allemande en 1763¹⁷ – de l'œuvre de sur Venegas et Burriel, qui servirent de référence en ce qui concerne la Californie dans les cercles cultivés européens, incita semble-t-il directement Baegert à rédiger son propre livre. Comme il le souligne dans la préface de ses *Lettres de Californie*, il avait déjà pris connaissance de l'ouvrage de Venegas et Burriel sous forme d'extraits lors de son séjour au Mexique comme missionnaire¹⁸. Cependant, ce n'est qu'après son retour en Europe qu'il a pu prendre connaissance d'une manière plus approfondie de

14 Dans ses lettres, il aborde plusieurs fois cette question, cf. Baegert, *Letters*, 170, 189. Sa bibliothèque comprenait en 1752, selon son propre témoignage, 78 volumes, dont 46 en langue française: Baegert, *Letters*, 160.

15 Cf. successivement Baegert, *Letters*, 90, 189, 95, 105, 215s.

16 M. Venegas, A. M. Burriel: *Noticia de la California y de su Conquista Temporal y Espiritual* (Madrid, 1757), traduction anglaise sous le titre: *A Natural and Civil History of California* [...] (London: Rivington and J. Fletcher, 1758); la traduction française que Baegert connaissait et citait, apparut sous le titre: *Histoire naturelle et civile de la Californie* [...] (Paris: Durand, 1767). En 1777 parut une traduction hollandaise à Amsterdam. Concernant la traduction allemande voir ci-après. Cf. Venegas et Burriel: L. Gooding Massey, “Jesuits and Indians: A Brief Evaluation of Three Early Descriptions of Baja California”, dans *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly*, vol. 10, n° 1, January (1974): 1-12, ici 1-3.

17 *Natürliche und Bürgerliche Geschichte von Californien* [...]. Traduit par J. C. Adelung (Lemgo: Meyersche Buchdruckerey, 1769).

18 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, “Vorrede”, s. p. [p. 5-6]: “Was ich ferner den geneigten Leser zu erinnern hab, ist folgendes. 1) gegenwärtige Nachrichtigen zu Papier zu bringen, hab ich weder des spanischen großen Buchs mch bedienet, als welches ich schon vor mehr als zehen Jahren in Californien zum Theil gelesen, und längst wieder vergessen hab, weder der engelländischen, die ich nicht verstehe, noch der französischen Übersetzung ; sondern hab allein meine eigene Erfahrung zu Hilf genommen, weswegen ich auch oft zum Beweis anführe, was mir selbst begegnet, was und wie ich selbst es gesehen, oder von denen, die mit mir in Californien gewohnt haben vernommen hab”.

la totalité de cet ouvrage, et surtout de ses traductions anglaise, française et allemande beaucoup plus largement diffusées que l'original espagnol.

Il y a environ 12 ans ont été publiées à Madrid en trois gros volumes in 4 les "Nouvelles de Californie", qui furent ensuite traduites en anglais avec de nombreuses coupures, comme semble en témoigner une récente traduction française effectuée à partir de ce texte anglais. A présent, quelques jours avant que je ne commence à écrire ces pages, je viens de recevoir d'Autriche la nouvelle qu'une traduction allemande de ce texte a été publiée très récemment, également à partir de la traduction anglaise, ce qui pourrait rendre superflu ce travail que je m'étais proposé.

Mais la première traduction anglaise, dont le texte allemand est une copie fidèle, comporte deux défauts majeurs qui me sont apparus à la lecture de la traduction française, plus fidèle: 1) la traduction anglaise contient plusieurs erreurs (y compris sur la page de titre) qui ne figurent sans doute pas dans l'original espagnol 2) et si elles figuraient, elles devraient y être radiées. (Baegert 1772, "Préambule" s.p.)¹⁹.

On trouve déjà, dans les lettres de Baegert à son frère, toute une logique du contre-discours ethnographique qui mettait clairement en opposition le savoir contemporain publié sur la Californie avec ses propres observations. Dans les seconde et troisième lettres à son frère, par exemple, il cite l'article "Californie" du *Grand dictionnaire géographique historique et critique* de Bruzen de la Martinière, qui constituait le reflet des connaissances en sciences naturelles et en géographie culturelle de l'époque, et qui contenait – avec le *Dictionnaire Universel du Commerce* (1723) de Savary des Bruslons – les informations les plus complètes sur le monde colonial hors d'Europe, jusqu'à la publication en 1770 de l'*Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (avec deux nouvelles éditions en 1774 et 1780)²⁰. À l'affirmation de Bruzen de la Martinière considérant la Californie "comme le plus beau Pais du monde", Baegert répond de façon lapidaire que l'auteur de ces propos n'y a jamais séjourné et qu'il semble s'être fié à des sources très peu sérieuses et non fondées sur des observations directes²¹. L'article "Californie" dans le dictionnaire de Bruzen de la Martinière, qui est utilisé par Baegert dans sa quatrième lettre en contraste avec ses propres affirmations, décrit ce pays, dans des termes exagérément élogieux, comme un véritable paradis terrestre:

19 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, "Vorrede", s. p. [p. 3]. Les citations en allemand ici et par la suite ont été traduites par nous-mêmes.

20 Baegert, qui rédigea son livre entre 1768 et 1771, ne cite pas l'œuvre de Raynal. Le chapitre concernant la Californie dans G.-T. Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (Genève: Pellet, 1783), Vol. III, 259-265, ne contient pas les projections idylliques présentes dans l'article du *Dictionnaire* de Bruzen de la Martinière, mais comporte dans quelques domaines (géographie, faune) plus d'imprécisions.

21 Baegert, *Letters*, 127. Le passage est partiellement (sans l'ajout critique de Baegert) imprimé dans J. J. Baegert, "Brief eines Elsässers aus Californien", dans *Der patriotische Elsässer* (1777), 121: "Siehe, geliebter Bruder, so siehst in diesen Gegenden aus. Fürwahr verworfene Länder! und das ärgste davon ist Californien, obschon *Le grand dictionnaire géographique de Mr. De la Martinière* es mit den schönsten Ländern des Erdbodens vergleicht. 'Il y a', spricht er, 'en Californie, comme le plus beaux pais du monde, etc.'"

Il y a en Californie, comme dans le plus beau Païs du monde, de grandes plaines, d'agréables vallées, d'excellents pâturages en tous temps pour le gros et le menu bétail, de belles sources d'eau vives, des Ruisseaux et des rivières dont les bords sont couverts de saules, de Roseaux et de vignes sauvages. [...]. Le Païs est si bon, qu'il n'est pas rare que beaucoup de plantes portent du fruit trois fois l'année. Ainsi, avec le travail qu'on apportoit à cultiver la terre et un peu d'habileté à savoir ménager les eaux, on rendroit tout le Païs extrêmement fertile et il n'y a ni fruit ni grains qu'on n'y cueillit en abondance. (Bruzen de la Martinière, 1737, Vol. II, 65)²².

Baegert, qui avait lu l'article de Bruzen de la Martinière sur la Californie avant son départ pour l'Amérique et qui avait été conforté par cette lecture dans sa motivation pour partir comme missionnaire²³, se montra cruellement désillusionné lors de son arrivée sur place, comme en témoignent les lettres adressées à son frère. L'écart considérable entre les réalités rencontrées et les projections bucoliques des auteurs d'articles de dictionnaires européens – dont les descriptions influencèrent directement la perception du monde colonial dans les cercles érudits au 18^{ème} siècle – choqua Baegert et le poussa, comme il le souligne à plusieurs reprises, à prendre la plume. Baegert insiste constamment sur ses observations personnelles, il cite des témoins crédibles et confronte les informations glanées sur place avec le contenu des publications existantes sur la Californie. Dans le supplément à ses *Nouvelles de Californie*, intitulé “fausses nouvelles de Californie”, Baegert confronte ses propres observations avec les affirmations contenues dans le dictionnaire de Bruzen de la Martinière ou l'ouvrage de Venegas et Burriel. Ce dernier ouvrage, qui promet, à travers son titre *Histoire naturelle et civile de la Californie avec une description exacte de ce pays*, une observation précise du pays, n'est autre, selon Baegert, “1) qu'une pure imposture destinée à attirer les acheteurs; 2) une pure contrevérité, car les descriptions promises dans le titre sont introuvables dans le livre [...]”²⁴. Baegert accompagne les prétendues descriptions géographiques exactes promises dans ses lectures d'ouvrages sur la Californie, telle celle affirmant que “dans la baie de Sainte Madeleine on trouve une épaisse forêt que les Californiens utilisent pour la construction navale” du commentaire détaillé suivant:

22 Bruzen de la Martinière, *Le Grand Dictionnaire géographique et critique* (Venise: Jean-Baptiste Pasquali, 1737), Vol. II, art. “Californie”, 63-68, ici 65. Les passages les plus louangeux de l'article, la parenthèse “Comme dans le plus beaux Païs du monde [...]” et la dernière phrase de la citation ont été supprimés, de manière révélatrice, dans la nouvelle édition du lexique. L'article “Californie” y est sinon en majeure partie identique avec celui de l'édition de 1737 (consultée et citée par Baegert), mais un peu plus court. Cf. Bruzen de la Martinière, *Le Grand Dictionnaire géographique, historique et critique*. Nouv. Éd., corrigée et amplement augmentée (Paris: Libraires Associés, 1768), vol. II, art. “Californie”, 44-46.

23 Cf. les propos de Baegert concernant le pouvoir de fascination que l'image de la Californie exerçait sur lui avant son arrivée, dans sa lettre du 22 octobre 1750 à son frère, dans Baegert, *Letters*, 86.

24 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 317.

Je suis allé souvent dans cette baie, et je n'y ai jamais vu qu'un grand nombre de buissons, tantôt touffus, tantôt clairsemés. Il s'agit, pour les Indiens qui habitent cette région, d'utiliser le bois pour se chauffer pendant les nuits très fraîches dans ce pays. Les Californiens, dans leur ensemble, n'avaient aucune connaissance en matière de bateaux ou de barques avant l'arrivée des Espagnols dans leur presqu'île; et le bois utilisé aujourd'hui pour construire des bateaux et des embarcations à Loreto, provient pour sa totalité des forêts de la région de Maranchel²⁵.

Baegert se réfère expressément à différents passages de l'*Histoire naturelle et civile de la Californie* concernant les croyances religieuses des Californiens, la démographie, la faune et la flore de la Basse-Californie, ainsi que l'agriculture et la pêche, qu'il introduit chaque fois par la formule lapidaire "il est faux de dire que". Dans son commentaire introduisant le supplément, il insiste non seulement sur ses réfutations mais aussi sur sa propre représentation systématique des réalités rencontrées:

Après ces fausses "Nouvelles" tirées de plusieurs ouvrages, je présente à présent dans un ordre systématique de nombreuses informations, qui ne constituent cependant qu'une faible partie de ce que j'ai pu relever lors de ma lecture des deux premiers volumes de la traduction française, effectuée à partir du texte anglais de l'*Histoire de la Californie*, éditée à Paris en 1767, et dont il est question dans ma préface. Ces "Nouvelles" et les fausses informations relevées ci-dessus se trouvent suffisamment contredites dans ce petit ouvrage que je publie ici, et il ne sera pas nécessaire d'en discuter désormais plus longuement²⁶.

Les corrections explicites de Baegert dans le supplément à son œuvre majeure, qui comportent une quarantaine de pages, s'avèrent extrêmement précises et couvrent une multitude de détails dans les domaines anthropologique, culturel, zoologique et géographique. Etant donné que l'ouvrage de Venegas et Burriel contient en évidence un grand nombre de projections et de fantasmes en contradiction radicale avec la réalité, Baegert utilise volontiers, pour sa contre représentation, un ton très ironique, comme en témoignent les passages suivants:

Ibid., page 56: *On trouve de délicieux fruits, semblable aux nôtres en Europe*. Lorsqu'il est question de précieux chênes, il est vrai qu'on en trouve en la Californie, et on m'en a montré un ou deux comme rareté, qui ont poussé dans le district de la mission de mon voisin et sont gros comme un doigt environ²⁷.

En ce qui concerne les pêcheurs de perles, qui sont cités abondamment dans le dictionnaire de Bruzen de la Martinière²⁸, Baegert cite le passage suivant tiré de l'ouvrage de Venegas et Burriel en le commentant également sur un ton ironique:

25 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 320.

26 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 316 et suiv.

27 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 320.

28 Bruzen de la Martinière, *Grand Dictionnaire*, Vol. II, Art. "Californie", 63-66, ici 65: "Les côtes sont fameuses par la pêche des perles. C'est ce qui a rendu ce País l'objet des vœux les plus pressés des Européens, qui ont souvent formé des entreprises pour s'y établir". Ce passage a été supprimé dans la nouvelle édition du lexique cf. note de bas en page 22.

Page 65: *Une foule de gens attirés par les perles s'est établie en Californie et continue chaque jour à y affluer.* Depuis le 3 février personne n'y est venu, et jamais personne ne s'est établi ici. Les pêcheurs de perles viennent chaque année en Californie, et quittent ensuite ce pays tels les commerçants à la foire de Francfort²⁹.

III. MODÈLES DE PERCEPTION ANTHROPOLOGIQUE – DIMENSIONS COMPARATISTES ET ETHNOGRAPHIQUES

Les lettres de Baegert à son frère, de même que son œuvre principale les *Nouvelles de Californie* de manière plus systématique, prennent ainsi clairement position contre le discours européen existant sur le monde extra-européen, monde qu'il a appris à connaître et vécu intensivement pendant 17 ans dans une grande isolation. Ses *Nouvelles* se décomposent en trois parties: elles décrivent tout d'abord les spécificités géographiques et climatiques de la Californie, puis la vie des habitants de ce pays, et enfin dans la dernière partie, l'histoire des missions chrétiennes en Californie. Le supplément évoqué précédemment se compose de deux parties et développe une critique approfondie des "fausses nouvelles" sur la Californie, en particulier des *Noticia de la California* de Venegas et Burriel. La rhétorique de Baegert et sa stratégie argumentative sont dominées par la logique du contre-discours, et il remet continuellement en question, sur un ton souvent très provocateur, l'image de la Californie transmise aux Européens par les écrits de Bruzen de la Martinière et ceux de Venegas et Burriel. Le quatrième chapitre, par exemple, de ses *Nouvelles de Californie* est intitulé "Les propriétés du sol de la Californie, sa fertilité et son infertilité" et s'ouvre par les phrases suivantes:

Si je veux décrire en quelques mots la Californie [...], je peux affirmer avec le prophète dans le Psaume 62, qu'il s'agit d'un désert sans eau et inaccessible à cause des pierres et des épineux dont il est recouvert, *terra deserta, et in via, et in aquosa*, ou bien je peux dire qu'il s'agit d'une longue presque rocheuse recouverte d'extraordinaires buissons épineux (cactus), d'herbe, de prairies, de forêts et érodée par les fleuves et les pluies³⁰.

Baegert émousse quelque peu par la suite les pointes provocatrices de son argumentation et essaie de décrire le plus précisément possible toute la variété de la faune et la flore de la Californie; mais son mode de description reste cependant marqué par la désillusion. Cette désillusion marque tout particulièrement son discours anthropologique. Le lecteur y trouve un effort considérable pour offrir une description quasiment ethnographique des mœurs et habitudes des ethnies indiennes de Basse Californie, depuis leurs habitudes alimentaires et pratiques religieuses jusqu'à leurs outils et leurs formes de travail, en passant par leurs attitudes mentales et leurs modes de perception, comme leur comportement devant la mort ou la maladie. Baegert s'attarde longuement sur la problématique

29 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 325.

30 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 32.

de la propriété et du vol dans la société californienne, insiste également sur les principes qu'on y trouve en matière d'éducation des enfants, principes qu'il estime trop peu autoritaires et qu'il compare à ceux de Jean-Jacques Rousseau dans son roman *l'Emile*³¹. Ces efforts pour présenter au lecteur une description très détaillée et ethnographique, qui ont incontestablement beaucoup amélioré l'état des connaissances de l'époque en ce qui concerne la culture des Indiens d'Amérique centrale, contraste fortement avec ses jugements de valeur souvent très globalisants et stéréotypés en matière culturelle. Il évoque ainsi de façon répétée la "barbarie" des ethnies indiennes de Basse Californie, les place à un niveau d'existence très bas, proche de celui de l'animal et les considère dans leur ensemble comme "Des gens sans sagesse, sans souci, irréfléchis et impulsifs, qui se font violence pour rien, et qui suivent constamment leurs pulsions animales"³². Au début du chapitre VIII intitulé "A propos du naturel, des coutumes et du caractère des Californiens" Baegert laisse éclater toutes ses désillusions et ses déceptions ayant abouti à l'échec final de sa mission en Californie³³; et dans un flot rhétorique surabondant, il qualifie ces populations de "stupides, maladroites, brutales, malpropres, ingrates, menteuses, voleuses et paresseuses, bavardes, et pour ainsi dire semblable à des enfants pour ce qui est de leur esprit et de leurs occupations"³⁴. Même si Baegert affirme dans sa même argumentation, que les Californiens "n'en sont pas moins, comme tous les autres américains, des hommes et des enfants d'Adam comme nous-même"³⁵ le modèle anthropologique les définissant comme les témoins d'une étape primitive et révolue du développement de l'humanité n'ayant rien d'admirable, domine nettement son discours.

Malgré la singularité des coutumes, des valeurs et des comportements observés, Baegert s'efforce, en matière culturelle comme dans d'autres domaines de son l'œuvre, d'établir des paradigmes de comparaison pour offrir à son lecteur une représentation plus différenciée. Il utilise à cet effet des références régulières à l'œuvre du Père jésuite français, Pierre-François Xavier de Charlevoix, qui a présenté en 1744, dans son *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France*, une description

31 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 137: "Gott wolle die Californier noch mehr erleuchten, und unser Europa und Deutschland von solcher californischen Kinderzucht bewahren, welche zum Theil mit dem Plan, welcher der ehrvergessene Schwärmer J.J. Rousseau in seiner *Emile* entworfen hat, ziemlich übereinkommt, wie auch mit der Sitten-Lehr einiger anderen neuen Philosophen aus der Hunds-Zunft; als welche wollen, man solle den Anmuthungen und Begierden den Lauf lassen, die Kinderzucht aber, was den Glaub, die Religion und Gottesforcht angeht, vor dem achtzehnden oder zwanzigsten Jahr nicht für die Hand nehmen".

32 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 145.

33 Baegert lui-même évoque de façon répétée l'échec relatif de ses efforts missionnaires, p. ex. *Nachrichten*, 156s.: "[...] muß viel mehr mit großem Schmerz bekennen, daß sowohl viele andere angewendete Mittel, als der Samen des göttlichen Worts, welches so oft ihnen geprediget ist worden, gar wenig Frucht unter ihnen geschafft haben".

34 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 146.

35 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 146.

très complète des cultures des Indiens du Canada³⁶. Il se réfère par exemple à Charlevoix lorsqu'il explique – comme ce dernier – les raisons de la faible densité démographique du continent américain par le mode de vie des habitants et “leurs incessantes guerres civiles”³⁷ auxquelles viennent s'ajouter les conséquences des conquêtes coloniales. Il cite également Charlevoix à l'appui de ses observations lorsqu'il affirme que les Indiens se différencient des Européens essentiellement dans leur conception du travail, de l'économie et de leur temps. Les Indiens incarnent, selon Baegert, un mode de vie étroitement pragmatique orienté vers l'instant présent et les besoins immédiats; ils n'entreprennent aucun effort pour planifier leur vie, imiter ou même admirer d'autres peuples, et il souligne ses observations, comme le fait Charlevoix, par des anecdotes issues de sa propre expérience³⁸.

Le discours anthropologique de Baegert apparaît, au delà des commentaires placatifs qu'il utilise et qui n'en diminuent pas moins la valeur ethnographique de ses observations, profondément marqué par les efforts réalisés pour tenter de comprendre l'altérité des valeurs culturelles et les comportements des Indiens, ainsi que pour briser le mur du silence qui a largement caractérisé sa communication avec eux et qu'il décrit, à multiples reprises, plein de désillusion. Il décrit par exemple comme suit ses vaines tentatives pour parvenir à comprendre les conceptions religieuses des Indiens à travers des conversations avec eux:

Je me suis renseigné auprès de ceux parmi lesquels je vis, et j'ai fait des recherches pour savoir s'ils croient en un Dieu, en la vie éternelle et l'existence de l'âme, mais je n'ai pu trouver aucune trace de telles croyances.[...] Il ne pourrait en être autrement s'agissant de personnes qui ne pensent à rien d'autre qu'à s'alimenter et à s'amuser et qui ne réfléchissent sur aucun sujet. Ils considèrent la lune, le soleil, les étoiles et le reste de la même façon que le bétail animal, et ils utilisent l'expression *aipékériri* (signifiant *qui sait?*) pour définir tout ce qui n'a aucun lien avec la nourriture ou l'amusement. A chaque fois que je leur ai demandé, par exemple, s'ils s'étaient déjà interrogés pour savoir qui pourrait avoir créé le soleil et la lune ou qui dirige le monde, ils m'ont répondu par un *vâra*, qui veut dire *non*, et renvoyé à la maison³⁹.

Baegert met particulièrement l'accent sur les comportements et systèmes de valeur qui ont un caractère exotique pour les Européens: il souligne par exemple l'absence constatée de forme de gouvernement, d'organisation administrative ou d'institutions religieuses au sens européen. Il est aussi frappé par l'inexistence apparente de comportements humains élémentaires – mais, comme il le constate, fortement conditionnés culturellement – tels “l'admiration”, le “dégoût”, ou encore la “pitié”.

36 Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France, avec le Journal historique d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amérique septentrionale* (Paris: Pierre-François Giffart, 1744), 6 vols.

37 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 94s.

38 Baegert, *Letters*, 215s.

39 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 170s.

Baegert ressent également sur le plan linguistique, et avec une grande acuité, les différences culturelles constatées. Il observe ainsi que les Indiens Waicuri ne possèdent pas de mot pour dire “maladie” mais ont une expression exprimant “être malade”, que le mot “mariage” est exprimé dans la langue Waicuri par le mot “Tikéré undiri” signifiant “joindre ses bras ou ses mains”⁴⁰: que leur système de calcul ne comporte que six chiffres, tout ce qui se situe au delà étant qualifié de “beaucoup”⁴¹. Dans un long chapitre intitulé “De la langue des Californiens”, au cours duquel il étudie en détail non seulement la sémantique mais également les spécificités grammaticales de la langue Waicuri que Baegert parlait très bien, il établit une longue liste de mots qui n’ont pas d’équivalent dans la langue Waicuri – tels “vie”, “temps”, “vérité”, “honneur”, ou “confession”⁴². Il met en lumière tous les problèmes de traduction qui en ressortent pour la communication dans le domaine religieux, pour les sermons par exemple, les confessions ou la transmission orale des vies de saints.

Les réflexions de Baegert sur les langues indiennes, en particulier sur leur contenu anthropologique, et les problèmes interculturels qui en découlent, se révèlent d’une étonnante actualité et concernent des thèmes comme la projection des concepts européens sur des cultures étrangères et des aires géographiques qui, comme le remarque Baegert dans sa critique de la *Noticia de la California* de Venegas et Burriel et de leur traduction française, s’avèrent totalement inadéquats dans leur sémantique même⁴³. Pour mieux éclairer les problèmes posés par la traduction de textes religieux, Baegert présente deux versions différentes du *Notre Père* et des *Dix Commandements* dans la langue Waicuri, l’une étant une traduction littérale et l’autre une traduction adaptée culturellement dans laquelle par exemple le mot “ciel” est traduit par son équivalent indien “terre courbée”⁴⁴.

La sensibilité de Baegert pour les différences interculturelles et les systèmes linguistiques étrangers se trouve en contraste radical avec son incapacité évidente à comprendre ces formes de refus de communication et de rébellion ouverte qu’il évoque de façon répétée, tant dans ses lettres que dans ses *Nouvelles de Californie*, et qui le conduisirent à constater un certain échec de sa mission (mission à laquelle il a voulu croire obstinément jusqu’au

40 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 131.

41 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 149.

42 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 173 et suiv.

43 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 101: “Der französische mehrgedachte Übersetzer bedient sich nicht selten der Wort[e]: villes, villages, das ist Städte, Dörfer, und sogar des Ausdrucks *Métropole*, welches, wann ich es recht verstehe, eine Haupt- oder eine erz-bischöfliche Stadt will sagen, obschon nicht allein kein Bischof oder Erzbischof in Californien wohnet, sondern auch keiner einen Fuß in dasselbe gesetzt hat [...]”.

44 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 186-189.

bout et qu'il a poursuivie jusqu'à l'expulsion des Jésuites des colonies en 1768). Lorsqu'il évoque cette "pénible habitude" des Indiens de ne "pas dire mot" et de ne saluer personne⁴⁵ cela concerne en premier lieu la communication avec lui-même en tant que missionnaire essayant constamment de transformer fondamentalement leurs habitudes de vie et leur système de valeur, un objectif auquel les Indiens répondirent par un mélange de résistance passive, d'adaptation simulée et de soudaines irruptions de violence. Leur silence et les réponses extrêmement lapidaires qu'ils lui donnèrent, qui illustrent l'échec de la communication interculturelle, contrastent de manière frappante avec "les rires, les bavardages et plaisanteries"⁴⁶ que Baegert observe dans leur communication quotidienne. Ce tragique isolement subi au cours de ses 17 années de mission à San Luis Gonzaga en Basse Californie, qui ne fut interrompu que par la correspondance avec son frère et par des contacts occasionnels avec d'autres missionnaires jésuites, a véritablement forgé sa personnalité d'observateur très attentif, à la fois stoïque et désillusionné, du monde indien et de ses formes de communication.

45 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 162.

46 Baegert, *Nachrichten*, 171.

Thinking about the history of Africa in the eighteenth century

ANN THOMSON

It may at first sight appear rather strange to discuss thinking about African history in the eighteenth century in view of the general belief that Africa was a largely unknown continent which impinged on the consciousness of eighteenth-century Europeans mainly as the place from which slaves were taken to the Americas. It is largely absent from Enlightenment philosophical history and was of course famously excluded from history by Hegel¹. One might therefore be pardoned for supposing that there was no thinking about the history of Africa in the eighteenth century and so nothing to say on the subject. It should however first of all be pointed out that in this context Africa means sub-Saharan Africa, as North Africa (or Barbary) has generally been considered as a different case, and Hegel specifically excludes it from his remarks, aligning it with Europe or Asia. Indeed in the eighteenth century North Africa, most of which was part of the Ottoman Empire (albeit with a somewhat unclear status) was part of the known Mediterranean world and was the subject of regular political information in journals. Barbary was therefore to some extent not really part of Africa for much of the eighteenth century and its rich history, including that of its

¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 99. Echoes of this view surfaced in France in 2008 following a speech by Nicolas Sarkozy.

church, was generally known – although by the time of its conquest by the French from 1830 onwards it had become part of savage Africa².

The rest of Africa was much more of a mystery. The coasts were visited, mainly since the fifteenth century, and as Philip Curtin observes, as far as the seaboard was concerned “a great deal was known [...] in ways that were intimate, detailed, and highly specialized”³. But Europeans were forbidden from venturing any distance into the interior and thus had to rely for information about most African countries on hearsay evidence, of which there was not a lot. Europeans frequently remarked that the slaves refused to say anything about their native country. This ignorance, and the fact that for most Europeans any contact with Africans was more likely to be with slaves, would seem to have encouraged a view of Africa as one vast undifferentiated mass peopled by savages with no history. The authors of *Modern Part of the University History* wrote in 1760:

One might reasonably expect to find, in such a vast extensive tract of land, and so great a variety of climates, nations, governments, a proportionable diversity of inhabitants, in regard to the qualifications both of body and mind, strength, corpulency, agility, industry, & dexterity on the one hand, & ingenuity, learning, arts & sciences on the other. Our readers, therefore, will doubtless be much surprised to find, in the contrary, a general uniformity run through all those various regions & people; so that, if any difference be found between any of them, it is only in the degrees of the same qualities, & more strange still, those of the worst kind; it being a common known proverb, that all people of the globe have some good as well as ill qualities, except the Africans.

They do however admit that this is the fault of these peoples’ governments, citing the great men, arts and commerce of the past (although this only seems to refer to North Africa), before continuing: “they are now everywhere degenerated into a brutish, ignorant, idle, treacherous, thievish, mistrustful & superstitious people, even in those empires & states where one might expect to find them more polished, humane, docile & industrious”⁴. The type of history that was apparently most appropriate in descriptions of Africa was natural history, and indeed there is no lack of descriptions of the flora and fauna, and of the appearance and customs of the people, of an ethnographical type. For the *Encyclopédie*, apart from ethnography, it is essentially African commerce that is noteworthy, as is clear from Diderot’s short article “Afrique”⁵. It is remarkable that in its introduction to the black Africans, the chapter of the *Universal History* cited above quotes the description provided by the Greek and Roman authors, and said to be still valid. According to this they are:

² See A. Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment* (Leiden: Brill, 1986).

³ P. D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa. British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (London: Macmillan, 1965), 9.

⁴ *Modern Part of an Universal History*, XIV (pt. 2) (London: T. Osborne, C. Hitch, A. Millar, John Rivington, S. Crowder, B. Law and Co, T. Longman, and C. Ware, 1760), 17. Curtin details the data available to eighteenth-century scholars in *The Image of Africa*, 18-22.

⁵ On the *Encyclopédie* see A. Curran, “Diderot and the *Encyclopédie*’s construction of the black African”, *SVEC*, 9 (2006): 35-53.

Proud, lazy, treacherous, thievish, hot & addicted to all kinds of lusts & most ready to promote them in others, as pimps, panders, incestuous, brutish & savage, cruel & revengeful, devourers of human flesh & quaffers of human blood, inconstant, base treacherous & cowardly; fond of & addicted to all sorts of superstition & witchcraft; & in a word to every vice that came in their way or within their reach⁶.

There would seem to be little more to say. As J. G. A. Pocock points out, for Gibbon Africa consists of Mediterranean Africa, not Sub-Saharan Africa, and he comments: “Racial prejudices played some part in excluding the latter from history, and the narratives he sought to follow did not include it”⁷. Indeed, at the beginning of his *Histoire de Loango, Kakongo et autres royaumes d’Afrique*, abbé Proyart writes unequivocally:

On ne doit point s’attendre que nous donnions une histoire bien étendue de peuples qui n’ont pas encore l’usage de l’écriture, et qui n’y suppléent par aucune espèce de monument: ensorte que cet ouvrage sera moins le récit de ce qui s’est passé chez eux, que le tableau de ce qui s’y passe aujourd’hui⁸.

The only reference to Africa in Ferguson’s *Essay on the History of Civil Society* reflects the same view:

Great part of Africa has always been unknown; but the silence of fame, on the subject of its revolutions, is an argument, where no other proof can be found, of weakness in the genius of its people. The torrid zone, every where round the globe, however known to the geographer, has furnished few materials for history⁹.

And in a similar vein, the section on Africa in the *Histoire des Deux Indes*, which concerns its geography and customs (the only historical discussion being devoted to the Europeans’ slave trade), begins:

Les révolutions qui ont dû arriver dans l’Afrique occidentale, comme dans le reste du globe, sont entièrement ignorées; et il étoit impossible qu’il en fût autrement dans une région où l’écriture a toujours été inconnue. On n’y a même conservé aucune tradition qui puisse servir de base à des conjectures bien ou mal fondées¹⁰.

6 *Modern Part of an Universal History*, vol. XIV, 18.

7 J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, 4. *Barbarians, Savages and Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 231 note 7.

8 Abbé Proyart, *Histoire de Loango, Kakongo et autres royaumes d’Afrique, Rédigée d’après les mémoires des préfets apostoliques de la mission française* (Paris: chez C.-P. Berton et N. Crapart, Lyon, chez Bruyset-Ponthus, 1776), 5.

9 *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* [1767] (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 110.

10 *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements des Européens dans les Deux-Indes* (Genève: Pellet, 1780), book XI, chapter 12, §1. This echoes Voltaire’s remark in *Essai sur les Mœurs* about the lack of history of peoples without writing, which includes Amerindians, Tartars and Celts.

The section is preceded by a long chapter discussing the reasons for the colour of the Africans' skin, a subject of huge scientific curiosity with obvious implications for the question of slavery, and one on which opinion was divided. Indeed the explanation given in the third edition of Raynal's work, quoted here, is different from that given in the earlier ones¹¹. Above all, this discussion places the Africans firmly in the realm of natural history, one where they remained as scientific interest fuelled physical anthropology and the racial classifications that developed seriously from the 1770s.

Curiously, however, the scientific discussion in Raynal's work leads on to a passage by Diderot on the uncertainty of human knowledge and the lack of serious study, hampered by religion, which ends with the prediction that the age of natural history is coming to an end, to be replaced by the study of history:

Le goût de l'histoire naturelle est sur son déclin. Nous sommes tout entiers aux questions du gouvernement, de législation, de morale, de politique et de commerce. S'il m'étoit permis de hasarder une prédiction, j'annoncerois qu'incessamment les esprits se tourneront du côté de l'histoire, carrière immense où la philosophie n'a pas encore mis le pied¹².

While it is true that Diderot's fragments seem sometimes to have been inserted in the text in a way which did not necessarily take account of the general thrust of the argument, nevertheless one cannot fail to be struck by the fact that this statement of the importance of historical study introduces, so to speak, the presentation of Guinea. Whether one should read too much into it or not, this juxtaposition does seem to invite further investigation. And despite the apparently unambiguous opinions quoted above, when one looks in more detail at what was in fact written about Africa in the eighteenth century, a much more complex picture emerges. There are many accounts of different peoples and nations divided up into empires, kingdoms and even republics, with different political and legal systems and religions, who cultivate crops, fight wars, make treaties, trade and so on. In short, these descriptions treat the African continent little differently from other continents, despite the conclusion of the physiocrat abbé Roubaud:

L'histoire de cette contrée est celle de la barbarie et du brigandage, et sa description celle d'un désert peuplé de bêtes féroces et d'animaux farouches¹³.

11 On these questions, see Ann Thomson: "Issues at stake in eighteenth-century racial classification", *Studi Settecenteschi*, 21 (2001): 223-44 and "Diderot, Roubaud et l'esclavage", *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, 35 (2003): 70-76.

12 *Histoire des Deux Indes*, book XI, chapter 10, §20. Pocock quotes the whole of this diatribe (*Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 4, 303-4), but his interpretation is different from mine.

13 *Histoire générale de l'Asie, de l'Afrique et de l'Amérique* (Paris: Des Ventes de la Doué, 1770-1775), vol.12 (1771), 578.

There is also a certain amount of history, much of it dating of course from the arrival of the Europeans and drawn from European accounts, but some going back earlier. The writings thus belie the general perception of the whole continent as an undifferentiated and above all unchanging place of undiluted savagery. The *Universal History*, whose disparaging introduction to Africa we have quoted, in fact devotes four whole octavo volumes to the continent and the history of its different countries, drawing on existing accounts. It begins with Abyssinia which was often seen as a special case¹⁴, being the home of the Queen of Sheba whose visit to King Solomon was said to have led her to introduce Judaism not only to that country,

but in many other parts of Africa, though perhaps formerly subject to that crown, but since dismembered from it, and sunk in other respects into the grossest idolatry, as seems to confirm that report, founded on an ancient Abyssinian record, of which we shall speak in its proper place, which makes express mention of it¹⁵.

But Abyssinia is not in fact presented here as an exception as other regions are described in a similar way; the authors make a general distinction between people in the inland regions and those living on the coast who are “long since allured to more active and laborious life”, although their civilization is attributed to their “frequent commerce with Europeans and other strangers”¹⁶. Those who seem to constitute the exception are on the contrary the Hottentots, generally the object of very negative descriptions. The *Universal History* describes these inhabitants of “Caffraria” as “but one remove from brutes, who live like them without religion or laws, void of reason, humanity and industry and subsist altogether upon plunder and hunting”¹⁷. In 1778 the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* called them “the most degenerate of all the human species”¹⁸. For the rest, however, each of the states is described and its origin and revolutions indicated and some accounts refer to African tradition, giving the lie to the claims that there could be no history without writing, although of course these accounts could be considered as fables and thus unreliable¹⁹. Even the terrifyingly savage and bloodthirsty Giagas are accorded a history²⁰. One of the books drawn upon by the authors of the *Universal*

14 De Jaucourt’s *Encyclopédie* article “Ethiopie” indeed discusses its history.

15 *Modern Part of an Universal History*, vol. XIV, 22; in vol. XVI, 197 there is a reference to Angolan tradition.

16 *Modern Part of an Universal History*, vol. XIV, 32.

17 *Modern Part of an Universal History*, vol. XIV, 21.

18 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2nd ed., I (Edinburgh: J. Balfour & Co, W. Gordon, J. Bell, J. Dickson, C. Elliot, W. Creech, J. McCliesh, A. Bell, W. Hutton, and C. Macfarquhar, 1778), 111.

19 On which see Voltaire’s article “Histoire” in the *Encyclopédie*, vol. 8 (Neuchâtel: Samuel Faulche, 1765), 224.

20 The Appendix to the history of W. Ethiopia in Book XVI gives an “Account of the dreadful incursions of a new tribe of Giagas into the kingdoms of Kongo, Loango etc., thence, through the heart of Africa, quite to the Eastern Coast”.

History was Francis Moore's *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (1738) whose scope is much wider than its title indicates. Moore, who was a factor for the Royal African Company in the Gambia, used the oldest accounts he could find, in particular that by Leo Africanus, to give an idea of the history of the region. Although his history is somewhat fanciful, beginning with the Golden Age in Africa before the arrival of the Moslems, it is clear that for Moore the Africans entered history at least at that date because with the expulsion of the Moorish conquerors in the fourteenth century they did not return to "their first simplicity of manners"²¹.

It would be fastidious to go at any length into the accounts of different African kingdoms, empires etc. (but not 'tribes'). While there are always a lot of details about their customs and religion and there is no lack of depreciation and emphasis on tyranny, wars, absence of arts, and ignorance, there is in the literature a certain amount of history of the various countries, often highlighting changes in frontiers, the break-up of kingdoms, wars and invasions. To give but one example, the long article on Angola in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is largely devoted to the country's history; while much concerns the famous Queen Zingha, who particularly captured European imaginations²², an earlier "petty African tyrant", Ngola Chilivangi, is compared to Alexander the Great when the "folly and insolence" brought on by his conquests led him to believe he was a god²³. It is clear that, the peremptory statements I have quoted notwithstanding, for most of the writers on Africa – including those who had been to the West coast for the purposes of the slave trade – it was not a continent without a history. It was not, despite the statement at the beginning of Book 14 of the *Universal History*, radically different from the rest of the world even if it was rarely seen as congenial.

But does this mean it was possible to think about African history in the eighteenth century? It was clearly possible to think about the history of North Africa, which fitted into the account of world history to the extent that it was part of first the Roman and then the Moslem empires, but the rest of Africa was certainly more problematic. It is the "half of Africa" that is, according to Voltaire, plunged into a brutal lethargy²⁴. For John Millar the Africans are clearly rude peoples at an early stage of the development of mankind, before the appearance of private property; to illustrate this stage in history he provides examples concerning the Hottentots and the Kingdoms of Kongo, Loango, Benin or Guinea, mostly taken from abbé Prévost's *Histoire générale des voyages*. The image he provides is generally not a very positive one; the position of women in the Congo is unenviable and the power of a father over his children "on the coast of Africa" is said to be so great that, "as is too well known to be denied [...]"

21 *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa, containing a Description of the several Nations for the Space of Six hundred Miles up the river Gambia [...]* (London: Edward Cave, 1738), iii-v.

22 See Jean-Louis Castillon, *Zingha, reine d'Angola, histoire africaine* (Paris: Lacombe, 1769).

23 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2nd ed., vol. I, 429.

24 "Histoire", in *Encyclopédie*, vol. 8 (1765), 221.

in order to supply the European market, he often disposes of his own children for slaves". Millar does however also note that the same kingdom of Congo

is divided into many large districts or provinces, the inhabitants of which appear to have made some progress in agriculture. Each of these districts comprehends a multitude of small lordships, which are said to have been formerly independent, but which are now united together, and reduced under a single chief governor, who exercises absolute authority over them [...].

He expounds on the absolute power of this king, providing a description which corresponds to the main characteristics of despotism, adding "similar accounts are given of the constitution in the neighbouring kingdoms of Angola, Loango, and Benin"²⁵. Here, therefore, these states appear to be at a somewhat later stage of development and indeed to possess a history. For Lord Kames too the Africans are not all "rude" peoples. He writes for example:

the negroes of the kingdom of Ardrah, in Guinea, have made great advances in arts. Their towns, for the most part, are fortified, and connected by great roads, kept in good repair. Deep canals from river to river are commonly filled with canoes, for pleasure some, and many for business.

This is followed by a list of agricultural produce and a description of the extraction of salt which is traded in inland countries for gold²⁶. What we have here, as in many of the descriptions of particular empires and kingdoms, is a picture of thriving if despotic kingdoms, hardly primitive savages at the first stage of human history. Indeed, the category of despotism itself is not appropriate to savages (although it may be to barbarians) and can often correspond to a state which has degenerated from monarchy, a situation implied in one of the quotations from the *Universal History* given at the beginning. Likewise the awareness that Abyssinia is Christian (although professing a "degenerate" form of Christianity) and that several of the more northern countries of sub-Saharan Africa are Moslem again made it difficult to classify them as being at the earliest stage of history. There seems to be a contradiction between the generalisations concerning the savagery, ignorance and general primitiveness of Africans, corresponding to a view of sub-Saharan Africa as "one rude chaos"²⁷ on the one hand, and the picture that emerges from the more detailed accounts of different countries on the other, however negative they may have been. According to the *Universal History*, the history of Africa "has unfortunately been treated by

25 *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, [1771] ed. A. Garrett (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2006), 8-9, 166, 224-5.

26 H. Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, [1774] ed. J. A. Harris (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007), Book I, 101.

27 The title of the chapter on Africa in J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind* (London: Dent, 1982), which provides many more examples.

writers the most illiterate, unmethodical, credulous, and false, of any we have hitherto had occasion to peruse”²⁸. This, together with the generalisations placing the Africans in the category of savages, probably prevented any real interest in or discussions of what was in fact a relatively large body of known facts concerning African history.

Nevertheless the awareness of the existence of this history and the information generally known about the peoples on the coasts of Africa with whom the Europeans were in contact meant that to place the Africans in the category of simple savages in the earliest stage of human development led to a certain number of problems. This may be the reason for the lack of references to Africa in most speculative history. The other complicating factor was also surely the existence of the slave trade. As was explained in all the writing on West Africa, the slaves were sold by the Africans themselves, and accounts by slave traders demonstrated that it was a complicated trade with strict rules in which court had to be paid and presents made to powerful rulers for whom the local traders acted as middlemen. Such trading activity would also seem to remove the Africans from the category of savages. What is more in the African case, far from bringing civilisation, trade had apparently mostly accentuated savage behaviour and wars and thus flew in the face of the prevailing belief in the civilising effect of commerce. African history was an anomaly and the primary reason for this anomaly and for the difficulty of thinking about African history seems to have been the slave trade.

Most of the known history of sub-Saharan Africa concerned the period since the arrival of the Portuguese, even when it did not recount the activities of the Europeans in Africa, and it was therefore intimately linked with slave trading. It was as a result very difficult for the Europeans to separate the two. While, as we have seen, for some authors Africans had been civilised by contact with the Europeans, for others the evils of Africa came from the activities of European slavers. This was increasingly the position of the abolitionists whose impact came to be felt from the 1770s. If we look at the pioneering abolitionist works written by the American Quaker Anthony Benezet, which were widely circulated and translated, we can see that his account of the parts of Africa where the slaves were acquired attempts to counter the image of these regions propagated by the defenders of the slave trade as dominated by bloodthirsty savages from whom slavery had, so to speak, saved the slaves. He uses some of the same sources as does the *Universal History* to emphasize the agricultural production and trade of certain countries on the slave coast before the arrival of the Europeans, and insists that the Africans do not live “in the same wild unsettled manner as the American Indians do” and thus can become “good members of society”; as the region is huge and includes many different peoples,

28 Vol. XVII, 445.

there is doubtless some people of a more savage disposition than others, yet certain it is, that the natural disposition of the generality of the negroes is widely different from the roving dispositions of our Indians; they generally settle together and employ themselves in agriculture and commerce. Some large nations are represented as industrious and careful in the cultivation of their lands; breeding cattle, and carrying on a trade to distant parts²⁹.

It is interesting to note in passing that a similar point was also made by someone as different from Benezet as Pierre-Victor Malouet, who was a French colonial administrator and defended the need for the slave trade. In a manuscript “Mémoire” concerning his mission to Guyana in 1776 he opposes the savagery of the Americas to the ancient civilisation of the old world, writing: “au milieu même des déserts de l’Afrique, de magnifiques ruines attestent qu’il y eut là une immense population, des arts, des richesses, des maîtres et des esclaves; ailleurs on découvre des cités dans les entrailles de la terre”³⁰. For these writers it is a mistake to place the Africans in the same state of nature as the Amerindians. Nevertheless, despite all this awareness of the Africans’ past, it is the view of them as innocent and primitive children of nature that seems to predominate in abolitionist writings. Benezet’s work begins by insisting at length that the wars in Africa are encouraged by the Europeans in order to ensure a source of slaves and that the Africans are naturally good. He quotes Michel Adanson’s *Histoire naturelle du Sénégal*: “The simplicity of the natives, their dress and manners, revived in my mind the idea of our first parents; and I seemed to contemplate the world in its primitive state”; various other passages taken from Adanson, Bosman, Smith, Barbot, Brue and others likewise insist on their good nature and the progress they could make if “their genius was cultivated”³¹. Such remarks are typical of much abolitionist literature, whose effect is to paint a picture of the Africans as, if not actually living in a state of nature³², at least the simple, childish victims of European wickedness who can be civilised if well-treated – and probably converted to Christianity. John Wesley, after quoting details about various West African countries provided in the main by participants in the slave trade, concludes:

Upon the whole, therefore, the Negroes who inhabit the coast of Africa, from the river Senegal to the southern bounds of Angola, are so far from being the stupid, senseless, brutish, lazy barbarians, the fierce, cruel, perfidious savages they have been described, that, on the contrary, they are represented, by them who have no motive to flatter them, as remarkably sensible, considering the few advantages

29 A. Benezet, *A Short Account of that Part of Africa inhabited by the Negroes* [...], 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: W.Dunlap, 1762), 72.

30 *Mémoires de Malouet*, 2nd ed., I (Paris: Plon, 1874), 97. He was probably thinking of North Africa.

31 Benezet, *A Short Account*, 13 f.

32 Such as William Roscoe’s *The Wrongs of Africa, a Poem* (1787), 9, describing them as “strangers alike to luxury and toil” (quoted by Curtin, 61).

they have for improving their understanding; as industrious to the highest degree, perhaps more so than any other natives of so warm a climate; as fair, just, and honest in all their dealings, unless where white men have taught them to be otherwise; and as far more mild, friendly, and kind to strangers, than any of our forefathers were³³.

If not quite noble savages, they are at least good barbarians; in any case, they are at the stage of development of “our forefathers”. Others who were vaguer about the Africans’ stage of development clearly believed it was below that of the Europeans. For Benjamin-Sigismond Frossard, writing at the beginning of the Revolution:

Nous verrons que, malgré le long commerce qu’ils ont eu avec les plus méchants des Européens, ils ont conservé une partie de leur simplicité primitive; et que s’ils n’étoient pas excités à la vengeance par les fréquentes injustices que nous leur faisons, ils se montreroient aussi affables, aussi humains qu’aucun peuple de l’Europe. A ces avantages, qu’on ajoute un esprit susceptible de perfection, l’exercice des arts utiles, un gouvernement généralement modéré; et l’on aura peu de peine à se persuader que les Nègres auroient vécu heureux, s’ils étoient demeurés inconnus à l’Europe, ou si, loin de nous attribuer injustement le droit de les asservir, nous nous étions fait un devoir d’éclairer leur entendement en accélérant leurs progrès dans la civilisation, et leur raison, en réfléchissant sur eux la lumière Divine dont la Providence nous a favorisés³⁴.

He concludes that Guinea, although barbarian, has nevertheless made considerable progress towards civilisation even if these nations are retarded compared to Europeans. At the same time, they retain the superior virtues of the first ages of history (188-189). In his attempts to counter the negative stereotypes recounted by the defenders of the slave trade, this abolitionist further muddies the waters. A similar confusion is found even among some of those who were favourable towards the slave trade. Golbéry, who defended French interests in Senegal in the 1780s and whose descriptions of these people concern mainly their physique, also speculates on the history of Africa, in particular the influence or past migrations of the Ethiopians or even Indians, traces of whose culture are found among the peoples of West Africa. In many ways his attitude is similar to that of the abolitionists we have seen, despite his contempt for that “sect” and their dangerous theories; he believes in the duty of the Europeans to civilise these mainly savage peoples who are close to a state of nature, but he nevertheless describes the Wolofs (whom he calls “iolofs”), as people among whom “il existe déjà un commencement de civilisation, un certain ordre, et même des réglemens de police; dont le caractère est généralement honnête et bon; chez qui l’hospitalité est une vertu naturelle”³⁵.

33 “Thoughts upon slavery”, 1774, in *The Works of John Wesley* ed. T. Jackson, XI (1872), 59-79 (<http://gbgmumc.org/umw/wesley/thoughtsuponslavery.stm>).

34 Frossard, *La Cause des esclaves nègres et des habitans de la Guinée portée au Tribunal de la Justice, de la Religion, de la Politique*, I (Lyon: Aimé de la Roche, 1789), 142.

35 Silvain Meinrad Xavier Golbéry, *Fragmens d’un voyage en Afrique [...]*, 2 (Paris: Truttel et Würtz, 1802), 107.

An indication of a connection between abolitionist sentiment and the way that Africa and its history were perceived can be found in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and its succeeding editions. In the first edition, published in Edinburgh in 1771, there is a short article on Africa which is limited to factual geographical information, together with the remark: "The government in Africa is in general despotic, and the inhabitants black"³⁶. There are also even shorter articles on particular parts of Africa. However, in the second edition in 1778 the article on Africa is greatly extended and remarks are added to the geographical description generally emphasizing the savagery of the continent, particularly the inhabitants of the southern part as we have already seen. Otherwise, the Europeans' ignorance about Africa is emphasized:

In short, Africa, though a full quarter of the globe, stored with an inexhaustible treasure, and capable of producing almost every necessity, conveniency, and luxury of life, within itself, seems to be utterly neglected both by its own inhabitants and all other nations: the former, being in a savage state, are incapable of enjoying the blessings offered them by nature; and the latter taking no farther notice of the inhabitants, or their land, than to obtain at the easiest rate what they procure with as little trouble as possible, or to carry them off for slaves to their plantations in America³⁷.

This reference to slavery is developed later in the article, but in a curious way. The discussion of slavery, while rejecting the justification which used the Biblical account of the curse of Ham, condemns the "iniquitous trade" in a perfunctory manner, and instead insists on the Africans' liberty. After observing, "Certain it is, that the interior parts of Africa have never been conquered by any nation", the authors remark that while the rest of the world was governed by "a set of lawless banditti",

during this time the Africans enjoyed liberty, and do still enjoy it, notwithstanding the wicked advantages the Europeans take of the barbarism of the negroes to make them sell one another. No European nation hath ever made a nation of negroes yield up their country to them, or pay them an annual tribute; nor have they even been able to introduce their customs among them; so that, on the whole, instead of being the greatest slaves, we cannot help thinking the barbarous nations in Africa are the only people on earth that have never been enslaved by others³⁸.

The condemnation of slavery is therefore less striking than the vision of Africa as composed of independent barbarous peoples. However, in the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia* in 1797, the emphasis again changes. The derogatory statement about the Hottentots quoted earlier disappears and remarks are added about the system of government, said to be monarchical everywhere. It concludes:

36 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, I (Edinburgh: A. Bell and C. Macfarquhar, 1771), 36.

37 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2nd ed., I (1778), 110.

38 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2nd ed., I (1778), 111.

Few princes, however, possess a very extensive jurisdiction; for as the natives of this part of Africa are grossly ignorant in all of the arts of utility or refinement, they are little acquainted with one another; and generally united in small societies, each governed by its own prince³⁹.

This emphasis on their primitive state of society is accompanied by a much more virulent condemnation of the slave trade with which the article ends:

There are some independent princes who have extensive dominions; particularly the kings of Dahome and Widah, the most noted of any for the infamous slave-trade. Upwards of 200 years have the European nations traded with Africa in human flesh; and encouraged in the Negro countries, wars, rapine, desolation, and murder, that the West India islands might be supplied with that commodity. The annual exportation of poor creatures from Africa for slaves hath exceeded 100,000; numbers of whom are driven down like sheep, perhaps 1000 miles from the sea-coast, who are generally inhabitants of villages that have been surrounded in the night by armed forces, and carried off to be sold to our traders (227-228).

The British are also criticized for not attempting to convert the slaves to Christianity, unlike other Europeans. This description, together with the removal of the passage concerning the Africans' independence, has the effect of representing the Africans as victims of both the Europeans and their own despotic kings at the same time as they tend to be seen as childlike children of nature. This provides a further indication that the abolitionists' attempts to counter pro-slavery propaganda meant that the image of a passive, victimized Africa seems to have increasingly accompanied the condemnation of the slave trade.

Within the scope of a brief article it is impossible to develop this point any further, but what I would like to suggest as a result of this rather rapid survey is that Africa presented a problem when it came to thinking about its history in the eighteenth century. The difficulty of travelling any distance into the interior encouraged unreliable speculation about most of the countries of the continent, but there was nevertheless a certain amount of information available about the history of many African states, detailed at length in the *Universal History*. Nevertheless, the tendency to see Africans as savages and the efforts of the abolitionists to render the European slavers responsible for Africa's problems combined to encourage a general perception of them as childlike peoples at the dawn of history. But unlike the Amerindians, condemned to occupy the role of savages, good or bad, the Africans could apparently not be assigned a clear place in the stadial scheme of history in view of the conflicting evidence about their degree of civilisation. Thus, I would argue, they were generally excluded from thinking about history, while at the same time their own history was ignored or simply denied. Indeed, the abolitionists' insistence that their wars were simply the result of machiavellian manoeuvring on the

39 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 3rd ed. I (Edinburgh: A. Bell and C. Macfarquhar, 1797), 227.

part of European traders made it impossible to place them in any coherent historical narrative or to accord these peoples and states a political history of their own. Their place seems to have become that of childlike victims to be either enslaved or, increasingly, converted and civilised by the Europeans rather than actors in their own destiny. Thinking about the Africans was increasingly confined to the field of natural history and anthropology and to their place in the racial hierarchy.

Madagascar

“possession française”?

L'historiographie coloniale en débat: une mise en perspective

MARCO PLATANIA

I.

Le savoir historique sur le fait colonial fait l'objet d'un regain d'intérêt dans le contexte de l'étude de la transformation des cultures nationales à l'échelle de l' 'empire'. Les recherches de terrain, les congrès, les thèses de doctorat et les publications abordant le problème de l'institution, de l'enseignement et de l'écriture de l'histoire coloniale, se multiplient depuis quelques années¹. Les enjeux sont également importants concernant les approches culturelles

¹ P. Singaravélou, *L'École française d'Extrême-Orient, ou l'institution des marges. Essai d'histoire sociale et politique de la science coloniale, 1898-1956* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001, première éd. 1999), A. L. Conklin, "Boundaries Unbound: Teaching French History as Colonial History, and Colonial History as French History", *French Historical Studies*, 23, 2 (2000): 215-238, B. Gainot, "Un projet avorté d'intégration républicaine. L'institution nationale des colonies (1797-1802)", *Dix-huitième siècle*, 32 (2000): 371-401, C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Enjeux politiques de l'histoire coloniale* (Paris: Agone, 2009), *La construction du discours colonial. L'empire français aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles*, sous la direction de O. Saaïdia, L. Zerbini (Paris: Karthala, 2009), S. Dulucq, *Écrire l'histoire de l'Afrique à l'époque coloniale, XIX^e-XX^e siècles* (Paris: Karthala, 2009). Cf. aussi la thèse de Simon Duteil, "Enseignants coloniaux: Madagascar 1896-1960", soutenue à l'Université du Havre le 24 octobre 2009, et le Colloque "Enseignement et colonisation dans l'Empire français: une histoire connectée?" (Lyon, 30 sept.-2 octobre 2009). Je remercie Frédéric Garan et Arne Bialuschewski, qui ont lu une version préparatoire de cet article, pour leurs remarques et pour les suggestions précieuses pour la recherche à venir.

des mondes et des civilisations ‘non-européens’: le savoir historique sur le fait colonial est-il capable, ou a-t-il jamais été capable, de comprendre et de représenter la diversité des civilisations indigènes? Sommes nous confrontés à l’assimilation de l’histoire des pays et des peuples colonisés dans le récit de l’expansion du pays colonisateur ? Comment est-ce que sont représentées, par l’historiographie coloniale, les dynamiques d’action et réaction entre colonisateurs et colonisés?

Nous touchons là à une problématique de grande ampleur, comme l’ont mis en évidence les recherches – à l’époque novatrices – sur l’‘empire’ comme système de pouvoir traversé par des ‘tensions’, des inflexions, des résistances, des mutations, des adaptations². Mettant à profit cette démarche analytique, les études récentes se sont appliquées à reconsidérer les regards que les Européens ont portés sur l’histoire des peuples non-européens au cours de l’expansion coloniale (et vice-versa, les représentations que les peuples non-européens ont données de la diversité de la civilisation occidentale), et aussi les rapports des savoirs au pouvoir colonial: dans ce cadre, l’étude des institutions, des acteurs, des dynamiques matérielles qui ont formé la culture coloniale et contribué par là à la mise en place de la domination occidentale, constitue certes un apport décisif; à côté de cela, il ne faut pas non plus sous-estimer les appropriations, les résistances, les assimilations, les médiations, les contaminations, les réceptions, les transferts, les conséquences inattendues, les dérapages de ces processus culturels.

S’agit-il d’un vœu pieux? Le défi doit être relevé si on souhaite répondre à une objection fréquemment avancée, il y a environ une vingtaine d’années, par les *Subaltern Studies*, et en particulier par Ranajit Guha et Partha Chatterjee, mais aussi aux remarques présentées par Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Nicholas Dirks sur l’écriture de l’histoire des peuples non européens à l’époque coloniale en France, en Espagne, et en Grande Bretagne³; il est aisé de constater dans ce débat l’ampleur et l’actualité d’une remise en question générale de l’historiographie coloniale. Cette remise en question porte sur une idée bien précise: la nécessité de démasquer et de déconstruire le préjugé déformateur du point de vue à la fois européocentrique et national dans l’écriture de l’histoire coloniale, et, dans une perspective plus générale, dans

2 Voir l’essor de cette perspective dans *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. F. Cooper and A. Stoler (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1997).

3 P. Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), M.-R. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); R. Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Cambridge, Mass.-London: Harvard University Press, 1997), J. Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World. Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), N. B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire. India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Mass.-London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).

toute tentative de compréhension de l'histoire des peuples non-européens. Or, ce renouvellement souhaité s'avère de la plus haute importance car il en va bel et bien de l'histoire coloniale elle-même⁴: est-il possible, de nos jours, d'écrire, d'étudier, de fabriquer une histoire coloniale affranchie des préjugés européocentriques, une histoire coloniale qui ne soit pas orientée de façon exclusive ni par le point de vue des 'dominateurs', ni par le point de vue des 'colonisés' (pour reprendre la conception des *Subaltern Studies*)? À quoi pourrait ressembler une telle histoire? Serait-elle capable de se libérer de la perspective nationale, c'est-à-dire de se présenter sous une autre forme que celle du récit des succès ou des malheurs des peuples colonisateurs, de leurs bienfaits ou de leurs dévastations? Serait-elle capable, cette histoire coloniale renouvelée, de porter son attention sur les échanges, les inflexions et les modifications réciproques des civilisations sans pour autant sous-estimer les rapports de dominations? Quelles méthodologies et quels outils conceptuels pourraient-ils féconder une pareille histoire du fait colonial?

Sans prétendre à répondre à toutes ces questions, cet article insiste sur l'importance de l'étude contextuelle de la construction de l'historiographie coloniale comme démarche constitutive de l'étude du fait colonial lui-même, et des approches culturelles des civilisations 'non-européennes'. Cette investigation, qui se veut non-téléologique, montre que l'historiographie coloniale ne peut être considérée comme un 'discours' unitaire, constamment et consciemment orienté par la mise en œuvre de formes de domination culturelle. Il ne s'agit ici nullement de faire l'apologie du préjugé européocentrique implicite dans le regard historique de l'Occident vers les Nouveaux Mondes, ni de justifier les usages politiques de l'historiographie coloniale. Il s'agit bien plus de souligner que, malgré les schématismes et maintes préjugés dont il était formé, le savoir historique a également opéré comme instrument critique de la mise en place de la domination coloniale; qu'il a été un savoir pluriel, traversé par des polémiques, des tensions, des résistances internes.

On objectera que, malgré sa pluralité et sa variété, ce savoir arrangeait les vues de l'Europe. Le fait que cela puisse être vrai en général ne doit pas occulter la reconnaissance des diverses voix, idées, opinions, institutions, dynamiques ayant formé le savoir historique autour du fait colonial, les chemins interrompus, les acteurs gagnants et les perdants dans ce processus de construction du discours historique, les failles dans l'élaboration des argumentaires européens et finalement de la domination culturelle. La reconnaissance de cette complexité, jointe à une étude de la construction du savoir historique à l'échelle impériale des échanges et des dynamiques culturelles, contribue de manière capitale au renouvellement des études sur le fait colonial, et favorise la reprise du dialogue avec les critiques de l'occidentalisme.

4 Cf. J.-F. Schaub, "La catégorie 'études coloniales' est-elle indispensable?", *Annales. Histories, Sciences sociales*, 63, 3 (2008): 625-646.

II.

Madagascar possession française depuis 1642 est le titre d'un pamphlet publié par Barbié du Bocage en 1859, en plein milieu de l'opposition franco-britannique sur l'occupation de la Grande Île⁵. L'argument construit par l'auteur pourrait aujourd'hui être facilement réfuté comme provocateur, maladroit, voire même dépourvu de sens de la réalité. Il témoigne néanmoins d'un tournant historiographique important, orienté vers l'usage manifestement politique et propagandiste de l'histoire coloniale; cet usage, à son tour, est redevable de la construction méticuleuse et intentionnelle d'une 'tradition' historique à l'appui des prétentions coloniales: pour assoir le 'droit' français à la possession de l'île sur une base d'historicité, Barbié du Bocage procède par énumération des dates et événements qui feraient preuve de la 'présence' française à Madagascar. La démarche de Barbié de Bocage actualisait, en le modernisant, un récit de la colonisation française à Madagascar qui s'était formé tout au long des tentatives d'exploitation de l'île. Il est pertinent d'effectuer un survol de ce discours pour en saisir les éléments de continuité, mais aussi de rupture, par rapport à l'historiographie coloniale du milieu du XIXe siècle.

L'histoire de Madagascar a commencé par être écrite et racontée en France dès les premières entreprises commerciales et coloniales. Abordée par les frères Parmentier en 1529, Madagascar fait l'objet de nombreuses tentatives d'installation permanente par la Compagnie des Indes Orientales en 1619, 1638, 1642 et 1648. Retenons surtout cette dernière date, car elle correspond au commencement de l'aventure d'Étienne de Flacourt à Madagascar ; cantonnés au sud de la côte Est, les colons français n'arrivent pas à vivre en bonne harmonie avec les habitants de l'île (encore moins à les gouverner)⁶; leur constitution physique ne supporte pas le climat, les établissements ne progressent pas, et finalement, en 1655, Flacourt rentre en France. Mais auparavant, il avait pris des notes de son séjour, qu'il publie trois ans plus tard dans son *Histoire de la Grande Île de Madagascar* (à Paris: chez Alexandre Lesselin, 1658). Il est important d'observer dès maintenant que cette *Histoire* a été proposée à deux nouvelles reprises au public français, en 1991 et 1995⁷.

En dépit du fait que les démarches de la Compagnie des Indes pour s'établir à Madagascar n'avaient pas été encourageantes, cette île recouvre une place

5 V. A. Barbié du Bocage, *Madagascar possession française depuis 1642* (Paris: A. Bertrand, 1859).

6 P. M. Larson, "Colonies last: God, Hunger and Conflict in Anosy (Madagascar) to 1674", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27, 2 (2007): 345-366, spec. 357-66. Sur d'autres aspects de l'arrivée des Européens à Madagascar, et en particulier le trafic des armes, cf. A. Bialuschewski, *Firearms and Warfare in Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century Madagascar*, in *War and Peace in Africa*, eds. T. Falola and R. C. Njoku (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2010): 57-72.

7 É. de Flacourt, *Histoire de la Grande Isle de Madagascar*, éd. présentée et annotée par C. Allibert (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1995), Id., *Histoire de la Grande Isle de Madagascar* (Sainte Clotilde, La Réunion: A.R.S. Terres Créoles, 1991).

importante dans les plans de l'administration française, et cela aussi grâce à l'insistance de gens tels que Flacourt, qui ne laissent pas de souligner les avantages que procurerait la possession de ce territoire⁸. Le marquis de Montdevergue, nommé pompeusement "vice-roi des Indes et gouverneur de Madagascar", prend le relais de Flacourt. Sur son navire se trouve aussi François Martin, dont les mémoires constitueront un apport certain dans la construction historiographique de la colonisation française. Le résultat est toujours le même, un échec; en 1674, les Français abandonnent Madagascar pour s'installer à l'île Bourbon (La Réunion). Il faut remarquer que malgré cette situation, l'île de Madagascar "continua d'être considérée comme française: en 1686 un arrêt du conseil d'État la réunit à la couronne de France"⁹. Cette annexion 'sur la carte' est tout à fait paradoxale car de fait l'île Dauphine – puisque tel était désormais son nom – jouera un rôle mineur dans l'histoire coloniale française à l'avantage des Mascareignes, et cela jusqu'en 1767. À cette date, le comte Maudave propose à Choiseul et Praslin un nouveau projet de colonisation. Il débarque à Fort Dauphin avec une soixantaine d'hommes, mais les moyens dont il dispose ne suffisent pas à assurer leur maintien. En outre, Maudave est en désaccord avec le gouverneur de l'île Bourdon, Dumas, qui parvient à convaincre Versailles de mettre fin à son aventure. Une fois encore, l'échec est accompagné, outre de violentes polémiques, par des mémoires et relations très importantes pour la reconstruction de l'histoire de la colonisation française; la correspondance que Maudave rédigea dans cette occasion compta parmi les sources les plus précieuses au XIXe siècle, lorsque la France redécouvrit son héritage colonial¹⁰. Quelques années après la tentative de Maudave, vint le tour du baron Beniowski. Celui-ci débarqua à deux reprises dans la baie d'Antongil, au Nord de la côte Est: en 1773, sous le drapeau français, et en 1784, à son propre compte. Si les résultats de sa première tentative s'avèrent infructueux, son deuxième débarquement lui fut cette fois fatal, car il fut tué par une escadre française envoyée de l'île de France (actuelle Île Maurice)¹¹.

La Révolution ne fait que détourner un moment l'attention de Madagascar. En 1803, Joseph-François Charpentier de Cossigny, fils de Jean-François

8 De Flacourt rédige encore trois textes qu'il publie dans la deuxième édition de son *Histoire*, en 1661: *Cause pour laquelle les intéressés de la compagnie n'ont pas fait de grands profits à Madagascar, Avantages que l'on peut tirer en l'établissement des colonies à Madagascar pour la religion et pour le commerce, et Moyens dont il faut se précautionner contre les maladies du pays*. À remarquer aussi son *Dictionnaire de la langue de Madagascar* (1658) e son *Petit Catéchisme en français et en malgache* (1657).

9 R. et M. Cornevin, *La France et les Français outre-mer. De la première croisade à la fin du Second Empire* (Paris: Tallandier, 1990), 139.

10 H. Pouget de St. André, *La colonisation de Madagascar sous Louis XV, d'après la correspondance inédite du Comte de Maudave* (Paris: Challamel Ainé, 1886). Le journal de voyage de Maudave (ou Modave) est aussi très important: Modave, *Voyage en Inde du Comte de Modave, 1773-1776*, texte établi et annoté par J. Deloche (Paris: École française d'Extrême Orient, 1971).

11 M. A. Beniowski, *Mémoires et voyages* (Montricher: Les Éditions Noir sur Blanc, 1999, 3 vols.).

Charpentier de Cossigny qui avait été ingénieur du roi à Madagascar dans les années 1730, revient sur l'importance d'occuper cette île dans un ouvrage ambitieux: *Moyens d'amélioration et de restauration proposés au gouvernement et aux habitants des colonies, ou mélanges politiques, économiques, agricoles, et commerciaux, etc., relatifs aux colonies* (Paris: Barillot, an XI, 1803, 3 vols.). Par cet ouvrage, Joseph-François de Cossigny reprend ainsi un projet que lui-même avait déjà esquissé en 1773, dans un mémoire où l'on propose un établissement au Madagascar et où l'on s'attache à en prouver l'importance et les avantages¹².

Malgré l'insistance des milieux coloniaux, la compétition britannique dans l'Océan Indien prive la France de toute possibilité d'installation dans la Grande Île. En 1814, sir Robert Farquar signe un traité avec Radama I^{er}, chef du royaume merina alors en expansion dans l'île, lui donnant le titre de Royaume de Madagascar pour le rallier à la politique anglaise et limiter l'influence française. Il n'en va guère mieux pour la France sous le règne de Ranavalona I^{ère} (1828-1861), reine que les manuels d'histoire coloniale qualifient de "xénophobe" en raison de la résistance qu'elle a opposée à la pénétration française (Jean Laborde)¹³. La seule présence française dans cette partie du monde est désormais liée à quelques points d'appui sur la côte Ouest, aux Créoles de l'île Bourbon (la Réunion), ou à des marchands qui négocient des concessions commerciales avec la reine, tels Napoléon de Lastelle, Jean Laborde, Joseph Lambert. Celui-ci essaye à plusieurs reprises (en 1855 et 1862) de se présenter comme ambassadeur français et de faire signer une "Charte" dans laquelle Madagascar demanderait le "protectorat français". Mais une fois de plus les rapports internationaux, l'opposition britannique et les luttes internes pour la succession au trône de l'île ne lui permettent pas de donner naissance à la "Compagnie de Madagascar, Foncière, Industrielle, et commerciale", qu'il avait projetée. En même temps, les publications françaises insistent sur le passé colonial de la France à Madagascar et sur les progrès réalisés. Au moins deux études se distinguent par leur importance: les *Mémoires sur les progrès des découvertes géographiques dans l'île de Madagascar* (Paris: Bourgogne et Martinet, 1844), par Eugène de Froberville (1790-1871) et l'*Histoire et géographie de Madagascar* publiée par Henry d'Escamps sous le pseudonyme Macé Descartes¹⁴. Bientôt, au milieu des années 1850, la polémique concernant la Grande Bretagne et ses prétentions sur Madagascar commence à enfler. On le voit bien dans les histoires des colonies françaises publiées à l'époque, tant dans les ouvrages

12 Arch. Col., C/5a/3.

13 Cf. R. et M. Cornevin, *La France et les Français outre-mer*, 381, et J. Meyer, J. Tarrade, A. Rey-Goldzeiguer, J. Thobie, *Histoire de la France coloniale. Des origines à 1914* (Paris: Colin, 1991, 2 vols.), vol. I, 442. Il faut néanmoins préciser que l'action politique la plus significative de Ranavalona I^{ère} fut la lutte contre les missionnaires chrétiens, en large partie protestants anglais.

14 M. Descartes [H. d'Escamps], *Histoire et géographie de Madagascar depuis la découverte de l'île, en 1506, jusqu'au récit des derniers événements de Tamatave*; par M. Macé Descartes [...] Ouvrage écrit d'après les publications officielles les plus récentes et accompagné d'une carte nouvelle de Madagascar et de ses dépendances (Paris: P. Bertrand, 1846).

consacrés exclusivement à Madagascar – parmi lesquels je signalerais Barbié du Bocage¹⁵– que dans les synthèses d’histoire coloniale¹⁶. Désormais, le rattrapage systématique et sélectif de l’histoire coloniale pour la défense des ‘droits’ de la France sur cette île est une stratégie fréquente.

III.

Ce survol de l’historiographie de l’entreprise coloniale française à Madagascar a mis en évidence certains éléments importants de continuité: tout d’abord, il existe un lien très étroit et constant entre l’écriture de l’histoire coloniale française, les acteurs de cette colonisation et les politiques coloniales. Le récit de l’histoire coloniale française se construit sur le terrain même de l’aventure coloniale, c’est-à-dire à partir des rapports, des mémoires et des ouvrages rédigés par les protagonistes de cette colonisation, qui en étaient aussi les interprètes. En second lieu, notons que les récits sont orientés par leur caractère instrumental, ils répondent à des buts politiques et pratiques (qui font aujourd’hui l’objet de l’attention des historiens). Une troisième remarque s’impose également: l’histoire de Madagascar a été confondue, voire assimilée à l’histoire des Français à Madagascar (bien sûr, il y a aussi la vision anglaise de Madagascar, et celle des missions de tous pays, y compris françaises). Enfin, le préjugé européocentrique et les intérêts pratiques des nouveaux arrivés ont faussé la compréhension et les représentations de la civilisation malgache.

Ce dernier aspect est évident dans les remarques ‘anthropologiques’ intégrées dans les récits historiques, à commencer par celui d’Étienne de Flacourt jusqu’à *l’Histoire des deux Indes* (le célèbre ouvrage publié sous le nom de l’Abbé Raynal mais en réalité écrit par lui-même et par plusieurs autres auteurs, parmi lesquels Diderot et Deleyre). Le préjugé de supériorité envers les peuples que Flacourt venait de rencontrer est tout à fait frappant dans ses textes : il décrit les “habitants de cette île” comme “une [...] grande multitude de Barbares, un peuple [...] de barbares perfides, sans foi et sans parole, poltron, craintif et nu, qui se sert de dards qu’il jette sur son ennemi, et n’entend ni ordre, ni manière d’attaquer que par surprise et trahison”¹⁷. Mais Flacourt ne pouvait pas en rester là: le risque était de décourager l’administration de la Compagnie de l’entreprise coloniale à Madagascar, et il était évident que les colons avaient besoin du soutien de ces “peuples barbares” pour leur propre maintien (ils leurs achetaient du bétail, des produits). C’est pourquoi Flacourt s’empresse de préciser que ces tribus

15 V. A. Barbié du Bocage, *Madagascar possession française*.

16 J.-J.-É. Roy, *Histoire des colonies françaises et des établissements français en Amérique, en Afrique, en Asie et en Océanie, depuis leur fondation jusqu’à nos jours* (Tours: A. Mame, 1855).

17 É. de Flacourt, dans *l’Avant propos* de sa *Relation de la Grande Isle Madagascar*, aujourd’hui publiée en appendice à son *Histoire de la Grande Isle de Madagascar*, éd. Allibert, 259.

n'avaient pas “la Barbarie et la cruauté des Américains et des Cafres de Soffala, qui sont anthropophages, ni la bestialité des Nègres de la Guinée qui vendent père, mère, et parents aux Nations de l'Europe, et moins encore la folle superstition des Idolâtres de Pagu, Siam et autres pays circonvoisins qui se sacrifient vivant aux pieds de leurs Idoles [...]”¹⁸. Les Malgaches, au contraire, n'avaient connu “aucune communication ni commerce” et vivaient à l'état de nature, “sans ambition et sans luxe [...] plus contents des fruits que la terre leur donne et des bestiaux qu'elle leur nourrit, passant plus doucement leur vie que les autres habitants de l'Europe”¹⁹.

Il serait impossible de suivre ici le développement de ce discours anthropologique tout au long du XVIIe et du XVIIIe siècle, jusqu'à ses aboutissements dans la science des XIXe et XXe siècles. Serais-je autorisé à remarquer – sans viser une quelconque justification des préjugés européocentriques et des pratiques qui en découlaient, parmi lesquelles l'esclavage – qu'il me paraît anachronique de faire l'unité de ces discours sur la base de leur manque des précautions et des prémunitions méthodologiques constitutives de l'anthropologie contemporaine? La tâche consistant à éclaircir le développement de ce discours anthropologique et ses caractères doit être confiée aux spécialistes²⁰. Mon propos à moi est de préciser le sens de l'utilisation de ce discours anthropologique à l'intérieur d'ouvrages consacrés à l'histoire de l'expansion coloniale française. On ne saurait nier à cet égard le lien très étroit entre le regard anthropologique et les pratiques de domination coloniale, comme Michèle Duchet le relevait déjà²¹. On ne saurait non plus sous-estimer le lien qui existe entre le discours insistant sur la barbarie des “indigènes” et le futur développement de l'idéologie de la “mission civilisatrice”, comme Alice Conklin l'a également remarqué²². Mais, en même temps, je voudrais ici souligner que cette continuité n'est pas identité : si l'avènement de l'idéologie de la ‘mission civilisatrice’ peut, et doit être retracé jusqu'à ses origines et sa prémisse lointaines, l'établissement de ce lien de continuité ne peut se passer d'une mise en évidence des accélérations, des mutations internes, des tournants idéologiques. L'utilisation du discours anthropologique par l'historiographie coloniale au XVIIIe siècle nous propose quelque cas exemplaires sur lesquels appuyer cette thèse.

18 Flacourt, *Histoire de la Grande Isle*, éd. Allibert, 95.

19 Flacourt, *Histoire de la Grande Isle*, éd. Allibert, 96.

20 E. Sibeud, *Une science impériale pour l'Afrique?* (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 2002), et *The Anthropology of Enlightenment*, eds. L. Wolff et M. Cipolloni (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

21 M. Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1995, 1^{ère} éd. 1971), Id., *Essais d'anthropologie. Espace, langues, histoire* (Paris: Puf, 2005).

22 A. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: the Republican Idea of Empire in France and West-Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

Il est intéressant à ce propos de se pencher sur les pages consacrées à la colonisation de Madagascar dans la troisième édition de l'*Histoire des deux Indes* (1780):

Ces Insulaires étoient fatigués de l'état de guerre & d'anarchie où ils vivoient continuellement. Ils soupiroient après une police qui pût les faire jouir de la paix, de la liberté. Des dispositions si favorables ne permettoient pas de douter qu'ils ne se prêtassent facilement aux efforts qu'on voudroit faire pour leur civilisation. [...] Quelle gloire ce seroit pour la France de retirer un peuple nombreux des horreurs de la barbarie; de lui donner des mœurs honnêtes, une police exacte, des loix sages, une religion bienfaisante, des arts utiles & agréables; de l'élever au rang des nations instruites & civilisées!²³

Ainsi que Michèle Duchet et l'édition critique du texte raynalien l'ont démontré, l'*Histoire des deux Indes* était redevable des nombreux mémoires rédigés par des marins, des naturalistes, des hommes de lettres (Poivre, Commerson, Maudave) qui avaient circulé au sein de l'administration de la Compagnie française, ainsi que des récits de voyages publiés (parmi les plus récents à l'époque, le *Voyage dans les mers des Indes*, de Le Gentil de la Galaisière et la *Lettre concernant l'état actuel des mœurs, usages, commerce, [...] des habitans de l'île de Malegache*, par de Barry²⁴).

Le projet proposé par Raynal (ou par le rédacteur anonyme du passage cité) s'inspire des idées avancées par Maudave et avant lui par Flacourt; ceux-ci insistaient sur la sociabilité des tribus madécasses, et sur la possibilité d'établir des liens d'amitié, même des mariages mixtes entre la population et les colons français (mais uniquement dans la logique homme français et femmes malgaches). Raynal ne dit pas autre chose²⁵. Il faut reconnaître que cette idée entraîne avec elle un certain paternalisme qui affleure dans le texte raynalien:

C'étoit par la voie douce de la persuasion; c'étoit par l'appât si séduisant du bonheur; c'étoit par l'attrait d'une vie tranquille; c'étoit par les avantages de notre police, par les

23 G. Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique de l'établissement des Européens dans les deux Indes*, livre IV, chap. 5, éd. critique sous la direction d'A. Strugnell (directeur), A. Brown, C. P. Courtney, G. Dulac, G. Goggi et H.-J. Lüsebrink (Ferney-Voltaire: Centre International d'étude du XVIII^e siècle, 2010), t. I, 355, 358 (abrégé par la suite: HDI).

24 Barry, *Lettre de M. de Barry à M. G. *** de l'Académie Royale [...] contenant l'état actuel des Mœurs, [...] de l'Isle de Malegache* (Paris: chez Laurent Prault, 1764). J.-B. Le Gentil de la Galaisière, *Voyage dans les mers de l'Inde, fait par ordre du roi, à l'occasion du passage de Venus, sur le disque du soleil, le 6 juin 1761, & le 3 du même mois 1769* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 2 vols., 1779-1781).

25 "On a calomnié les Madecasses, lorsque sur un petit nombre d'actes isolés d'emportement & de rage, commis dans l'accès de quelque passion violente, on n'a pas craint d'accuser la nation entière de férocité. Ils sont naturellement sociables, vifs, gais, vains, & même reconnoissans. Tous les voyageurs, qui ont pénétré dans l'intérieur de l'isle y ont été accueillis, secourus dans leurs besoins, traités comme des hommes, comme des frères" (HDI, IV, 4, 354). "Le mariage des filles Madecasses avec les Colons François, auroit encore plus avancé le grand système de la civilisation. Ce lien, si cher & si sensible, auroit éteint ces distinctions odieuses qui nourrisent des haïnes éternelles & qui séparent à jamais des peuples, habitant la même région, vivant sous les mêmes loix" (HDI, IV, 5, 356).

jouissances de notre industrie, par la supériorité de notre génie, qu'il falloit amener l'isle entière à un but également utile aux deux nations²⁶.

Il n'y a donc pas de doute que l'*Histoire des deux Indes* s'exprimait à la faveur de la colonisation de Madagascar, et qu'elle appuyait cette idée sur des principes assez bien précisés. Nous trouverions-nous face à une véritable idéologie coloniale?

Pour en juger, je crois qu'il faut d'abord évaluer la distance qui sépare les vues de l'*Histoire des deux Indes*, à la fois des politiques coloniales entreprises par les administrateurs coloniaux au XVIIIe siècle, et de l'idéologie coloniale nourrie par l'idée de "mission civilisatrice" de la Troisième République. Tout d'abord l'appel lancé par l'*Histoire des deux Indes* à la civilisation du peuple madécasse reste lettre morte auprès de l'administration, et cela est un signe très révélateur des rapports non linéaires entre l'administration et les hommes de lettre. Il faut aussi considérer que cet appel à la colonisation discrédite les pratiques mises en place à l'époque par Maudave et Beniowski: l'*Histoire des deux Indes* les rejette comme des tentatives "sans plan, sans moyens" alors que les démarches coloniales précédentes sont qualifiées de violentes et injustes (en ce qui concerne l'acquisition des terres)²⁷. Il y a donc un virage paradoxal dans la propagande coloniale de l'*Histoire des deux Indes*: l'auteur prend le contre-pied de la politique de Versailles, critique les démarches des protagonistes des entreprises coloniales françaises desquels il puisait ses informations, et se lance dans une incitation qui, tout en s'adressant aux "hommes d'État", prend un ton consciemment utopique:

Ce n'est pas seulement la politique qui veut qu'on se roidisse contre les difficultés inséparables de cette entreprise [la colonisation de Madagascar]. L'humanité doit parler plus haut, plus énergiquement encore que l'intérêt. [...] Hommes d'état, puissent les vœux de la philosophie, puissent les vœux d'un citoyen aller jusqu'à vous!²⁸.

Le point de vue colonialiste exprimé par l'*Histoire des deux Indes* ne peut donc pas être considéré comme un texte à l'appui de la politique coloniale réelle de la France à Madagascar, et surtout il ne la légitime pas; Raynal s'inspire des textes et des mémoires officiels qu'il interprète librement, dans une perspective 'philosophique', allant jusqu'à contester les auteurs de ces textes mêmes.

Il faut encore remarquer que l'idée coloniale proposée par l'*Histoire des deux Indes*, bien que porteuse d'un discours parfois paternaliste, parvient à annuler la distance qui sépare colonisateur et colonisés ; certes, selon l'auteur, ce sont très

26 HDI, IV, 5, 356.

27 HDI, IV, 4. Cf. aussi IV, 5, 357: "[Les agens de la Compagnie] détournèrent sans pudeur une partie des fonds dont ils avoient l'administration; ils consumèrent en dépenses folles ou inutiles des sommes plus considérables; ils se rendirent également odieux, & aux Européens dont ils devoient encourager les travaux, & aux naturels du pays qu'il falloit gagner par la douceur & par des bienfaits. Les crimes & les malheurs se multiplièrent à un tel excès, qu'en 1670, les associés crurent devoir remettre au gouvernement une possession qu'ils tenoient de lui".

28 HDI, IV, 5, 358.

souvent d'entrée les peuples colonisés qui doivent s'élever au niveau des peuples colonisateurs. Il en va ainsi des Madécasses. Mais il faut aller plus loin, car les 'effet positifs' de la colonisation française, d'après Raynal, ne seront déployés que si les français à Madagascar savent abandonner la "législation de l'Europe, corrompue & compliquée par la barbarie des coutumes féodales". Il s'agit donc pour les Français eux-mêmes de retrouver, à côté des Madécasses, une simplicité et une naturalité qu'ils semblent avoir perdues.

IV.

Si, jusqu'au milieu du XIX^e siècle il était encore possible de produire des histoires de la colonisation française capables de rassembler des informations diverses sur la géographie, l'anthropologie, le commerce, l'histoire locale²⁹, dès la deuxième moitié du XIX^e siècle, en revanche, le récit historique de la colonisation française se sépare progressivement de l'étude de l'histoire locale des peuples et des civilisations colonisés. La tâche de regrouper dans un tout les connaissances utiles pour mener à bout l' "œuvre coloniale" de la France est désormais confiée à une nouvelle science, que l'on nomme justement "coloniale", suivant la suggestion de Jules Duval³⁰.

Les ouvrages publiés par A. de Longeville, J. Rambosson, Paul Gaffarel, Alfred Rambaud³¹, nous offrent des exemples éloquents de la construction de cette science qui, selon Rambosson, se compose de plusieurs compétences: "géographie, histoire, productions, administration, et commerce: telles sont les grandes divisions auxquelles toutes les notions ont pu se rattacher"³². La partie confiée à l' "histoire" par cette "science coloniale" consiste, le plus fréquemment, dans un récit chronologique et événementiel de la colonisation française. Souvent, les écrivains se contentent de résumer en quelques pages une histoire coloniale qui s'étale sur plusieurs siècles. Encore une fois, il n'est pas question

29 Comme le faisait l'*Histoire des deux Indes*, véritable modèle d'une historiographie "encyclopédique" dans ses quatre éditions dont la dernière fut publiée en 1820, mais aussi comme essayaient de le faire les plus modestes synthèses de Antoinette-Joséphine de Latreiche, qui écrit sous le pseudonyme de Comtesse de Drohojowska, une *Histoire des colonies françaises* (Lyon-Paris: Périsse Frères 1853), et Juste-Jean-Étienne Roy, qui écrit lui aussi une *Histoire des colonies françaises et des établissements français en Amérique, en Afrique, en Asie et en Océanie, depuis leur fondation jusqu'à nos jours* (Tours: A. Mame, 1855).

30 "c'est une partie de la science à refaire, ou plutôt détacher pour être érigée en science spéciale, la science de la colonisation qui a son objet précis, délimité, bien distinct de tout autre, et qui l'explore avec des instruments fournis par d'autres sciences, mais formant en ses mains un ensemble qui n'appartient qu'à elle": J. Duval, *Les colonies et la politique coloniale de la France* (Paris: Bertrand, 1864), *Préface*, citée aussi par A. Girault, *Principes de colonisation et de législation coloniale* (Paris: Larose, 1895) 15. Cf. Dulucq, *Écrire l'histoire de l'Afrique*, 149-160.

31 A. de Longeville, *Les Colonies françaises, géographie, histoire, statistique* (Rouen: Mégard, 1869); J. Rambosson, *Les Colonies françaises. Géographie, histoire, productions, administration et commerce* (Paris: Ch. Delagrave, 1868); P. Gaffarel, *Les Colonies françaises* (Paris: Germer-Baillièrre, 1880), et *La France coloniale: histoire, géographie, commerce*, sous la direction de A. Rambaud (Paris: A. Colin, 1888).

32 Rambosson, *Les colonies françaises*, viii.

de s'intéresser directement à l'histoire locale: les ouvrages ne retiennent que les dates et les moments qui 'autorisent' la France à défendre ses droits sur les territoires occupés.

Cette pratique d'écriture de l'histoire coloniale ne semble pas par ailleurs reposer sur une réflexion méthodologique détaillée et développée. En 1851, quelque peu avant l'émergence de l'idée de 'science coloniale' dont l'histoire ferait aussi partie, Vivien de Saint-Martin, auteur d'une étude intitulée *Les sciences historiques et géographiques, envisagées dans leur mouvement actuel chez les différents peuples de l'Europe* (Paris, Arthus Bertrand éditeur), ne se penchait même pas sur l'apport du savoir historique à la connaissance du fait colonial, alors qu'il envisageait la science historique sous le respect de l'histoire locale, de l'histoire des langues et des religions. Même un apôtre de la 'science coloniale' tel que Jules Duval ne parvient pas à définir les objets et les méthodes propres du savoir historique intégré à la science coloniale sinon d'une façon très générale et quelque peu ambiguë, alors que l'usage de ce savoir historique en soutien de l'idée coloniale est, quant à lui, bien évident:

[la science coloniale] lit dans l'histoire l'influence des colonies sur le sort des métropoles, et y découvre une des causes de la puissance et de la richesse de ces dernières, de leur grandeur et de leur chute³³.

En parallèle du débat sur les méthodes de l'histoire coloniale, l'étude des pays et des peuples intéressés par la présence française reçoit aussi une impulsion dictée par l'expansion nationale outre-mer. Entre les années 1840 et 1890, au moins trois importantes histoires de Madagascar sont publiées par Henry d'Escamps (1846)³⁴, Camille de La Vaissière³⁵, et Alfred Grandidier³⁶. Certes, le regard que la France porte à l'histoire locale de l'île est motivé par les entreprises coloniales. Les sources exploitées sont prioritairement françaises et ministérielles. Au bout du compte, l'histoire de Madagascar reste l'histoire de la France à Madagascar, et surtout de ces traits de Madagascar auxquels la nation s'intéresse: le royaume Mérima et les missions catholiques³⁷. Il existe pourtant des tentatives d'écrire l'histoire de Madagascar au sens large, c'est-à-dire d'un pays moins directement concerné par la présence coloniale française. *L'Histoire physique, naturelle, et politique de Madagascar*, qu'Alfred Grandidier publie en 1885, se propose d'offrir la connaissance la plus complète possible de cette île. Si, finalement, l'intérêt que les Grandidier (père et fils) portent sur Madagascar correspond aux vues

33 Duval, *Les colonies et la politique coloniale de la France*, xix.

34 Henry d'Escamps, *Histoire et géographie de Madagascar* (voire note 14).

35 C. de La Vaissière, *Histoire de Madagascar: ses habitants et ses missionnaires* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1884).

36 A. Grandidier, *Histoire physique, naturelle, et politique de Madagascar* (Paris: Impr. nationale, 1885).

37 Cf., à ce sujet, les remarques de H. Deschamps, "Conceptions, Problèmes et Sources de L'Histoire de Madagascar", *The Journal of African History*, 1, 2 (1960): 249-256, spéc. p. 250.

coloniales de la France, leurs tentatives pour faire progresser la connaissance de l'île dépassent la simple propagande, et pour cela, elles seront appréciées par un réformateur de l'histoire coloniale tel que Hubert Deschamps en 1960, lui aussi provenant de l'expérience comme administrateur de la Grande Île³⁸. Il me paraît donc important de distinguer parmi les différentes sortes de productions historiographiques concernant Madagascar ou les possessions françaises plus en général. Si différentes formes de récits historiques sont directement inspirées par l'élan colonial français et s'inscrivent dans l'effort de connaissance que cet élan entraîne, ces récits ne se ressemblent pas tous par nature. À côté des histoires hagiographiques de la présence française à Madagascar, coexistent des tentatives, fort imparfaites par ailleurs, de faire l'économie de la présence française sur l'île pour connaître et étudier les éléments indigènes de l'histoire locale.

V.

Sans nier le regard déformant porté sur cette histoire locale, et parfois son véritable oubli, il me semble intéressant de mettre en évidence certaines remarques, objections, et mises en garde provenant du sein de l'historiographie coloniale européenne elle-même envers ses négligences et ses préjugés ; bien que ces critiques n'arrivent pas à démanteler un système épistémologique largement européocentrique, et parfois contredisent les propos qu'elles affirment, il me semble qu'elles font preuve d'un degré de dynamisme plus consistant que ce que l'on représente habituellement:

Il y a, et surtout il y a eu, des monuments historiques dans nos colonies. L'histoire coloniale, jusqu'à présent, ne s'en est guère souciée. Exception faite pour l'Afrique du Nord et pour quelques rares coins privilégiés, comme Angkor, elle ignore à peu près tout des traces matérielles laissées par les sociétés indigènes ou les peuples colonisateurs. C'est là une lacune singulièrement grave, si l'on songe à la place que les monuments, petits ou grands, châteaux, cathédrales, statues ou médailles, tiennent dans l'histoire de l'Europe. [...] C'est dire qu'en négligeant cette source de documentation, l'histoire coloniale se condamne à mainte erreur et mainte injustice.

Qui voudrait souscrire à cette remarque, pourrait être surpris d'apprendre qu'elle est tirée des *Éléments de l'histoire coloniale*, publiés en 1921 par Georges Hardy, à l'époque directeur général de *l'Instruction publique, des beaux-arts et des antiquités* du Maroc³⁹. Dans cet ouvrage, Hardy insiste encore sur d'autres défis que présente l'étude de l'histoire coloniale: elle attend tout d'abord de l'historien qu'il porte un regard critique sur les sources écrites – la presse et les relations de voyages – car celles-ci contiennent des informations parfois

38 Deschamps, "Conceptions, problèmes et sources de l'histoire de Madagascar", 251.

39 G. Hardy, *Les éléments de l'histoire coloniale* (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1921), 24-25. Cf. Dulucq, *Écrire l'histoire de l'Afrique*, 97-118.

fausses, parfois exagérées. Ensuite, la complexité du phénomène colonial exige de l'historien de situer son regard au croisement de plusieurs perspectives: les dynamiques globales, l'histoire métropolitaine, l'histoire locale: "c'est déjà une particularité très importante, que cette histoire [coloniale] ait pour ainsi dire deux centres, ou, si l'on préfère, deux foyers, l'un dans la métropole, l'autre dans la colonie intéressée"⁴⁰. Une fois de plus, me semble-t-il, nous retrouvons des recommandations judicieuses et partageables, bien qu'elles viennent de la plume d'un haut fonctionnaire colonial. Héritage ambigu, embarrassant, ou mise en garde prévoyante contre les abus des études coloniales à venir?

Certes, la mise à l'épreuve des principes herméneutiques déclarés par Hardy fait émerger des résultats quelque peu décourageants: somme toute, *l'Histoire de la colonisation française* qu'il publie en 1928 s'inscrit dans le paradigme historiographique conventionnel, qui consiste à défendre la 'vocation colonisatrice' de la France en montrant la longue durée et les effets de la présence française outre-mer⁴¹; il s'agit à la fois d'un récit événementiel et d'un bilan historique dans lequel l'histoire des peuples colonisés ne trouve pas encore de place. Le point de vue de cette histoire reste donc 'national' dans le sens où l'historien s'intéresse aux entreprises de la France, à ses succès et à ses 'malheurs'.

La première importante vague polémique contre l'histoire coloniale de Madagascar se manifeste à l'époque de l'indépendance de la Grande Île. Je ferais référence à deux ouvrages bien différents entre eux quant aux points de vues et méthodologies développés, et qui pourtant se rejoignent sur le terrain de la polémique envers l'histoire coloniale.

Le premier parmi ces ouvrages – dont le titre est *Contribution à l'histoire de la nation malgache* – est publié en 1958 par un historien marxiste proche du parti communiste, Pierre Boiteau⁴². L'histoire de Madagascar est interprétée à la lumière des idées de Marx et Engels sur l'État, les luttes de classes, l'impérialisme comme entreprise bourgeoise pour l'ouverture de nouveaux débouchés en soutien de la production. Le regard que Boiteau porte sur l'histoire madécasse ne se laisserait donc pas qualifier comme 'neutre'. L'écrivain, d'ailleurs, a été aussi acteur dans cette histoire. Néanmoins, ce qui intéresse, ici, c'est de remarquer que, peut-être justement en raison de son point de vue engagé, Boiteau arrive à dénoncer les transformations que l'arrivée des Européens a provoquées dans la société et l'économie madécasses. Deuxième élément d'intérêt dans cette réécriture de l'histoire de Madagascar, c'est que la polémique menée par Boiteau ne reste pas sur le plan de l'économie; elle investit aussi la production des connaissances et en particulier, l'écriture de l'histoire coloniale. D'abord Emile Tersain dans la préface qu'il rédige pour cet ouvrage, ensuite l'auteur lui-même insistent sur les représentations déformantes de la société et de l'économie malgaches élaborées par les Européens – qu'ils appellent "falsifications":

40 Hardy, *Les éléments de l'histoire coloniale*, 41.

41 G. Hardy, *Histoire de la colonisation française* (Paris: Larose, 1928).

42 P. Boiteau, *Contribution à l'histoire de la nation malgache* (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1958).

Géographes venus dans une louable intention de pénétration scientifique, prospecteurs attirés par des soucis plus utilitaires, missionnaires animés – protestants ou catholiques – par un but d'évangélisation, militaires racontant leurs campagnes et ce qu'ils imaginent être leurs exploits, ont tous été, en fin de compte, les fourriers et les servants de la colonisation. Et volontairement (dans la plupart des cas) ou involontairement, leurs travaux tendent toujours à justifier cette même colonisation. [...] L'histoire écrite de Madagascar est l'œuvre d'Européens. Mis à part quelques rares auteurs anciens, ces Européens sont les porte-parole de leurs impérialismes respectifs et, à ce titre, on peut s'attendre de leur part à de multiples falsifications⁴³.

Boiteau dénonce par la suite "l'oppression culturelle" de la France consistant dans l'effort (notamment par Gallieni) de transplanter les programmes d'études occidentales dans la culture locale, ce qui empêchait l'étude de l'histoire locale⁴⁴. Il est intéressant de constater que cette dénonciation de la domination culturelle que la France a exercée sur les colonisés s'exprime dans les mêmes termes employés par les porte-parole des *Subaltern Studies*⁴⁵ dans leur analyse des rapports de la culture au pouvoir.

On serait sans doute bien en droit de mettre les principes énoncés par Boiteau à l'épreuve des résultats. Il faudrait alors reconnaître que le point de vue marxiste risque de superposer à l'histoire des mondes colonisés des catégories, telles que 'lutte de classe', ou 'état', qui sont tout autant schématiques et européocentriques que les représentations de la civilisation madécasse qu'elles veulent renverser. Tout bien considéré, les objections soulevées par les *Subaltern Studies* envers les théories marxistes du développement socio-économique des nations colonisées pourraient s'appliquer à l'interprétation que Boiteau propose de l'histoire de Madagascar ; il me paraît néanmoins important de souligner que le rôle joué par le point de vue marxiste (spécialement le marxisme gramscien) dans la mise en cause de l'histoire coloniale est à l'origine des remarques avancées quelques années plus tard par les *Subaltern Studies*.

Un deuxième front polémique envers le point de vue colonial et européocentrique, qui influence l'écriture de l'histoire de Madagascar, s'ouvre en 1960 par un article de Hubert Deschamps⁴⁶. Soulignant que le regard européen sur l'histoire de Madagascar avait été fortement orienté par les politiques et les stratégies coloniales, Deschamps insiste sur l'importance de restituer l'histoire de Madagascar à ses peuples:

L'histoire coloniale était hagiographique, héroïque (d'un seul côté), patriotique, uniformément bienfaitrice et civilisatrice. Ensuite nous avons vu naître, par réaction,

43 Boiteau, *Contribution à l'histoire de la nation malgache*, 7-8, 11.

44 Boiteau, *Contribution à l'histoire de la nation malgache*, 290-5.

45 P. Chatterjee, *Nationalism as a Problem in the History of Ideas*, in Id., *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 17-30.

46 H. Deschamps, "Conceptions, problèmes et sources de l'histoire de Madagascar".

une histoire anticoloniale, mettant en scène, aussi exclusivement, de blancs démons tortionnaires, réactionnaires et exploiters [...]. Coloniale, anticoloniale, ce sont les deux faces contraires d'une même monnaie: au premier plan les Européens, les "enfants de Japeth", et leurs sempiternelles divisions⁴⁷.

Tout comme il était impossible d'imaginer une histoire de la France où les "premiers rôles seraient tenus par les Romains, les Anglais, les Espagnols et les Prussiens", un effort devait être fait pour replacer les Madécasses au centre de leur propre histoire:

L'eurocentrisme – Deschamps dénonce en 1970 – n'est plus qu'un anachronisme à abattre, et un égoïsme à combattre. Cette optique européenne, fruit de l'ignorance, des habitudes, de la paresse intellectuelle et d'un orgueil commode, a longtemps retardé et faussé l'histoire de l'Afrique⁴⁸.

Bien évidemment, au lieu de s'en tenir aux seules déclarations de principe (bien que salutaires et fort utiles), il serait souhaitable de soumettre l'exécution du programme de Deschamps à une analyse détaillée des résultats⁴⁹. Une fois de plus, cette vérification ne saurait être tout à fait satisfaisante; on pourrait ainsi se demander ce qu'il en est de la reconnaissance de l'authenticité de l'histoire africaine et de l'abandon des paramètres européens si, au bout du compte, Deschamps lui-même juge du développement de l'histoire de Madagascar à l'aune d'une notion 'européenne' telle que celle de 'progrès', aboutissant finalement au rapprochement quelque peu suspect de l'histoire de la Grande Île à celle de...la France:

Cette histoire d'un des pays les plus originaux du monde apparaît, dans sa marche continue à l'unité, comme particulièrement cohérente et clairement progressive. Elle diffère, à cet égard, d'histoires cycliques, comme celles de l'Inde ou de la Chine, et évoque plutôt, dans son déroulement logique, l'histoire de France elle-même⁵⁰.

Sommes-nous donc à nouveau confrontés au paradoxe d'un point de vue eurocentrique qui conduit presque insensiblement à tout rapporter au progrès européen ? Deschamps serait-il lui-même tombé dans le piège de l'idéologie eurocentrique, sinon coloniale? Somme toute, en représentant Madagascar comme intrinsèquement proche de l'Europe, plus précisément encore, proche de la France qui l'avait gouvernée pendant "65 ans de vie commune" dans le but déclaré de mettre la Grande Île sur le chemin du progrès, l'auteur ne finit-il pas par créditer en quelque mesure l'ancienne thèse coloniale? Des indices nous

47 H. Deschamps, *Histoire générale de l'Afrique noire, de Madagascar et des archipels*, sous la direction de H. Deschamps (Paris: Puf, 1970-1971, 2 vols.), vol. I, 8. Cf. Dulucq, *Écrire l'histoire de l'Afrique*, 258-9.

48 *Histoire générale de l'Afrique noire*, 7-8 pour les deux extraits.

49 Cf., en général, Dulucq, *Écrire l'histoire de l'Afrique*, 257-280.

50 H. Deschamps, *Histoire de Madagascar* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1972, 4^e éd. revue et complétée), 8.

confirmation dans ce soupçon: le défi que Madagascar devait relever pour affermir son indépendance consistait, selon Deschamps, à trouver sa place et jouer son rôle dans le développement de deux civilisations différentes, celle de l'Europe et celle de l'Asie. Le peuple malgache, situé à la frontière de ces deux mondes, risquait d'être envahi par les "foules chinoises et indiennes" qui "ne cessent de s'accroître à un rythme gigantesque et risquent de déborder vers ces zones de basses pressions démographiques de la planète qui se situent dans l'hémisphère austral"⁵¹. Redevenu indépendant, le pays devait maintenant "mériter" cette liberté: cela signifiait abandonner toute nostalgie du temps de "ray amandreny", et faire évoluer rapidement sa civilisation sous l'impulsion de la science et de la technique afin de participer à la vie mondiale et demeurer maître de sa propre histoire⁵². L'ambiguïté de ce souhait réside dans le fait qu'il propose, en définitive, le ralliement de Madagascar à l'Europe, alors que les peuples africains étaient en quête de la "troisième voie" au progrès.

Il me paraît essentiel de souligner que l'ensemble des questions soulevées jusqu'à présent pose un problème qui intéresse l'écriture et l'étude de l'histoire coloniale: libérée, si possible, de la référence implicite ou explicite au point de vue national, l' 'histoire coloniale' aura-t-elle encore un sens, ou finira-t-elle par se dissoudre dans l'écriture et l'étude de l'histoire des civilisations du Monde? Je crois que la réponse à la première question doit être affirmative, si on ne veut pas diminuer l'importance du fait colonial en lui-même. Les apports qui favorisent cette réécriture de l'histoire coloniale ne manquent pas, comme on l'a évoqué au début de cette étude: ils arrivent de domaines et méthodologies aussi diverses que l'Atlantic History, la socio-histoire, l'histoire des échanges, des transferts, des circulations des savoirs, l'histoire de l'économie à l'échelle globale. Considérés dans leur ensemble, ces apports sont en train de transformer nos vues sur l'histoire coloniale, d'en faire une histoire pour ainsi dire bidirectionnelle, capable d'explorer les échanges complexes entre civilisations différentes, les modifications réciproques, les rapports de pouvoir et leurs inflexions, les interactions, les mécompréhensions, les rencontres et les confrontations.

C'est à l'intérieur de ce vaste domaine de recherche, qu'une enquête empirique de la production et de l'écriture des paradigmes historiques qui ont raconté l'expansion coloniale française trouve toute sa légitimité. Les objets et les enjeux du long débat historiographique que nous venons d'évoquer dans ce survol, les transformations épistémologiques, les circulations d'informations que nous avons signalées, montrent combien ce savoir historique était varié, dynamique, pluriel; son évolution du XVIIIe jusqu'au XXe siècle a été considérable. L'enjeu d'une telle enquête du savoir historique exige tout d'abord de saisir dans quelle mesure les colonies ont été associées à la métropole dans la conscience des contemporains, et combien la conscience que la métropole avait d'elle-même dépendait de la conscience qu'elle avait de ses colonies. Mais

⁵¹ Deschamps, *Histoire de Madagascar*, 324.

⁵² Deschamps, *Histoire de Madagascar*, 324.

il s'agit aussi de remettre en cause l'idée, trop souvent reçue, que ce savoir historique ait eu un développement linéaire, exclusivement orienté vers la dominance culturelle. Il s'agirait au contraire de porter un regard nouveau sur ce savoir, comme sur les autres savoirs, en soulignant les critiques internes, les résistances, les occasions manquées de réforme, les gagnants mais aussi les perdants dans la production et la promotion des discours historiques. Tout cela non dans le but de minimiser la dominance culturelle, mais d'en montrer son historicité, de sorte à mieux la comprendre, et de sorte aussi à nous octroyer cette capacité à saisir la diversité et la variété qui sont le rempart contre toute hégémonie épistémologique. En restituant au savoir historique sur le fait colonial des XVIIIe, XIXe, et XXe siècles sa variété interne et la pluralité des voix qui le composaient, nous serons nous-mêmes capables d'entendre et de dialoguer avec la pluralité qui nous entoure; nous serons capables de porter un regard autre sur l'histoire coloniale et son héritage culturel.

Catholic civilization and the evil savage: Juan Nuix facing the Spanish *Conquista* of the New World

NICCOLÒ GUASTI

I.

This contribution is focussed on the *Riflessioni imparziali sopra l'Umanità degli Spagnuoli nell'Indie*, published in 1780 by the exiled Spanish Jesuit Juan Nuix¹. My aim is twofold: first of all, I will try to analyze some issues debated in late eighteenth century Spanish culture; secondly, I would like to grasp Nuix's peculiar point of view on 'otherness' in relation to the Spanish *Conquista* of America. In other words I wish to study his ideological framework and how an eighteenth century European Jesuit evaluated pre-Columbian civilizations and cultures.

Starting from some biographical information, Juan Nuix y de Perpinyà was one of the about five thousand Spanish Jesuits expelled by Charles III in 1767. Reaching Italy during the following years, this large colony of ecclesiastics concentrated itself mainly in the North Center region of Emilia-Romagna, within the Papal States, till 1814, when the Pope restored the Society of Jesus (which had been suppressed in 1773). Nuix was born in Cervera in 1740; in 1754 he joined the Aragonese Province of the Society; with his provincial group he lived in Ferrara until he died on 15 July 1783, at the age of 43 years.

¹ Juan Nuix y de Perpinyà, *Riflessioni imparziali sopra l'Umanità degli Spagnuoli nell'Indie, contro i pretesi Filosofi e Politici, per servire di lume alle storie de' signori Raynal e Robertson* (Venezia: Francesco Pezzana, 1780).

Within the Spanish Assistance in exile, the Aragonese Province, even before the expulsion, distinguished itself for humanistic studies and a strong interest in philosophical debates: contemporary historiography, starting from Miguel Batllori and Antonio Mestre, has explained this fact with the local erudite tradition and with the current of *novatores*, like Gregorio Mayans, born in the Reign of Valencia. We can extend this argument to the Society in its entirety. Within the Jesuit Spanish group too, during the eighteenth century (especially after the suppression ordained by Pope Clement XIV and the collapse of the ancient hierarchy), two cores or trends clearly emerged: a conservative wing, defending the Catholic orthodoxy and the Scholastic-Thomistic tradition; and an open-minded tendency, that tried to absorb philosophical, theological and epistemological breakings or cultural challenges. This latter wing developed a peculiar cultural technique based on syncretism and eclecticism, following the same method adopted by the Society's missionary strategy. These two wings had existed since the seventeenth century, but the emergence of the *Nova Scientia* and, afterwards, of the Enlightenment made this split and this double identity more evident within the Society. Usually the more open-minded wing tried to combine Cartesianism, Newtonian Physics, Lockean philosophy and the Leibnizian-Wolffian system with the Scholastic tradition, and in the first half of eighteenth century it engaged itself in a dialogue with the *philosophes* (as the French Jesuit Guillaume-François Berthier, editor in chief of the famous *Mémoires de Trévoux*). At the same time, the more traditional trend labeled every approach to modern philosophy by the insulting term of 'Spinozism'.

During the second half of eighteenth century, even after the suppression, the open-minded group was determined to take possession of the *sociabilité des Lumières* – academies, salons, libraries, Masonic lodges – and decided to reach the reading public by the press and the new fashionable literary genres, like the philosophical novel. We can consider this syncretist and enlightened wing as a part of that "moderate main-stream", which Jonathan I. Israel is making reference to in his *Radical Enlightenment*: in fact the basic aim of the open-minded wing was to fight atheism and, like their conservative *confrères*, to defend papal supremacy, political order and Catholicism. In other words these 'enlightened Jesuits' tried to Christianize European Enlightenment.

It is necessary to underline that both wings often co-existed within the same national group, in every Province and even in the same Jesuit college or house. After the French Revolution and the quick polarization of European political atmosphere, the enlightened wing suffered a clear defeat: even those Jesuits who had kept open a continuous dialogue with reformers and Enlightenment thinkers changed strategy and assumed more cautious attitude; the restoration of the Society allowed these two cores converge again.

In the case of the Spanish Jesuits we can note that both wings, especially after the expulsion, developed a strong patriotic attitude: this has been usually explained as a reaction to the expulsion itself because, during their long exile,

Iberian Jesuits protested their innocence against the impeachment they had been charged with. But, within the Spanish Assistance, we can observe the existence of different forms of patriotism. The conservative group engaged itself to extol the imperial past of Habsburg Spain, the essential foundations of which were *casticismo*, *limpieza de sangre* and militant Catholicism; on the contrary, the open-minded current did not ignore the economic, cultural and political decline of Spain, but anyway strove to demonstrate the important contribution Spain had given to European civilization: as Juan Andrés, one of the most important figure of Spanish Assistance maintained, Spain needed more an “indirect apologia” than a partisan one. These two patriotic or apologetic tendencies characterized not only Jesuits, but the overall Spanish culture of the eighteenth century: the clearest definition of the first kind of patriotism was that of Benito Jerónimo Feijóo who, in his *Glorias de España* (in *Teatro Crítico*, vol. 4, speech 13), exalted the civilizing role – beginning with the spread of Christianity – achieved by Spaniards in America. The second perspective came out from the *Austracismo* and Mayans’ erudition: not accidentally, because of its rejection of a Castilian-centric and imperial point of view, it was charged with anti-patriotism by Bourbon official culture, whose champion was Feijóo.

As we shall see, Juan Nuix – in spite of his Catalan origins – shared the first apologetic interpretation, following just Feijóos ideas on Iberian *Conquista* of America.

II.

It is neither possible to describe here every aspect of the Spanish Jesuits’ publishing activities during the exile, nor to explain the strategies they developed at the end of eighteenth century to counter Enlightenment culture. Suffice it to say that the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776 not only caused the appearance of a great quantity of writings dedicated to America and the European colonies, but it gave also impulse to the Enlightenment movement: with his *Riflessioni*, Nuix aimed at opposing “the prosecutors of Spain [...], who in our century are called philosophers”². Like many Spanish exiled Jesuits, he tried to question the new ‘enlightened’ version of the centuries old ideological paradigm defined *leyenda negra*.

Paradoxically the fact that the Spanish monarchy took side with the thirteen revolted British colonies did not help to assert a positive image of Spain, as Bourbon reformers like Camponanes endeavored to do in Europe. French, Scottish and Italian *philosophes* – taking their starting point from Las Casas’ *Relación*, Garcilaso de la Vega’s *Comentarios Reales* and other Iberian historians and chroniclers – described Spain with unprecedented polemical vigor as the prototype of the colonial nation whose unrelenting thirst for riches had caused the ruthless exploitation of innocent native peoples; they strongly insisted

² Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 14.

on two main topics, that is the cruelty of the conquest of the New World and the ineptitude in ruling the colonial territories. Therefore, during the 1770s, some political and historical texts, working out themes already expounded by Montesquieu, Buffon, de Pauw, Voltaire and Jaucourt, condemned Spain for its colonial system and for its religious fanaticism: among them, Raynal and Diderot's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770; 1774; 1780) and William Robertson's *History of America* (1777). Some novelists too, influenced by the noble savage myth, blamed *conquistadores'* violent insults against Amerindians: dramas and novels like Marmontel's *Les Incas* (1777) collaborated with Raynal's 'machine de guerre' to draw a black image of Spanish colonization. The climax of the anti-Spanish polemic was achieved in 1783, when Masson de Morvilliers published his famous article "Espagne" in the first volume of the geographical section in the *Encyclopédie Méthodique*.

Therefore, at the end of 1770s, French and Scottish Enlightenment circles had reinforced two main topics belonging to the black legend, that is the inhumanity showed by sixteenth century *conquistadores* and the tyrannical oppression on consciences and on Spanish culture exercised by Inquisition: the 'Olavide affaire', blown up at the same time as the American Revolution, revived the never soothed charges against the "monster", as Voltaire called the Spanish Holy Office in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*.

Bourbon government, led from 1776 by the count of Floridablanca, reacted immediately against this press campaign. With the support of José Gálvez (the minister of Indies) and in opposition to the count of Campomanes, Floridablanca decided to organize an effectual propaganda operation in order to refute the black legend's topics: his government enrolled to this purpose the best Spanish writers. This strategy will reach its climax with the prohibition of the translation Robertson's *History of America's* sponsored by Campomanes, with Pedro Suárez de Góngora's, Duke of Almodovar, revised version of Raynal's *Histoire philosophique* and, finally, with an official history of America written and published in 1793 by Juan Bautista Muñoz.

In order to win this cultural war, Floridablanca did not hesitate to recruit exiled Jesuits: from then on, Madrid would give granted honors and money to those Jesuits who, as any Spanish writer (José Cadalso, Juan Pablo Forner, José Cavanilles, Juan Sempere y Guarinos) and journalist, had criticized the "slanderous reports" spread by foreign philosophers and travelers. In the case of the expelled Jesuits, Floridablanca stipulated a tacit agreement with them: Bourbon government would systematically warrant a second pension for "literary merits" in exchange for their apologetic zeal.

The Jesuits who, during the previous years, had polemized against the Bourbon ministers responsible for their expulsion (first of all, Campomanes), chose to support Floridablanca's propaganda for two main reasons. First, after the suppression of their order in 1773, every Jesuit had to survive as any other member of the secular clergy. In the case of the Spanish Jesuits, Charles III's *Pragmática de expulsión* (1767)

had granted them individual pensions, but such a poor amount also because of an increasing devaluation, could not secure a decent life. So, taking advantage of the Jesuits' critical financial situation, Bourbon ministers could 'blackmail' and 'enlist' this group of exiled clergymen: Madrid would reward those who defended their own country from foreign black propaganda. As the Spanish ambassador in Rome José Nicolás de Azara said, it was a double kind of opportunistic "prostitution": the Jesuits sold themselves for money, while Floridablanca's government made a unscrupled use of their pens to build up a white legend.

In the second place, some ex-Jesuits – especially those who belonged to the conservative wing as Nuix – seized the opportunity to polemicize against French and Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. Floridablanca did not really want to seal up Spanish culture from Enlightenment influences, but only to fight *leyenda negra*'s topics; instead, taking advantage of the greater degree of freedom granted by Madrid, the Jesuits went often beyond with their apologetic zeal: they were able to make use of the government encouragement to fight their own battles. For example some Spanish Jesuits – like Nuix himself – wanted to show their patriotism not only to polemicize with Enlightenment writers, but also to demonstrate the injustice inflicted on them by Charles III in 1767.

On the other hand, Madrid succeeded in considering useful the Jesuits' competence basically for their knowledge of the American situation: exiled Jesuits – not only the Creole ones, but also the native European missionaries – had taken with them to Italy their "saber americanista", according to Miguel Battlori. Spanish government, in spite of the violent polemics on the Jesuit's experience in Paraguay, knew well that Jesuits had a personal practice, a deep familiarity and first-hand information on Spanish America: this knowledge could be efficacious to help Bourbon propaganda to refute the 'black legend'. Certainly not all the apologetic works written or published by Spanish Jesuits used this "saber americanista": in the case of Nuix's *Riflessioni*, a text upholding strongly partisan theses, this practical and empirical knowledge was subordinated to ideological passions, although he claimed exactly the opposite: "I relied on – we read in his preface – more than 100 skilled men [that is, ex-Jesuits], who lived many years in those [American] regions"³.

In this respect, exiled Jesuits chose two different strategies to defend the Spanish conquest of America against the 'black legend'. The first perspective, fostered by a group of Creole Jesuits and a few of European ex-missionaries – Francisco Javier Clavigero, Pedro José Márquez, Josef Fábrega, Juan Ignacio Molina, Juan de Velasco, Francisco Iturri, Josef Jolís, Gian Domenico Coletti – consisted in defending native culture from a proto-anthropological point of view; those who had been forced to leave their notes and manuscripts in America, where they were confiscated by Bourbon officials, succeeded anyhow in drafting valuable treatises during their long exile. These Jesuits decided to question de Pauw, Buffon, Raynal and the whole philosophical historiography by

³ Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 6.

making use of a rigorous historical method, founded both on erudition and on their own experience. The second perspective, developed by peninsular Jesuits – like Nuix himself, Antonio Torres, Antonio Julián, Ramón Diosdado Caballero, Francisco Javier Llampillas, Juan Francisco Masdeu, Marián Llorente, Domingo Muriel, Filippo Salvatore Gilj – tried to confute Raynal, Robertson, de Pauw by claiming the validity of Spanish and Catholic civilization: for them native culture was inferior and Europeans gave to the *indios* a civilized government and the true religion. They considered History – as Nuix clearly said – as just a tribunal where conflicting opinions confronted each other, and the historian as a lawyer who tried to defend his cause: in other words, this group of Jesuits, regarding History as a rhetorical discourse, challenged philosophical history on its own battle-field. Therefore their works are simply apologetic.

To sum up, both groups shared the same objectives – to fight ‘black legend’ and philosophical history (in all their details and inaccuracies) – but pursued them through two opposite strategies reflecting their ideological positions. The main difference originated, as we have seen, from different historical methodologies⁴. The second one was characterized by its insistence on the connection between colonization/civilization and Indian cultures. Most of peninsular Jesuits (even those who had worked in American missions) thought that Spanish colonization was just a synonym of civilization: naturally the main element of this European civilization was considered the spread of Catholic religion, not only because Christianity allowed the salvation of natives’ souls, but also because it permitted to cross out customs (like human sacrifices) that the simple natural right considered barbaric and cruel. As another Catalan Jesuit, Antonio Julián, said Spanish *Conquista* could be considered a real redemption of Indian peoples: the preaching of the Gospel and Spanish colonization had allowed to defeat Satan’s monarchy in America, that is heathen religions and cultures. On the contrary, most of the Creole Jesuits (especially the Mexican ones), even if they agreed on the benefits of christianization, tried to understand ‘otherness’: starting from Lorenzo Boturini’s point of view, they granted pre-Columbian States (particularly the Aztec and Inca Empires) a high degree of civilization; using the interpretative prism provided by Greek and Roman history, they went so far as to explain and even justify such controversial native customs as cannibalism. This marked historical awareness, resulting from the same ‘anthropological’ insight which had helped Jesuit missionaries to adapt Catholic religion to any world-wide contexts and cultures, led American Jesuits to express a quite different sort of patriotism from the Hispanic one of their European brothers. Contemporary historiography usually interprets this glorification of the ‘provincial’ mother-country by Creole Jesuits as a part of a complex cultural and political process leading, at the beginning of nineteenth century, to Latin America independence from Spanish monarchy:

⁴ Anyhow both groups can be considered part of a long historiographical tradition shared by the Society: in fact Creole Jesuits seemed to follow the Bollandist school, while European fathers shared the Jesuit tradition of Renaissance historiography (recently elucidated by Marc Fumaroli).

from this point of view, Creole Jesuits contributed (as David A. Brading has showed) to give rise to the consciousness of a political diversity between Spain and American Creole societies.

III.

Nuix's *Riflessioni* belong to this cultural climate. The treatise was published in Venice in the mid-1780s, because Venetian censorship – the *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova* – gave its license on 28 and 29 April, and in July the printer Francesco Pezzana advertised the book in *Notizie dal Mondo*. Afterwards some Italian and foreign reviews ensured the work a good success, since two distinct translations into Castilian appeared between 1782 and 1783: the first one was by Pedro Varela y Ulloa, *oficial de la Secretaría de Estado*, one of the government officials in Floridablanca's service; the second one was published in Cervera by Nuix's brother, José, with some original remarks and notes. In other words the first translation was sponsored by the Madrid government because, on Varela's opinion, it could help Floridablanca's propaganda; the second revised edition instead derived directly from the Nuix family and from his home town and country (Cervera, Catalonia). I think that José Nuix, with his version, made an attempt to claim a sort of copyright on his brother's behalf; at the same time he tried to offer a different product – not only correcting some misprints and mistakes in Varela's translation, but also adding new notes and paragraphs – with the intention to compete with and possibly overcome the Madrid edition.

The *Riflessioni* are divided in five chapters or “reflections”, preceded by two prefaces where the author explains his aims. It is immediately obvious that Nuix wanted to polemize against Raynal and Robertson, although he treated with greater respect the Scottish historian. Indeed if Nuix used a rough conservative rhetoric against Raynal (“his philosophy – Nuix says – is irreligious and his politics is symptomatic of the lack of every sovereignty”⁵), he seems more careful when he makes reference to Robertson, whom he considered a serious historian: “as regards Robertson, I won't mingle him with libertine philosophers, or with the enemies of Spain. But I thought necessary to rectify his mistakes. [...] This Scotsman is one of the best historians in our century when he follows Spanish writers; but when he does not use them to be a philosopher, he almost stops being a historian”⁶. It is possible that Nuix's point of view was affected by just a prosaic reason: he could not forgive Raynal to be a Society of Jesus apostate, whereas Robertson was at least a religious (albeit heretic) man.

Nuix's strategy to dismantle Raynal's and Robertson's works is founded upon three main points. First of all, he reversed the negative opinions on Spain

⁵ Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 8.

⁶ Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 8.

expressed by Enlightenment writers: intolerance, for instance, is praised because it guaranteed to Spain a lasting religious peace⁷, while he pointed out Inquisition as a universal model of legal politeness⁸. In other words our Jesuit claims the positive role of just those cultural and political aspects which Raynal and Robertson had vigorously condemned.

Secondly, Nuix maintained that the historical reconstruction of the Spanish conquest of America suggested by Raynal and Robertson was an overall set of prejudices. These prejudices derived from ignorance because, in Nuix's opinion, the philosophical historians, who had never set foot in America, thought themselves entitled to write on themes or questions they did not really know by direct experience: they spent all their time on over tendentious books, thinking to be able to reconstruct artificially the history of Spanish America from Paris or Edinburgh.

Finally Nuix tried to prove the more evident inner discrepancies between the French and the Scottish Enlightenment movements: he made use indeed of a sort of controversialist technique, coming from his theological training, not only to refute Raynal and Robertson, but also to censure such writers who were points of reference for the whole European Enlightenment, as Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, Montesquieu, Helvétius, Buffon, Hume. Practically Nuix tried to collide them with each other through a smart inter-textual strategy: thus, for example, when raising the issue of religious tolerance, he contrasted Rousseau with D'Alembert⁹.

The explicit aim of this strategy is to build up a *leyenda blanca* or *leyenda rosada* based on the systematic overturning of 'black legend's topics: Castilian *conquistadores* were human, Spanish governance had always been just, Catholicism civilized native peoples and 'saved' their souls. Obviously Nuix did not forget to praise the Society of Jesus, which (especially in California and Paraguay) helped to bring into subjection many Indian tribes "without bloodshed"¹⁰. However, his blame against the 'black legend' and philosophical history ends with a methodical challenge of the Enlightenment: he considered it a matter of point of view, just like a two-faced coin. So Nuix's *Riflessioni* pursue a more ambitious object, that is to refute "the so called modern philosophers [...], those irreligious and seditious writers of our times. All of them, having declared war on religion and government, necessarily had to do it against Spain, the most Catholic and orderly State. Therefore it happens that every anti-Catholic is anti-Spanish too"¹¹. French and Scottish Enlightenment indeed aimed, according to him, at overthrowing both throne

7 Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 196-208.

8 Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 208-216.

9 Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 201-208.

10 Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 329-330.

11 Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 7.

and altar, basic pillars of any civil society: since the best combination of these two elements had been achieved by Spanish monarchy, modern philosophers would discredit Spain to achieve a clear political subversive plan.

Nuix, in other words, not only set the historical mission of Spain within a providential frame, but also showed the dangers of a gradual secularization of contemporary European society. Not by accident in the first *Riflessione*¹², as well as at the end of the third one¹³, he addressed a violent anathema against modern commercial society, symbolized during eighteenth century by the 'English paradigm', resting upon luxury, self interest, economic profit. This Mandevillean sort of society horrified Nuix because it would relegate religion to the private sphere: Enlightenment, having granted political economy a new scientific status (especially thanks to Physiocracy), was responsible for this dangerous secularization because it provided "lessons diametrically opposed to the spirit of Christianity, lessons of unbounded commerce, lessons of immoderate luxury, lessons of insatiable avidity, and, finally, lessons which make believe that the greatest happiness lays in the greatest wealth. Instructed in a very different doctrine, Spaniards hate both extremes, wealth or stinginess and poverty"¹⁴.

Thus Nuix set commercial society, founded on protestant ethics and on the *esprit de commerce* (according to the celebrated definition by Montesquieu), against his 'Spanish paradigm', that is a model where Catholic faith, a nobiliary *ethos* and a moderate commerce were able to live together in harmony. In this model – born from the mere idealization of the society where Nuix lived since 1767 – avidity could exist, but only as an individual abuse or sin, promptly sentenced by religious and public powers, and it could not be raised to become the main pillar of civil order. So he explained the greed showed by the first *conquistadores* and *encomenderos* not as the effect of a 'capitalist' mentality linked with modern commercial society, but only as a symptom of human weakness, a consequence of the original sin. This theological frame led to ascribe *conquistadores'* inhumanity to a few Spanish colonizers. However, as Nuix resumed in his fourth reflection, Madrid, with the help of the Roman Church, had always tried to repress and punish these individual excesses: indeed from the *Nuevas leyes* (1542) onward natives were considered as Spanish subjects entitled to the same rights and bound by the same duties as any peninsular Spaniard: by his polemics against Raynal, therefore, Nuix denied the existence in America of a legal Indian slavery.

The Catalan Jesuit expressly devoted to the *indios* many chapters and the whole last *Riflessione*. Striking a final balance of benefits and disadvantages of Spanish colonization, he maintained that the *indios* had gained more than they had lost. Before 1492 native peoples were savages and pagans: so the Spanish

12 Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 74-76.

13 Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 253-255.

14 Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 75.

Conquista, as Feijóo had already said in his *Teatro Crítico*, was a positive enterprise of civilization because, at the best, *indios* were children and, at worst, bloody barbarians. Undoubtedly Nuix skillfully fought against the *bon sauvage* myth shared by a part of European Enlightenment movement: as Antonello Gerbi noticed, Nuix's topics on this issue are drawn from de Pauw's *Recherches*, that is from one of the most important Enlightenment texts on America. Thus, on the one hand, the Jesuit condemned the barbaric past of native peoples: their evilness, exemplified by cannibalism and human sacrifices, was naturally connected with the lack of Christian Revelation; on the other hand, Nuix admitted that their physiological or racial weakness caused a dramatic demographic crisis after the *Conquista*: *indios* were decimated by epidemics and mine labor. It was just this weakness that convinced the generous Castilians to transport to America the strongest black African slaves.

In my opinion Nuix's ideological 'masterpiece' was achieved when, while treating his subject, he taxed modern philosophers with racism and hypocrisy. He firmly maintained that American natives, once civilized and converted, could be considered 'citizens' of the Spanish monarchy, though he admitted that, at worst, they could be subjected to 'domestic servitude', according to the Aristotelian terminology, or as men-servants or serfs attached to the soil. For this reason Nuix polemized against Robertson and Raynal who had considered the *indios*-allotment (*repartimientos*) to Castilian *encomenderos* a hidden form of slavery. To demonstrate his thesis, Nuix recalled not only Castilian laws, but chiefly the inter-racial marriage practices which he contrasted with the strict racial separation practiced by France and England in their colonies. In Spanish America, the union between whites and *indios*, having produced the *mestizos*, had been fulfilled. This fact, totally absent in English and French North American colonies¹⁵, confirmed the link between puritan ethics, commercial society and slave-trade: Spanish mentality was immune from racism thanks to Catholicism (the authentic, not the French one, which was contaminated by modern philosophy and Jansenism) and to a natural magnanimity. Thus Nuix upset again Enlightenment opinions on this point. Those who considered native peoples as bestial or inferior creatures were the modern philosophers, as openly showed de Pauw. In fact Catholic Spaniards – beginning from Jesuit missionaries – could administer the sacraments only to human beings (on the contrary, beasts cannot receive the seven sacraments); baptism itself certified that every new Christian, in spite of his race, belonged to mankind. Nuix applied the same argument to black slaves. First of all he remembered that Spain never plied slave trade (even before England obtained the *asiento* with the Treaty of Utrecht); furthermore he maintained that Catholic, and particularly the Jesuit theologians like Diego de Avendaño, always condemned slave trade, while foreign writers, who were scandalized by Spanish cruel treatment of *indios*,

¹⁵ Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 257, 288-289 and 316.

passed it over in silence or assuming an ambiguous position as in the case of Raynal¹⁶. Nuix confirmed his main charge against the two-facedness of modern philosophy, which condemned slavery on the one hand, and on the other admitted and even praised the economic exploitation of human beings. To sum up Nuix rejected (by nearly the same words of Linguet) the rising capitalism as supported by the Enlightenment philosophy.

In my opinion the most interesting aspect of Nuix's *Riflessioni* is their explicit attempt, according to the ideological positions of the Society of Jesus's conservative wing, to rework – having recourse to a modern language – the Imperial Spain paradigm within a Counter-reformist frame: he simply claimed as positive all 'black legend's favorite topics. No surprise then that the first Spanish translation by Varela was reprinted in Madrid in 1944, with a preliminary note by Ciriaco Pérez Bustamante: Nuix's patriotic paradigm, built around an austere conception of Catholicism and on the firm belief that Providence entrusted Spain with a civilizing task, was not remote from the national viewpoint supported by the *Generalísimo* Franco.

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¹⁶ Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 244: "Raynal declaims with a violent eloquence against black-slave trade. But aware that the matter presents disadvantages in European colonies, he won't that europeans to shake off suddenly slaves's fetters, but to keep them to satisfy masters's benefits". See also Nuix, *Riflessioni imparziali*, 311.

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III. The nineteenth century: 'otherness' between identity building and retrieving typicality

Civilization and originality: perceptions of history and national specificity in nineteenth-century Hungarian political discourse

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Although the evolution of modern Hungarian national ideology from previous configurations of identification is marked by dramatic ruptures, the early modern frameworks of identity had a considerable impact on the outlook of modern national projects, both in terms of territorial imagery, codes of otherness and representations of the collective self. It is commonly assumed that the most influential construction of identity in the early modern period was the so-called *Hungarus*-consciousness (based on a purportedly supra-ethnic and legalistic vision of political nationhood), identifying Hungarianness with the community of noblemen. The picture gets, however, more complicated if one recalls that besides this seemingly 'color-blind' conception of political nationhood another aspect of nationhood was also present (no matter how submerged at some point), stressing common ethnic origins, perceiving nationality along the lines of genealogical myths and the normative memory of past glories, and occasionally even identifying it with the linguistic community².

¹ The present essay draws on parts of my forthcoming book, *The Terror of History. Visions of National Character in Interwar Eastern Europe*.

² On the early modern national consciousness in Hungary, the most original ideas were outlined by Jenő Szűcs in his collection of essays. See his *Nemzet és történelem* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1974). This work is also available in German translation: *Nation und Geschichte* (Köln: Böhlau, 1981). See also, *Antike Rezeption und Nationale Identität in der Renaissance in besondere in Deutschland und in Ungarn*,

The variegated intellectual lineage of early modern political *nationes* was further complicated by the duality encoded in the emerging ‘nationalist’ discourse at the beginning of the nineteenth century: i.e. the fusion of the somewhat contradictory ideological projects of the Enlightenment and the emerging Romantic aesthetic and political doctrines³. It would be too simplistic to grasp this duality in terms of the binary opposition of universalism and particularism. If one turns to the most interesting cases, like Herder, for example, who stands with one foot in the Enlightenment and with the other in the sentimentalist *Sturm und Drang* discourse which we might describe as the precursor of Romanticism, one can see that the universalistic and the particularistic elements could coexist in a cult of authenticity. The overlapping of these canons calls our attention to the ideological complexity of the modern national discourses emerging in the first half of the nineteenth century in East Central Europe⁴. The elements of ethnic and supra-ethnic identity, the ambiguity of universalism and particularism all came to play their part in the emerging ‘liberal nationalism’ of the nineteenth century – these encoded contradictions made the tradition viable, structurally open to appropriation from different perspectives, but the very same heterogeneity made the new national discourse especially explosive. The emerging constructions of Hungarian ‘national character’ are indicative of these ambiguities. On the whole, the use of the concept of ‘national character’ or ‘national customs’ at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the symbolic negotiation over the limits of the national community and also the interplay of the idea of nationhood with the new vision of historical progress. It is indicative that, from the very beginning of its use, ‘national character’ appeared in the context of something rooted in history, in need to be protected against corruption. Symptomatically, already at this early point the cultivation of national character was linked with the program of linguistic Magyarization. This appears in the program of the first Hungarian-language cultural periodical *Uránia* (1794-95), edited by József Kármán and Gáspár Pajor, as well as in Kármán’s key work, the essay *A’ Nemzet Tsinosodása* (The refinement of the nation)⁵.

From the turn of the nineteenth century onwards, the influence of Herder became especially tangible all over Eastern Europe, contributing to the emergence of

ed. Tibor Klaniczay (Budapest: Balassi, 1993); Katalin Péter, “A haza és a nemzet az ország három részre szakadt állapota idején”, in *Papok és nemesek* (Budapest: Ráday Gyűjtemény, 1995), 211-233. For a broader introduction to the history of political ideas in the early modern period in Hungary, see László Kontler and Balázs Trencsényi: “Hungary”, in., *Religion, Law and Philosophy: European Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. Glenn Burgess, Howell Lloyd (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008), 176-207.

3 On the problem of continuity see, most recently, Ambrus Miskolczi, *A felvilágosodás és a liberalizmus között* (Budapest: Lucidus, 2007).

4 Endre Bojtár, “Az ember feljő.” *A felvilágosodás és a romantika a közép- és kelet-európai irodalmakban* (Budapest: Magvető, 1986).

5 József Kármán, *A nemzet csinosodása* (Budapest: Magvető, 1981). Originally published: 1795, in vol. III of the magazine *Uránia*.

a discourse of national specificity⁶. The most important features of the discussion on national specificity in the Hungarian context were, on the one hand, the shift from customs to language in defining the nation; on the other hand, the problem of the relationship of cultural import and local production in creating a national culture. An early example, witnessing this link, can be found in the invectives of the journal editor István Kultsár (1760-1828)⁷, protagonist of the campaign for a Hungarian national theatre in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Significantly, ‘national character’ became a keyword in his argument for building ‘national institutions’: “Only that country can be happy and great where the inhabitants possess a national character”. As this assertion needed to be explained in view of the multiethnic character of the Hungarian *patria*, Kultsár did not hesitate to link nationhood, language, and mores and also loyalty to the fatherland and the King:

The Hungarian nation in this fatherland is the first according to its right, number, and the cultivation of its language. Even more so, if we look at the properties of its heart. Benevolent, full-hearted, faithful, straightforward, brave, constant⁸.

In his *Encouragement (Buzdítás)* dating from 1815, once again in favor of setting up a permanent national theatre, Kultsár admonished his compatriots to cultivate these “national traits”, inserting his call for national self-cultivation into a stadial model of history – contrasting the archaic martial virtue of the ancestors to “national culture”, the focus of modern national character. Polishing national culture is conditioned by the cultivation of the vernacular language. In order to reach this aim, Kultsár also called for the collection and systematization of folklore: “in every nation they collect diligently the national songs, because from them it is easy to understand the culture of the time, and the character of the nation”⁹ and he also theorized on the national peculiarity of the Hungarians on the basis of their “national dances”¹⁰. It is not hard to identify the intellectual inspiration of these suggestions in the Austrian patriotic project of Joseph von Hormayr, who engaged in collecting and publishing the folklore traditions of the peoples living in the Monarchy¹¹.

6 Recently, the emergence of “national literature” has been in the focus of interest of a number of Hungarian literary historians, who otherwise subscribe to rather divergent theoretical and methodological premises. See Péter Dávidházi, *Egy nemzeti tudomány születése (Toldy Ferenc és a magyar irodalomtörténet)* (Budapest: Akadémiai-Universitas, 2004); Pál S.Varga, *A nemzeti költészet csarnokai* (Budapest: Balassi, 2005); Mihály Szajbély, *A nemzeti narratíva szerepe a magyar irodalmi kánon alakulásában Világos után* (Budapest: Universitas, 2005).

7 On Kultsár’s life and works see János Markos, *Kultsár István, 1760-1828* (Pannonhalmi Pannonhalmi füzetek, 1940).

8 In *Hazai és külföldi tudósítások*, 1809/2., 6; quoted by Markos, *Kultsár István*, 39.

9 In *Hasznos multságok*, 1817/3., 21; quoted by Markos, *Kultsár István*, 54.

10 See his articles in *Hasznos multságok* on “Hungarian national dance” (from 1817 and 1823).

11 István Fenyő, “Ábránd a nemzet családéletéről”, in *Nemzet, nép, irodalom* (Budapest: Magvető, 1973) especially 129ff.

The local context of the intensification of the debate on national culture was the question of the reform of the national language, where the traditionalists often referred to the national tradition to reject the neologisms of the other camp. The broader scholarly context was the problem of creative *genius* that became a crucial issue of aesthetic theory in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, focusing on the figures of Homer, Ossian and Milton, who expressed the spirit of their ‘nation’ through epic poetry. The problem of originality, national language and national character thus became increasingly interrelated, which is testified by a large number of articles from the period, such as the Piarist Emil Buczy’s (1782-1839) essay in *Erdélyi Muzéum* (*A’ görög genie kifejlődése okának sejdítése*, from 1817) where he argued for the native tradition, and referred to the “national character” of the Greeks¹² as a model to emulate. In the debate on originality vs. imitation, the historian magnate József Teleki used Herderian arguments to argue for the “national framework” of language reform, while the “orthologist” (i.e. anti-neologist) discourse of originality – which marked the most prestigious scholarly review of the period, *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* [Scientific collection] (its protagonists being the above-mentioned István Kultsár, the prominent art collector and historian Miklós Jankovich, and the university professor István Horvát) – drew on the Herderian conception of the “ages of nations”, constructing “national culture” as the normative principle of continuity while criticizing the “heedless” reformism based on neologism and import.

In the period between 1817 and 1822 *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* published a considerable number of articles on national culture, heritage and character. These texts were marked by an overall conservative tone, at the same time the authors sought to address the up-to-date topics of scholarly debate, which often challenged this conservative position. One of the core questions, inherited from the Enlightenment, was the relationship of environmental factors and inherent character traits. The very “Preface” to the first issue of the journal¹³, entitled “On national culture in general” contained a lengthy argument about the impact of climate on physiognomy, morality, work and character. Warm climate gave birth to temperamental people, characterized by inconstancy and mostly conservative political options. In contrast, men living under cold climate tended to be peaceful and tolerant, and were characterized by an aptitude to learn. Finally, moderate climate engendered brave peoples, whose life was marked by permanent change, and whose best representatives sought to control this change by moral constancy, a typical example of which is “Roman virtue”. The article sought nevertheless to relativize the climatic theory, rejecting both Hume’s skepticism and Montesquieu’s determinism, focusing on “civil society” (*polgári társaság*)

12 Fenyő, “Az eredetiség-program kialakulása és kritikai értelmezése 1817-1822 között”, in Fenyő, *Nemzet, nép, irodalom*, 41-115. See also Lajos Csetri’s study on Buczy: “Adalékok Döbrentei Erdélyi Muzéumának irodalomszemléletéhez. (Buczy Emil tanulmányairól)”, in *Amathus* vol. I. (Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2007) 161-178.

13 “A Nemzeti Culturáról közönségesen”, *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* (1817/1): 13-42.

as the basis of national culture, and consequently stressing that the influence of governments could overwrite climatic factors and what is more climate itself was subject to change. In addition to climatic factors, the article also listed a series of geographical determinants such as living in the mountain, the valley, the forest, or on the plain and also meticulously catalogued other aspects shaping the national character such as nutrition, customs, or even garment.

At the same time, inherent factors were also considered to be important by the contributors of the journal. Drawing on the German Romantic understanding of community, the article “On Nationality” contrasted nation as an organic entity to people as inorganic (*orgántalan*) substance, i.e. shaped by external effects¹⁴. The organic force is the “National-Geist” present from the origins of the nation, and thus the national character is mainly conditioned by those forces which were in vigor when the nation was formed and it emerges as a normative regulatory principle keeping together the national community. The German Romantic influence is also visible in the essay “Some patriotic informative words on the soul and character of the Hungarians”¹⁵, which envisioned an organic pattern of development for the nation, rejecting the French revolutionary jumps and asserting that “national soul” was the key factor in securing this evolutionary course of development and serving as an instrument against revolutionary chaos. Turning to the specific Hungarian traits, the article sought to locate the original root of national character in the times of moving from Asia and connect it with the spirit of modern times. The key features identified were bravery, virtue, love of rulers, loyalty, moderation, and respect of law. This initial predisposition was further developed by the reforms of St. Stephen introducing Christian and monarchic elements. The corruption of the national character was due to the challenge to this original harmony, in the form of limiting the rights of the ruler. The danger to national virtue came mainly from unhealthy foreign influences and from the “seeming patriotism” masking particular interests, and thus leading to factionalism. The regeneration of the national community in this scheme was possible only with the help of Austria. In general, however, the Hungarian nation was considered to have preserved the most important constitutive traits of her archaic virtue, being a friend of legitimacy, rejecting the revolutionary spirit, and marked by a strong patriarchal element in her national life.

In contrast to this straightforward use of national characterological *topoi* as a basis of pro-Habsburg political propaganda, other authors positioned themselves in a more ideologically neutral way. András Thaisz (1789-1840), who in 1819 became the new editor of *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* and turned it into a more liberal direction in cooperation with the reshuffled advisory board headed by the reformist aristocrat József Teleki, questioned the scientific value

14 “A Nemzetiségről”, *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* (1817/5): 57-61.

15 “Némelly hazafíúi emlékeztető szavak a Magyarok lelke és characteré felől”, *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* (1822/6): 30-56.

of general statements about national specificity. Eventually, he asserted that such statements about a nation's character are only good for joking and not for scientific work¹⁶. He also admitted, however, that mere induction was a dubious tool for describing the national character as every difference generated new categories. In order to demonstrate the potentials of a more scientific approach, Thaisz referred to the standards of contemporary *Staatswissenschaften*, like Anton W. Gustermann's *Die Verfassung des Königreiches Ungarn* (1811). Steeped in this Late Enlightenment scholarly paradigm, Thaisz referred to the problems of defining the nation in view of the governing elite or in view of the common people, and also evoked the classical eighteenth-century polemic concept of "private patriots". Instead of sweeping generalizations and anecdotic details, he called for a synthetic study of national language, literature, geography, and history as a way to "map" the national character. He also rejected the idea of a timeless *National-Geist* infusing the national history from its very beginning, and stressed rather the ruptures, contrasting old Hungarian anarchy and violent behavior to modern friendliness and civility. In line with this enlightened vision of social and moral evolution he described "real patriotism" in terms of educating the nation by comparing it to the more developed nations and in another essay from 1820 he even contrasted self-centered "nationalism" (using the neologism *nacionalizmus*) to the more benign "patriotism".

It is characteristic that Thaisz came from the northern-Hungarian urban elite with mixed Hungarian, Slovak and German ethnic and cultural background, representing perhaps the last generation of *Hungarus* intellectuals in a period when the process of nationalization became increasingly based on ethno-cultural references. As a matter of fact, bringing together civic and ethno-cultural aspects of nationhood posed a serious challenge to all the authors of the Hungarian Reform Age. The discussions of Hungarian 'national character' often witnessed these dilemmas of the incipient process of modern nation-building. While, in general, the focus of nationality was shifting from 'customs' towards 'language', in the peculiar situation of having to forge a national community from a population where less than fifty percent was ethnically Hungarian, and where the Hungarian vernacular was far from being dominant, the conceptual and theoretical ambiguities quickly came to the fore.

Johannes (János) Csaplovics (1780-1847), who had mostly Slovak ancestors and who can thus be considered an exemplary case of 'Hungarus-consciousness', published a pioneering description of the country, *Gemälde von Ungern*¹⁷ in 1829. The book, based on a previous publication from 1822 in *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, witnesses a historical moment which was still largely untouched by the romantic atmosphere of 'national revival'. It depicts Hungary in terms of

16 András Thaisz, "Közönséges Észrevételek a' Nemzeti Charakternek megítélésére különösen pedig a' magyar Nemzetről hozott némelly ítéletekre", *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, (1819/9): 32-55.

17 Johannes Csaplovics, *Gemälde von Ungern* (Pest: Hartleben, 1829).

a mind-boggling ethnic, cultural and geographical multiplicity (stressing that “Hungary is Europe in small”). Avoiding the conceptual distinction of ‘ethnie’ and nation, it allows for the existence of many nations in the same fatherland. Describing his *patria*, Csaplovics was at pains to reject the accusation of barbarism, while accepting a specific cultural otherness, accentuating for instance the patriarchalism of Hungarian life. He constructed this otherness in terms of Herderian references – admitting that the *Volkscharakter* of European nations was gradually dissolving and therefore there was a pressing need to study them. At the same time, he rejected Herder’s infamous prophecy about the Hungarians as a nation bound to extinction.

Rather than a Herderian construction of ‘national authenticity’, the basis of Csaplovics’ description of Hungary was the Late Enlightenment genre of *Statistik* (especially the work of Márton Schwartzner, a pupil of Schlözer), meaning a complex science of government, mapping the human and natural resources of a given territory. He contrasted his project of *Statistische Ethnographie* to political history (*Staatsgeschichte*), pointing out the limited nature of historical works describing only high politics. Instead, he suggested that the physical, moral and socio-cultural state of the population needed to be taken into account. As one of the key markers defining the nation, he referred to language, but he immediately qualified this assertion by admitting the possibility of language changes. Drawing on the Enlightenment tradition of deciphering cultural and political diversity, he turned to the climatic model to characterize the inhabitants of Hungary, using the North-South divide even within the country to explain the specificities of the different nations.

According to Csaplovics, the character of Magyars is derived from the generally warm climate, generating vivid fantasy, which results in such level of exaltation that they often start talking to themselves. At the same time, they are marked by a lack of curiosity, friendliness, hospitality, and fieriness. This set of character-traits is then compared to the other nationalities: for instance, in comparison, the Slovaks tend to be somewhat less courageous, the Germans even less so, while the Jews are at the bottom of the list, as they “do not have any courage whatsoever”. Csaplovics takes into account other, less apparent, aspects as well, making comparative schemes of the prevalence of drinking, fighting or criminality in the respective communities. On the whole, his discourse of national character was that of the late Enlightenment. Rather than projecting a scheme of national revival as a reaction to the Germanization enforced by Enlightened Absolutism, he considers the population of Hungary as subject to a civilizing process which started with the benign rule of Joseph II, marked by reforms and general progress. Significantly, he did not have much to say about his own decade, which was marked by the intensification of national sentiment, eventually challenging his conception of supra-ethnic patriotism.

Gradually transcending the horizons of pluralistic ethnographical and statistical descriptions of the country, in the 1820s national specificity became

a key issue of intellectual discussion, formulated in an aesthetic register chiefly in the debate concerning imitation and/or originality of literary works. While the 'popular tradition' was in its rhetorical focus, in the 1810s the conservative discourse of the 'orthologists' did not identify the 'national' with the peasantry. As the issue of the peasantry became gradually incorporated by the liberals into the debate on national specificity, and thus acquired a direct socio-political relevance, the debate on national character had increasingly powerful repercussions in the entire emerging public sphere from the mid-1820s onwards. The paradoxical aspect of this development was that by activating an ethno-cultural system of references, the more inclusive social discourse seeking to integrate the peasantry also implied a more exclusivist turn towards defining Hungarianness in terms of linguistic and cultural homogeneity, undermining the possibility of multiple identification characteristic of the 'Hungarus-mentality'.

The move towards a cultural redefinition of the nation was tentatively made by Ferenc Kölcsey (1790–1838), poet, literary critic, and liberal politician, who was also one of the main participants of the controversy over the use of neologisms in the Hungarian language back in the 1810s, defending the main ideologue of the modernists, Kazinczy, against the traditionalist camp. While starting as a classicist and follower of the aesthetic principles of the Late Enlightenment, in the late-1810s he came to formulate a project of creating a "national literature" inspired by romantic aesthetic ideas, though also retaining a plethora of elements from the Enlightenment and the classicist literary tradition. The transformation of Kölcsey's poetic style and aesthetic views is usually taken to be the key document of the complex process of transition from Classicism to Romanticism. In his *Letters from Lasztóc* (1817), in which he drew on the romantic reinterpretation of Greek culture, especially by Friedrich Schlegel, Kölcsey formulated a program of poetic originality linking the problem of the organic quality of culture with the process of creation.

The most important issue of the 'revivalist' movement was the construction of a framework of cultural institutions and the creation of a 'national canon.' In the romantic vision mediated by such works as Joseph Görres' *Mythengeschichte der Asiatischen Welt*, Friedrich Schlegel's *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur* and the writings of Jakob Grimm, every nation was encouraged to recover its mythical pre-history in order to develop its own peculiar ("eigentümlich") literature and national culture. In the programmatic "National traditions" (1826) Kölcsey set out to identify the 'usable' elements from the Hungarian collective cultural memory and 'national' history, which might be possibly employed for building such a canon. The writers seeking to shape the national discourse had to come to terms with the fact that Hungarians evidently had no epic traditions comparable to Homer, the recently 'discovered' Ossian, or even the South-Slav epic poems which attracted widespread attention from the 1790s onwards. The lack of ancient poetry prompted poets like Mihály Vörösmarty (1800-1855) to write literary

epics on subjects of Hungarian prehistory, while others went so far as to try to fake such an epic tradition, with limited success.

As Kölcsey formulated the problem:

Nations boasting of their long past tend to reach back right to the creation of the world with their traditions, and they recount their stories, albeit in a fabulous form, from the times of their origin. Should we then conclude that a nation that is unable to do so is a quite recent branch of some more ancient tribe from which it separated, so slight in number as to be unworthy of attention, and then, growing ignorant, came to remember nothing about its separation? Or that a nation without tradition has wasted away its time in a spiritless fashion, without any great feats, and thus had no memories to pass on to its descendants?¹⁸.

Kölcsey's response to this challenge was to propose a literary canon that should serve to educate the "national public". Drawing on Herderian inspiration, "National traditions" reiterated the organic theory of national development, comparing the archaic peoples to children and the more civilized ones to adult persons. The young nations are more open to irrational impulses, and this 'animistic' mindset, deeply affected by every extraordinary event, produces the national mythologies. Successful national cultures, like the classical Greek one, evolved organically from these archaic roots, assimilating the foreign influences step by step, so that they could retain the essence of their own tradition. Gradually they became more rational, and their reaching back to a mythical past became a conscious self-reflection. Other cultures, however, like ancient Rome, assimilated an excess of sophisticated foreign influences and never managed to establish their own autonomous cultural climate.

Measured by this vision of organic development, Hungarian culture suffered from serious inadequacies due to the fact that the public memory has almost completely erased references to the heroic age:

Christianity, politics and science have brought our Hungarians closer to their European neighbors in diverse ways; on the other hand, their own state constitution, language, customs and mutual animosities have held them back in diverse ways. It is thus that they have adapted many European features, while at the same time they preserved many non-European ones. But the latter were much more conspicuous only fifty years ago than they are now; and the more they incline towards decay, the more painfully conscious we become of the absence of a writer who could have portrayed our ancestors in their simple and original greatness¹⁹.

This does not mean that the past glories were completely missing, as there are indirect proofs of the ancient virtue of Hungarians, but the historical hurricanes

18 Ferenc Kölcsey, "Nemzeti hagyományok". I used Dávid Oláh's translation in *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1775-1945): Texts and Commentaries*, vol. II: National Romanticism, eds. Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopeček (Budapest: CEU Press, 2007), 121.

19 Kölcsey, "Nemzeti hagyományok", 122.

sweeping the country in the past thousand years and the fateful rejection of the pre-Christian cultural heritage in the Middle Ages erased their memory. In order to create a replacement for the national mythology, Kölcsey revisited the Hungarian literary tradition, inquiring whether it could serve as a symbolic framework for the envisaged national awakening. In the last section of the essay, he turns to Hungarian literature from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, deploring the inorganic dominance of Latin over the vernacular, which was also linked to his counter-position of the authenticity of Homer and Ossian to the “corruption” of Virgil.

In this construction, ‘national culture’ and ‘national character’ are not completely overlapping with ‘popular culture’. It is clear that Kölcsey had strong reservations. Speaking of the folksongs he asserted:

In some of them we encounter, even if only for a few lines, genuine sentiments, a certain light and carefree flight and an attractive alternation from one subject to the other; but it is also undeniable that their most vulgar characteristic is the empty and inappropriate fabrication of rhymes, which causes the most incongruous ideas to be strung together and to form a ridiculous disarray, in which better-matched ideas are occasionally intermingled²⁰.

His aim was rather to create a national high culture while drawing on popular inspiration, as the repertory of the national tradition. But he was conscious that the irreversible progress would eventually sweep away the authentic folk culture – the question was whether the Hungarians could create a modern but national high culture, or would lose their national individuality altogether. In his vision, the success depended on the creation of a new national literature, an aesthetic sphere where national history and character could be internalized by the population, providing them with a framework of identification:

Happy is the poet who can allure us to such pleasant illusions, and from whose world no cold interests, unpleasant conflicts or feelings of strangeness can thrust our fancy back! In his works a real poetic realm would be created in which a refined nation would find its homeland; in his works the glorious heroic past and the present, the sentiments of humanity and patriotism could all embrace; while we, constantly held in check by remembrance and compulsion, would be saved from the peril posed by an incessant progress pressing further and further forward – the peril of gradually losing our original features and our bosoms becoming unable to take fire any more²¹.

Consequently, the idea of ‘national character’ (which he also described in terms of national “sentimentalism of character” – “karakterei szentimentalizmus”) fulfils two functions in Kölcsey’s writing: on the one hand it is a product of the past, a result of historical development, on the other hand it is a regulative idea, to be expressed by the authors who are theorizing on national culture and to be followed by poets and writers

20 Kölcsey, “Nemzeti hagyományok”, 122.

21 Kölcsey, “Nemzeti hagyományok”, 123.

who seek to create a national high culture. While the specification (sentimentalism) did not have a lasting influence, the overall impact of Kölcsey's construction was remarkable. Even though this essay was permeated by an almost self-destructive attitude towards the national community lacking 'national traditions', by elaborating a new vision of the national functions of art, Kölcsey's essay turned out to be the most important statement of cultural nation-building in Hungary, and in many ways it determined the ensuing discussions on the 'national character'²².

This program of 'originality' became a veritable master-narrative of the Hungarian public sphere in the 1830s. We can find similar claims in virtually every sphere of figurative arts or literature, and the concept of national character came to play a pivotal role in these rhetoric appeals. These debates on originality can be integrated into the framework of the 'regimes of historicity' co-existing and often competing in Hungarian (and European) culture at the time. There are basically four representations of history used in the period of 'national revival': the Christian conception of the teleological movement of humanity; the secular vision of technological-intellectual progress popularized by the last generation of the French Enlightenment (like Condorcet); the accumulative progress of civility characteristic mainly of the British versions of the Enlightenment; and the prescriptive-historicist vision (in a way, the radicalization of the accumulationist discourse, criticizing – from a conservative perspective – the 'polished' culture propagated by the Scottish tradition).

There is, however, a common trait in all these traditions: they all depicted an immanent march of Humanity towards higher levels of existence (the question was rather about the pace and the direction than the very existence of this movement). This immanent vision of human progress posed a fundamental challenge to the intellectuals speculating on the destiny of their respective nation. If the progress of Humanity unfolded anyhow, the individual nations faced a pressing alternative: they either catch up with the pace of the march, and turn from objects into subjects of History, or, if they fail to fashion their particularity along the lines of universality, they have to disappear, melting into the moulds of more promising versions of cultural and political individuality. As the principal figure of the Hungarian Reform Age, István Széchenyi (1791-1860), puts it:

If time was not progressing, and consequently the present was not followed by a tomorrow, and the man of today by the future, then probably the most sober way would be to remain in what is old, without endangering what we presently possess by our hasty grasps towards the new. But the fall of times urges us, and the present day will be quickly thrown into the sea of the past, as the present generation will also be buried under a coming age²³.

22 See Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, "Framing Texts as the Representation of National Character: From Enlightenment Universalism to Romantic Nationalism", in *National Heritage, National Canon* ed. Mihály Szegedy-Maszák (Budapest: Collegium Budapest, 2001), 107-120.

23 István Széchenyi, *Hunnia* (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1985), 59-60.

The challenge of modernity is formulated in terms of a question of existence: the inability of catching up means the “death of the nation”, and precisely this danger of extinction is perceived as an ultimate source of regeneration. The task of the thinker speculating about the destiny of his nation is to make his audience conscious of this danger of existence, and furthermore, to analyze his community in view of its potentials of rebirth. While he was speculating about national character in his diary already in the 1810s²⁴, Széchenyi’s nation-building program was explicated most coherently in his *Hunnia* (1835, published in 1858). In his vision, the most immediate danger is the ‘division’ of the national community. On the cultural/political level this means the growing abyss between those who “were educated abroad” (the magnates) and those who “had grown up in Hungary” (the country gentry). Hungarian public culture thus contains inorganic fragments of the Western hemisphere thrown out of their context, mixed up with the self-centered backwardness of the local tradition. But this cleavage is only the sign of a deeper division: the nation does not possess the set of heroic/medieval/natural values any more, but it has not yet become a ‘civic’ community. The real danger is thus the unbridgeable division between past and future – being torn between *nature* and *culture*. The Hungarian nation is “still rough, but not strong any more, self-confident, but not powerful”. From this it is obvious that, in Széchenyi’s mind, the road to national recovery is through the process of “polishing” the manners of the community: civilization “conquers in due time even the most tyrannical power”, the task is to create the specifically Hungarian forms of civilization, otherwise social progress will effect “a deadly blow on our originality and peculiarity”.

While Kölcsey tentatively located the potential of revival in the canon of ‘national literature’, Széchenyi focused on establishing a ‘national sociability’ which could be the basis of integrating the achievements of Western European civilization without decomposing the nation. Civilization spreads through civility, i.e. the refinement of social interaction – therefore the success of the reform program depends on the emergence of a Hungarian civic culture of sociability (hence Széchenyi’s immense efforts to found the institutional framework of social interaction, like the Casino or the horse races, or his diatribe against the Latin language). Furthermore, this perspective engenders another crucial conflict: since “catching up with the march of civilization” is a matter of pressing urgency (it is “now or never”), the question of the cohesion of culture becomes of vital importance.

The push for a unitary civic culture has another side as well: only the elimination of divisions paves the way for the service of the common good. The interaction of the citizens, the transparency of the public sphere (which is the result of a shared pattern of civic culture, a common language) was at the root of

²⁴ Széchenyi discusses the problem of national character in his diary note from April 1819 on the basis of John Chetwoode Eustace’s *A Classical Tour through Italy in 1802*. See Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, “A Nemzeti hagyományok időszerűsége”, *Valóság*, 42 (1999), 6, 31-43.

the social/political agenda of the Reformist generation, i.e. the “unification of interests”. However, in Széchenyi’s mind, this program of ‘unitary civic culture’ does not entail the forceful elimination of the cultural peculiarities marking the non-Magyar ethnic communities of the country. “Polishing” is a long process, the progress of civilization does not and should not lead to immediate assimilation. He believed in organic change and detested the “ridiculous haughtiness and impossible arrogance”²⁵ of those “who spread or believe to spread the Hungarian language and Hungarianness”. The meaning of human progress is a movement towards liberty, so those measures which indirectly lead to restraining liberty (like forced abandonment of customs) go fundamentally against the normativity of history. The need for a unitary political culture is a crucial exigency, but it can only be formed by communication, as a result of common interests and mutual gains²⁶.

In Széchenyi’s understanding the ‘historical chance’ of the Hungarian nation is its peculiar tradition of constitutionalism and this potentiality of liberty constitutes the core of the offer towards the non-Magyar population: their acceptance of the Hungarian public sphere would secure the advantages of constitutional existence for them. This offer was to become the most crucial element of the whole tradition of liberal nationalism in the Reform Age: however, the contradictions inherent in Széchenyi’s conception would gradually surface.

On the one hand, Széchenyi did not question the right of the nationalities to their own cultural individuality: the three measures he proposed are the replacement of Latin by Hungarian as the language of the public administration, full liberty in the use of language and religion for the nationalities, and the common task of refining customs and advancing the cultural level of the country. He cautioned against the “exaggerated fervor” of Magyarization, and claimed that the national agitation among the non-Magyar communities is mainly the consequence of the misplaced arrogance on the Magyarizers’ part. On a conceptual level, he also accepted the existence of “Croat, Serbian, Romanian, German, etc”. nations (“the angel of nationality smiled on them as well”), thus the “offer” of Hunnia is not elimination but incorporation.

While Széchenyi accepted the existence of national plurality within the country, he proposed the extension of the Hungarian constitution to all citizens of the realm, which also entailed turning the public culture of the country into Hungarian. With the abandonment of Latin, Hungarian language would become the medium of interaction in the public sphere. In a sense, Hungarianness would retain its dual function underpinning both the ethnic and the political community. The institutional framework of the realm would unite the different nationalities without fusing their individuality: “let us unite in our public relations, one body

25 Széchenyi, *Hunnia*, 50.

26 On Széchenyi’s political ideas see George Bányi, *Stephen Széchenyi and the Awakening of Hungarian Nationalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968).

one soul, for our common country, and common ruler”²⁷. This means a sharp separation of public and private spheres, without the move – so characteristic of the next generation of liberal nationalists – of identifying the sphere of nationality exclusively with the public sphere. In Széchenyi’s mind, the private sphere has its part in national existence as well (since nationhood itself is the product of civilization, while the progress of civility is a transformation characterizing our public and private selves alike). The Magyar character of “Hunnia” is thus a matter of de facto proportions of power: the Magyars hold the greatest estates, they make up the relatively largest community, they have a splendid past, a national fervor, and most importantly, “we are alone”, i.e. contrary to the other communities which all have their kin-states outside of the realm of Saint Stephen, the destiny of the Magyars is fatally intertwined with the future of Hungarian statehood.

Széchenyi asserted that this Hungarian primacy within the realm is compatible with the universal norms of natural right, equity, and justice. This primacy does not exclusively rely on historical grounds, it is not only the consequence of the past (i.e. conquest) but it is based on the promises of the future – the invitation of the whole population of the country to constitutional liberties (in a way, this is the message of his assertion that “Hungary does not belong to the past, but to the future”). In this sense, for Széchenyi national tradition and civil liberties ultimately overlapped. He pointed out that Hungarians were backward in civilization but had a crucial asset, their ancient constitution, which contained the potential of recovery. This recovery was conditioned by self-knowledge: coming to terms with the national past and with the present corruption as well. In this sense, while he was mostly under the influence of the British stadial vision of progress, his conception can also be linked to the German idealist philosophies of history, where development was identified with the progress in self-understanding, leading through self-negation towards a new synthesis of reaching transcendental self-awareness.

In the 1840s, the question of the grasp and pace of the nation-building process increasingly became a major division between the different branches of the Hungarian liberal camp. Perceiving the nobility to be the bearer of the national specificity (historically and in view of the development of civility, as well), Széchenyi was suspicious of the plebeian-egalitarian thrust of the new generation of liberal nationalists, claiming that their inconsiderate project might ultimately lead to the destruction of the Hungarian nation. He became the proponent of an organicist reformism, accusing the more radical liberal nationalists around Kossuth of a counter-productive push for assimilating the non-Magyar population. As the radical discourse of Kossuth gained popularity in the early-1840s, Széchenyi tried to re-conquer the conceptual framework of nationalism²⁸. He identified “patriotism” with “patience, moderation, tact”

27 Széchenyi, *Hunnia*, 67.

28 István Széchenyi, *A' kelet népe* (Pozsony: Wigand, 1841).

and tried to deduce his more moderate program from the very factor (i.e. the irreversibility of time: “the time, once gone by, cannot be resurrected. What we missed today, we cannot conquer tomorrow”²⁹), which featured as the strongest legitimating argument of radical action. While Széchenyi subscribed to the vision of the unfolding potentialities of the Hungarian nation (“the people of the East”), gradually realizing its special Oriental character traits in the Western world, he asserted that neither assimilation nor the democratization of society should be precipitated. In contrast, his critics (such as Lajos Kossuth or József Eötvös) emphasized that the sweeping spirit of the age, represented by public opinion rather than by the individual genius of Széchenyi, demanded such reforms.

The *topoi* of the debate about ‘Magyarization’ are mirrored by the ethnographical projects of the period. Csaplovics’s above-mentioned multi-ethnic vision is in stark contrast to the volume *Hungary and its peoples*, containing a huge number of regional character sketches, by Imre Vahot (1820-1879; his mother was the niece of Lajos Kossuth) seventeen years later, in the midst of the national revival movement³⁰. In the heart of Vahot’s depiction of the *patria* one finds the intertwining of language and national character to such an extent that he even chose to narrate the national history in terms of the march of vernacularism, criticizing the “mistaken policies of kings” in the Middle Ages for the neglect of the Hungarian mother tongue. The book was also heavily loaded with references to the political and cultural superiority of the Hungarians over the other nationalities of the country, stressing the dominance of Hungarians both in the nobility and the peasantry. At the same time, Vahot’s depiction of Hungarian character-traits, taken from Elek Fényes’s contemporary work of statistical description, does not differ radically from Csaplovics’s vision: most of all, the Hungarians are haughty, self-centered, serious, sincere, magnanimous, energetic, friendly, heroic, bragging, conceited, hospitable, and not very economic-minded. There is, however, an important new element: while Csaplovics described the Hungarians, as well as the other nations of the common *patria*, as being in need of civilization, Vahot fuses the stadial theory of civility adapted to the Hungarian context by Széchenyi (whom he describes as the “teacher of national character”) with the praise of rural pre-modernity, describing the Hungarians as close to nature. Here, once again, the quest for national specificity overlaps with the intention to establish the Hungarians’ primacy among the other nationalities, stressing that even the pre-modern aspects of their life singles them out as natural leaders of the country. The Hungarians’ pastoral occupations are “fitting the free man”, while the other nationalities are characterized by “pure naturalism”, not having modern character-traits (the Romanians, for instance, are described as

29 Gróf Széchenyi István írói és hírlapi vitája Kossuth Lajossal, ed. Gyula Vizsota (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1927), 51.

30 Imre Vahot, *Magyarföld és népei* (Budapest: ÁKV, 1984), reprint of the edition of 1846 (Pest: Biemel, 1846).

“benevolent”, “smart”, but also “lazy”, “superstitious, and “base”), thus it is clear that they are objects rather than subjects of the nation-building process.

The disintegration of the multi-ethnic *Hungarus* discourse can be seen from Vahot’s polysemic use of the notion “Hungarian”. When he states that the “Hungarians, except for the Jews, are Christians” he obviously referred to the citizens of Hungary; at the same time, in another context, Hungarians are identified only with the speakers of Hungarian language. The nation-building project of the 1840s was eventually trying to reintegrate the two aspects, describing the nationalities as materials for nation-building. It is along these lines that Vahot was excessively praiseful of the Magyarization of Upper-Hungarian cities, rejecting the “Slavic dream” about a “universal empire” and pointing out that they are gradually assimilating to the Hungarians in linguistic terms as well. The drive of assimilation is somewhat qualified in the case of the emancipation of Jews – while he praises the “enlightened spirit” of “progressive Hungarians” for promoting the emancipation, he also formulates some reservations, warning his compatriots not to haste, until the Hungarian society becomes economically stronger, as the “Jews are like leeches”.

A more sophisticated version of theorizing Hungarianness in the Reform Age was offered by Jácint Rónay (1814-1889) in his work *Jellemisme* (Characterology) which can be considered the first attempt at devising a socio-psychological typology of the Hungarians³¹. The author, a Benedictine teacher from Győr, had a remarkable itinerary: he studied psychology, participated in the revolution of 1848-1849, emigrated, became one of the first Hungarian followers of Darwin, and after 1867 served as the tutor of Crown-Prince Rudolf. Characteristically for the mid-nineteenth century European trends, Rónay was wavering between an analytic and a normative definition of character – at some point he was even claiming that only “virtuous men have character”. Furthermore, it is important to stress that ‘national’ character was just one of the directions of his inquiries – in the second part of the book, he also added a characterology of gender. Similar to most of the eighteenth-century theories of human psyche, Rónay derived the main factors of human character from climatic and social determination. He made reference to Polybius and Montesquieu, claiming that moderate temperature is the best, but he was also stressing that climate was not the only factor. In line with his historical definition, he asserted that the formation of a national tradition was linked to natural conditions (such as food, drink, external threats, etc.), while the key to nationality was national language. Consequently, he suggested that especially phonetics, which connected the physical and spiritual aspects, had to be studied thoroughly in order to map the national character.

As for the methodological aspects of studying characters, Rónay suggested that different individuals had different traits, so characterizing a community

31 Jácint Rónay, “*Jellemisme*” (originally published in 1847) in *Nemzetkarakterológiai*, ed. György Hunyady (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 51-224.

could only be a generalization. In line with his democratic political agenda, he suggested that the typical national character-traits could be found in the “common people” and the “middle-class” and not in the aristocracy, which was exposed to ethnic and cultural intermingling. His understanding of character was overwhelmingly historical: as he claimed, the main gain of analyzing character was that it helped us infer the present from the past and the future from the present³². He thus inserted his characterological discourse into an evolutionary vision: as humankind is exposed to progress, national character is also necessarily exposed to change. Every nation has “ages” – in its childhood it is in need of education, marked by the flow of imagination and consequently a poetic culture, thus the expression of its character can be found in songs, music, poetry. The second phase is that of adolescence, marked by passions, characterized by a gradually emerging sense of collectivity. Rónay qualified this statement with the claim that not every people could reach this level, i.e. progress was only a possibility but not a necessity. Characteristically, he did not extend his simile of human ages to describe decline in terms of old age and kept to the logic of the evolutionary theory envisioning permanent progress.

In order to construct the characterology of Hungarians, Rónay went back to the description of the Byzantine emperor Leo the Wise (r. 886-912), whose observations on the mores of ancient Hungarians were among the first to survive. Quoting Leo, Rónay stressed the trait of bravery and military discipline. It is important to note that this source was to make a long career in the tradition of Hungarian national characterology, becoming a key reference in Gyula Szekfű’s “What is the Hungarian?” project in the late-1930s. Rónay pointed out the existence of certain oriental traits still present in the Hungarian folk character – attested by their folksongs and their organization of space. Rejecting Schlözer’s accusation of barbarism, he stressed that this archaism was extremely important in view of the survival of the nation. However, modern Hungarians were exposed to the danger of heedless imitation, which could lead to the elimination of national character. Here the normative aspect of Rónay’s definition of character becomes important: losing the national character implies not only transformation, but loss of morality altogether, and eventually the dissolution of the nation. One of the main aspects of this danger was the abandonment of national language – here Rónay addressed his criticism especially to the nobility. At the same time, he did not reject cultural import altogether: accepting the precondition of belatedness of Hungary in comparison with the West³³, he asserted the need for imitation, stressing that every culture at the beginning of its progress is based on imitating the more advanced ones.

Echoing Széchenyi’s analysis, Rónay described the specific situation of the Hungarians as being in an abyss, torn between heroic past and future progress.

32 Rónay, “Jellemisme”, in *Nemzetkarakterológiák*, ed. Hunyady 51.

33 Rónay, “Jellemisme”, in *Nemzetkarakterológiák*, ed. Hunyady, 119-120.

The present-day Hungarians are characterized by the lack of self-knowledge, busy importing foreign goods and ideas, but also marked by a profound distrust of foreigners, cultivating the memory of their heroic past while plunging into permanent internal strife. Following Széchenyi's program of national introspection, the task of the reformers is to register the continuity between the features of the ancient Hungarians and the envisioned modern institutions, thus converting the archaic virtues into modern civilizing values. National past should be a source of pride – but the new Hungary to be built must integrate the achievements of modernity. Rónay insisted on the Hungarians being a new nation, who had not yet reached fully-fledged nationhood. He remained nevertheless optimistic, considering the “national revival” of the 1830-1840s as a success story, a sign of reaching adolescence. The aim of this revival in his reading was creating a new society where the bourgeoisie could play the key role. He was not worried of the ethnic otherness of the Hungarian urban class: he considered them aliens but possible to assimilate. In contrast, with all his sympathies, he did not consider the peasantry as the normative basis of the new nation-building: he stressed repeatedly that they were still marked by “oriental” authoritarianism. At the same time, the integration of the peasantry into the national community was supported by ‘characterological’ arguments as well: Rónay was busy pointing out the fragments of constitutional existence in the rural world – going so far as to describe the outlaws of the Bakony hills as ardent followers of a code of honor, which allegedly attested the ancient constitutionalism of the Hungarians.

On a different conceptual level, the same debate on the perspectives of nation-building gave birth to the first attempts to create a ‘national philosophy’, i.e. a philosophical system rooted in the Hungarian national character³⁴. This project came to tackle the same issues that we can find in the works of Széchenyi, such as the intertwining of the idea of civic nation with the discussion of the ethno-cultural heritage, a projection of a normative past and the *topos* of belatedness, references to the *Volksgeist*/national spirit and the assertion of a universalistic aspiration. The general trend of these philosophical experiments was to define Hungarian spirit as being situated in-between the available options – hence the keyword of “Hungarian harmonistics”, implying a new synthesis between the various Western high cultures, not rejecting the import of ideas but deriving originality from the unique combination of these elements. The complex interplay of the universalistic drive of philosophy and the aim to nationalize it is the most important message of the works of the ex-officer and political thinker, Gusztáv Szontagh (1793-1858), who was the first one to be elected to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in his capacity of a philosopher. His *Propylaea*

³⁴ The recurrent theme of “national philosophy” in Hungarian philosophical thought has been recently studied by László Percz, see his *Nemzet, filozófia, “nemzeti filozófia”* (Budapest: Argumentum, 2008).

to *Hungarian philosophy*³⁵ aimed at establishing a Hungarian philosophical tradition, bringing together the progress of national philosophy with the phases of the development of Hungarian nationhood. Szontagh was especially fascinated by Scottish philosophy, which he praised also on account of its practical orientation and for being the creation of a small nation. The Hungarian predicament was necessarily imitation and compilation, but the final aim was to devise a national philosophy, albeit not in view of its object, but its spirit and presentation. In Szontagh's understanding, the main mental trait of the Hungarians, namely being characterized by a balanced disposition between sentiment and reason, also facilitated the creation of a philosophical system balancing between the different Western traditions. In a sense, one can read all his speculations on national philosophy as a counter-project to the most obvious trajectory of the one-sided cultural reliance on German sources, mainly Hegelianism.

The political context of his second major work, *Propylaea to social philosophy with regard to the situation of our country*³⁶ was the debate around Széchenyi's essay *Kelet népe* (The people of the East). One of the central notions of the debate was progress³⁷, as the main issue of controversy was the 'meaning' of Hungarian historical destiny in view of the clash of the more evolutionary and radical visions of modernization and nation-building. Entering the debate, Szontagh also turned to the problem of philosophy of history³⁸. In order to establish the historical mission of a nation, the most important aspect to consider was its culture. Along these lines, Szontagh stressed that history of culture was superior to political history, while the irradiation of national spirit could be best analyzed with regard to national literature. National progress was following the ages of the individual. However, cultural creativity could somehow transcend the actual level of civilization: cultivated individuals could exist even in uncultivated communities, forming part of the intelligentsia of the nation, and thus representing the humankind of a coming era. In contrast, the common people in an uncultivated society are usually sticking to old mores and customs, ruled by authority. Szontagh contrasted this to the life-style of the citizen, the grown-up member of the nation, who assumes responsibility for his own deeds. The emergence of citizenship is rooted in progress: but Szontagh did not fail to point out that progress presupposed peaceful development, not revolution. Progress was not so much political rather civilizatory: the heralds of progress

35 Gusztáv Szontagh, *Propylaeumok a' magyar philosophiához* (Buda: Magyar Királyi Egyetem, 1839).

36 Gusztáv Szontagh, *Propylaeumok a társasági philosophiához tekintettel hazánk viszonyaira* (Buda: Eggenberger, 1843).

37 János Varga – in his *A Hungarian Quo Vadis. Political Trends and Theories of the Early 1840s* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1993) – characterizes the entire political discourse of the Reform Age as an attempt at bringing progress and the national imperative together.

38 Szontagh, *Propylaeumok a társasági philosophiához tekintettel hazánk viszonyaira*, 24ff

in a rustic age were the cultivated nations, while in uncultivated nations the cultivated individuals. This evolutionary vision, which might well be considered a secularized eschatology, was a precondition of social and political action: one needs to believe that there is a generic progress towards perfection³⁹, since rejecting this vision makes self-sacrifice meaningless.

From this modernist-evolutionist perspective, his final word in the debate on the speed and direction of national progress was conciliatory: progress is unavoidable, “difference and debate is only about how and in what way, and especially over quicker or slower progress”⁴⁰. Faithful to his moderate stance and belief in self-regulating processes of civilization, Szontagh opted for a middle way, balancing between preserving the privileges and the revolutionary system, and stressed the need of organic reforms.

The Revolution of 1848 and the ensuing War of Independence meant a turn in the discourse of nationhood as well. If before 1848 the questions of nation-building and the nationalities were mostly of theoretical nature, the conflicts and the ensuing civil war made the Hungarian political elite painfully aware of the importance of the nationality question. After the fall of banners, some of the profoundest minds of the generation (like Zsigmond Kemény and József Eötvös) started the reconsideration of the events, agreeing that a crucial error of the revolutionary leadership was the insufficient handling of the nationality problem.

The Transylvanian aristocrat and writer Zsigmond Kemény (1814-1875) was a supporter of the liberal movement in the 1840s, developing a reformist program converging with that of the ‘Centralists’ around József Eötvös, who believed in setting up a strong executive to overcome the “feudal” power structures of the county administration, thus offering an alternative to Kossuth’s project who considered these bodies as the last bastions of self-government and a potential basis of democratization. Though Kemény served the revolutionary government until the very end, he grew increasingly disenchanted as the revolution radicalized, blaming Kossuth for abandoning the more organic style of reform and for subordinating the common good to his personal dictatorial aspirations. After the collapse of the revolution Kemény’s was among the first critical voices to be heard in the midst of collective trauma and Austrian reprisals. Kemény positioned himself in a very precarious way. While he harshly criticized the revolutionary leadership, he also opposed the aristocratic ‘old-conservative’ political platform, which tried to resume politics as if the Revolution of 1848 had not taken place. Against both directions, Kemény sought to defend the liberal reforms and considered the formation of a modern ‘bourgeois society’ crucial for the survival of the nation. He maintained some hope of the modernizing potential of the ‘neo-absolutist’ government of Vienna, which was partially drawn from politicians (for example, Alexander Bach) who had a liberal political past.

39 Szontagh, *Propylaeumok a társasági filosofiához tekintettel hazánk viszonyaira*, 36.

40 Szontagh *Propylaeumok a társasági filosofiához tekintettel hazánk viszonyaira*, 72.

Along these lines, Kemény's political essays as well as his historical novels, written in the 1850s, were meant to actively 'shape the public' and reconsider the basic tenets of the Hungarian national discourse, using a normative vision of 'Hungarianness' as one of the main *topoi* of his argumentation. The pamphlets *After the revolution* (1850) and *One more word after the revolution* (1851) are usually considered the most characteristic representations of the conservative possibilities of Hungarian 'political romanticism.' With a sweeping rhetoric of collective self-criticism, Kemény called the nation to repentance after the "excesses" of the revolution and envisioned a model of cooperation with the Viennese administration which would allow Hungarian society to recover what it had lost during the upheavals.

Evoking Hungarian national character and the discourse of 'national self-knowledge' is one of the key aspects of Kemény's argument in *After the revolution*⁴¹. Showing how the nation faces the threat of disappearance, he calls on all political camps of the country to exercise self-restraint and at the same time to come to terms with the realities of defeat. Turning rhetorically to the Austrian authorities, he asserts that relaxation of military controls would not lead to a new revolt, as the character of the Hungarians does not contain any propensity for waging guerrilla warfare after a lost struggle. Turning to his compatriots, he warned them against "day-dreaming", that is, hoping to resume the revolutionary fight. Furthermore, he argues that national regeneration should be based on collective remembrance and the reconsideration of the national past. While the aims of the author might have been conditioned more by the need of finding a *modus vivendi* with the Habsburg administration, the essay turned out to be a paradigmatic text of cultural and political self-positioning. It had an enormous impact and inspired many later works, among them Gyula Szekfű's *The three generations* and László Németh's essays in the interwar period.

Besides Kemény's paradigmatic pamphlets, in the context of the traumatic experience of the lost fight, a number of other projects came to the fore, often using references to the national character as veiled political allusions. One can observe this in the essay by the Transylvanian philosopher and ethnographer, János Erdélyi (1814-1868), entitled *The present* (1851). Referring to the recent traumatic events, Erdélyi asserted that in the past lost battles had positive impact on the nation, implying that the lessons drawn from the defeat of the revolutionary struggle might also be turned to the benefit of the nation⁴². Similar to Kemény, Erdélyi sought to reconsider the national discourse in view of the new situation. He stressed that the main treasure of Hungarians was their nationality. This did not imply motionlessness but entailed permanent adaptation to the external conditions. When describing Hungarian popular

41 Zsigmond Kemény, "A forradalom után" (1850), in *Válogatott művei* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1982), 185-373.

42 János Erdélyi, "A jelen" (1851), in *Válogatott művei* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1986), 719-749.

character, he stressed the democratic aspects, obviously passing a – not even too much veiled – political message.

Not surprisingly, the problem of nationalities, as he put it, “the existence of many different peoples in Árpád’s homeland”, was at the core of Erdélyi’s inquiries as well. His concept of nation carried the same ambiguity as that of the Reform Age. On the one hand he declared that the basis of nationality is language, going as far as theorizing the national peculiarity of different nations on the basis of their greetings – presuming that the way different nations say “how do you do?” expresses their national soul. This linguistic understanding of nationhood prompted him to define national literature as the core of nationality, thus resuming the discourse of Kőlcsey, stating that literature – the presence of the past and of the future – raises nationality to the spiritual sphere. At the same time, Erdélyi was tried to separate his concept of nationhood from an ethnic understanding, stressing that although nationality was based on the belief of common blood, but it was legitimized by tradition and history.

Erdélyi’s essay on the *Present state of philosophy in our country* from 1856⁴³ was an attempt at finding a conceptual balance between the imperatives of the specific national community and universalism, in a critical dialogue with the writings on ‘national philosophy’ from the Reform Age, especially those by Szontagh. Erdélyi stressed that the principle of nationality was getting gradually weaker in poetry, religion and philosophy, as the highest level of human activity is by default also the least national. At the same time the archaic culture of the people is the basis of any further progress, that is why the question of national philosophy is not completely irrelevant.

On a conceptual level, this essay also reflected the dialogue between the Hungarian tradition of political nationhood and the imperative of reshaping the national discourse in view of an ethno-cultural tradition. In Erdélyi’s vision, nation was constituted by land, climate, history, state-forms and age-old customs. All these factors contributed to the formation of a specific character by which individuals could define themselves. While this list contained both natural and historical aspects, Erdélyi opted for a historicist understanding of nationality. His reference to national character was a way to define the nation historically, in obvious polemic with the ethno-cultural understanding professed by the Slovak, Romanian, Serbian, etc. national movements in the country, challenging the Hungarian nation-building project. Eventually nation is defined by tradition and the principal constitutive factor is not ethnic provenience but “national consciousness”.

The aim of philosophical reflection in Erdélyi’s understanding was bringing national specificity to the level of the universal: polishing, but preserving what is specific. Hungarian character thus had its own historicity and basic essentiality – continuing some of the archaic traits but also shaped by European interaction.

43 Erdélyi, “A hazai bölcsészet jelene” (1856), in *Válogatott művei*, 775-825.

The past is a regulative idea where the individual and the community can constantly return – “if the nation does not feel its past, it loses its present”. Criticizing “civil history” (i.e. political history) for failing to show the basic traits of national soul, he formulated the program of collecting folk-songs, proverbs etc. in order to facilitate this process of self-reflection, which made him the most important Hungarian folklorist of the nineteenth century. While national past is a major element of collective identity-formation, as the “self-knowing spirit” turns to the past, Erdélyi rejected Szontagh’s position about the nationalization of philosophy and stressed that the structures of human thinking are universal. There is no place for a national school of thinking – as the solar system is not Polish just because Copernicus was the first one to discover it.

Representing another direction of reshaping the national discourse, the works of József Eötvös in the 1850s sought to redirect the Hungarian national project after the trauma of the lost revolution. Most importantly, he stressed that the Imperial and the Hungarian levels were inseparably intertwined. He sought to harmonize the principles of nationality and liberty on a theoretical level as well: in his opinion “historical nationhood” needed to be preserved but, at the same time, he wanted to give concessions to the nationalities living in the country, which were not “historical nations” in his understanding but had some sort of cultural individuality. Eötvös argued for an establishment based on the liberal principles of individual freedom. He stressed the analogy of nationality with denominational identity, and claimed to propose a solution which could secure the liberties, not of the corporate groups (which might be extremely oppressive of their members), but of every particular member of the community.

This proposal, elaborated by Eötvös in the context of the negotiations with the leadership of the non-Magyar national movements, especially the Serbians and Romanians, was probably the intellectually most sophisticated conception of resolving the nationality question in Hungary to be formulated in the entire nineteenth century. Nevertheless, there were some problems with this proposal – not so much with what he actually said, rather with what he was silent about. It was vital for him to avoid the debate about the existence of more than one nation in Hungary. He thought that this ideological question is only the surface, and the real issue lay deeper. The reason for his repudiation of thinking in terms of the plurality of nations in the same framework was obviously his strong commitment to the mainstream national liberal conception asserting that nationhood is ultimately identical with the aspiration to statehood. Had he accepted the existence of nations within the realm, he would have had to accept the potential collapse of the Hungarian state. Instead, he sought to define the Hungarian nation in purely political terms, thus separating Hungarianness from the ethno-cultural aspects. As the subsequent development of the debate on nationalities has shown, this fragile compromise proposed by Eötvös could only be maintained if both of the sides

were willing to leave this 'ultimate' ideological question unpronounced. When the issue of 'political' nationhood came back to fore in 1867 the chances of maintaining this potential compromise vanished immediately.

There was, however, yet another option inherent in the liberal discourse, which was perhaps theoretically less sophisticated, but which sought to solve the problem of nationhood in a more realistic way by accepting the 'nationhood' of the non-Magyar population as well. Its most important proponent, Lajos Mocsáry (1826-1916) started from a strongly Romantic perspective and represented the gradually diminishing tolerant version of the Romantic liberal nationalism related to the anti-Compromise tradition in the Hungarian political culture. Arguably, Mocsáry's belief in the peaceful co-existence of different nations in the same political framework might have been connected to the fact that he 'missed' the entire revolutionary period in Hungary (curing his illness in Germany) and thus he was probably more capable of distancing himself from the darker aspects of nationalism than most of his contemporaries.

Significantly, in his early writings, he entered into a fierce debate with Eötvös. Most of all, Mocsáry attacked Eötvös for misrepresenting the nature of national sentiment, arguing that it was a profound mistake to perceive nationalism as a craving for domination. Contrary to the mainstream liberal vision of the mid-century, shared by Eötvös as well, the post-Herderian conception of nationhood professed by Mocsáry was not state-centric and although it championed a fervent nationalist creed (asserting that nationality was the supreme normative focus – something Eötvös emphatically rejected), this nationalism was built on the conviction that peace and prosperous co-existence was not only compatible with, but in fact made up the core of sincere nationalism. Nation is the community of people who are of the same origins, who speak the same language, who consider themselves to be of the same kin. Therefore in the territory of Hungary Mocsáry accepted the existence of more than one nation and he explicitly spoke about Slovak, Serb, Croat and Romanian "nations"⁴⁴.

Rather than an aspiration to domination, nationality implied a universalistic creed: "every part has to aim at the fulfillment of the common mission of mankind in its own way". It was from a 'culturalist' perspective that Mocsáry claimed that "Nation" and "Country" should converge, as the mixing of different populations tended to be a source of weakness (he cited the decline of the Greco-Roman civilization as an illustration of this argument). In the case of mixed populations, one of the national communities has to emerge as the natural leader of the country, but this cannot mean a push for assimilation, since forced assimilation is deeply immoral, taking the most important human property (cultural heritage) from the citizens⁴⁵.

44 Lajos Mocsáry, *Nemzetiség* (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1987), 42. Originally published in 1858.

45 Mocsáry, *Nemzetiség*, 55.

Furthermore, Mocsáry placed an “even more generous” and more altruistic state of mind over nationalism, that of *patriotism* – an allegiance not only to our own national-cultural community, but to the country in general (involving different national groups). Mocsáry argued for the development and institutional advancement of this kind of patriotism, and he tried to formulate his political proposals in the 1850s from this perspective. The “country” should be neutral, “it should not become the partisan of any of the nations”⁴⁶. According to Mocsáry the real problem was that, during the preceding decades, national feeling was over-emphasized to the detriment of this patriotic state of mind. But these two allegiances are not contradictory (he blamed Eötvös for counter-posing too strongly these two attitudes) at all: in the Hungarian case it is obvious that the national and patriotic interests converge, but Mocsáry goes further and tries to prove that even in the case of the other nations living in Hungary their national loyalty could be harmonized with Hungarian patriotism.

History makes a *patria* out of Hungary for more than only one nation, creating a community that becomes the real basis of coexistence: “the Slavs of our country are closer to us than any of our philologically established linguistic relatives”. In this list of ‘centripetal’ factors, Mocsáry recapitulates one of the crucial elements of the Reform Age discourse, i.e. claiming that the only country which provided “constitutional existence” to the Slavs was in fact Hungary. It is a thousand years that they have been inhabiting and possessing this land together, tilled its soil together and shared each other’s sufferings and joys:

Is it possible to show a single feat that can be said to have been achieved by Hungarians or by Slavs alone; hasn’t everything been done by joint efforts? The troops that fought so valiantly against the Turks, the Tartars and so many other adversaries have always included Hungarians, Slovaks, Croatians, Serbs, Germans and Romanians as well, and many a Hungarian warlord has led Slavic troops to glory, just as Croatian and Serb commanders have achieved similar victories with Hungarian troops. And haven’t they all served a common cause, with a common glory and lesser or greater success, and haven’t they all regarded each other as brave sons of the same homeland, as valiant champions of the same cause?⁴⁷

While the liberal nationalists of the 1840s were offering constitutionalism in exchange for assimilation, Mocsáry turns the constitutionalist tradition into a guarantee of the preservation of Slavic national existence. In this argument the concept of national character becomes a symbolic framework, constituted by history, over-writing ethnic differences:

But in more recent times, when the struggles for liberty are no longer about abstruse denominational questions but more practical issues, where have the Slavs tasted the

46 Mocsáry, *Nemzetiség*, 65.

47 Mocsáry, *Nemzetiség*, 126. I used Dávid Oláh’s translation in Trencsényi and Kopeček, eds., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe*, vol. II, 357.

sweet, albeit sometimes deceptive fruits of the spirit of freedom and reform other than in Hungary? The other Slavs as yet knew nothing at all about these concepts when they were already becoming the subject of public reflection and public debates here, with an elevating and ennobling effect on their character that is still discernible now that the questions themselves have long been swept aside from the forum of debate. Only here did the Slavs have an opportunity for this more elevated, nobler spiritual preoccupation.⁴⁸

Even though Mocsáry had a predilection for a more culture-centric understanding of nationhood, eventually the historical basis of collective identity is reintroduced into his scheme through the re-conceptualization of patriotism (“the shared history of our homeland”) in contrast to the ethno-linguistic arguments:

Let scholars and linguists put us into separate columns, let them classify us into separate language families and say that our real kinsmen are wandering somewhere on the plateaux of Asia and shivering around the Arctic Sea, and that the Turks with whom we lived in such a pleasant fraternal harmony for centuries are in fact our dear kinsmen: we shall still reckon our Slavic compatriots to be more closely related to us. Even though we are classed as a separate group of people linguistically, we shall still hold dearer this long-standing proximity, friendship, compaternity and the intertwined branches of quasi-kinship than that other distant kinship that goes back to Adam and Eve⁴⁹.

In this sense, while Mocsáry’s agenda was markedly different from the historicist nationalism supporting the unitary Hungarian political nation against the ethno-cultural discourse of the nationalities, he willy-nilly reverted to history as the main factor of defining the national community. Historical memory is the principal marker of national character, over-writing the ethno-cultural ingredients, which means that his symbolic acceptance of national plurality within a multi-national patria is implicitly relativized, although his position was still far from that of the assimilatory nationalists:

It is unthinkable that our Slavic relatives could ever forget all these historical memories and extinguish from their bosom the sentiments that they evoke. And as soon as they take a historical point of view, they are ours. Yet without history there is no nationality; without it there may be an enthusiastic zeal for a language, there may be a temporary sense of irritation towards one or other race, but this is no genuine national sentiment but just an artificial movement labeled with some name, which can never be permanent and enduring⁵⁰.

On the whole, although Mocsáry exchanged a number of symbolic gestures especially with the Romanian national movement⁵¹, his attempts to harmonize

48 Mocsáry, *Nemzetiség*, 131, in *Discourses of Collective Identity*, 360.

49 Mocsáry, *Nemzetiség*, 127-128, in *Discourses of Collective Identity*, 358.

50 Mocsáry, *Nemzetiség*, 128, in *Discourses of Collective Identity*, 358.

51 In 1888 Mocsáry, who by then abandoned the Independence Party, was elected in Caranșeș

some sort of historical patriotism and ethno-cultural plurality turned out to be gradually marginalized. Eventually his ideas became rejected both by the mainstream of the Magyar political elite and the national movements of Romanians, Slovaks, Serbs and Ruthenians. This marginalization was mostly due to the reconfiguration of the national discourse on both “sides”. On the part of the titular nation, the 1860s, and especially the period after the Compromise of 1867, brought a new development, namely the ‘canonization’ of Hungarian national identity based on the fusion of political and ethno-cultural factors. On the part of the elites of the other nationalities the liberal ideological framework became less and less attractive as a basis of finding a mutually acceptable solution and the emerging new ‘national intelligentsias’ were shifting to a more uncompromising position creating their own mixture of ethno-culturalist and historical arguments, which questioned the possibility of any supra-ethnic arrangement.

The fusion of historical and ethno-cultural aspects had both inclusive and exclusive implications. In the essay by the Transylvanian historian, Károly Szabó (1824-1890), *On Hungarian national pride* (1865), written at the end of the period of ‘passive resistance’ and in the context of the anticipation of some sort of consolidation, the core of Hungarian national character is defined in terms of its unique capability of resistance to external catastrophes⁵². Szabó stressed that this trait is “common to all members of the nation”, “from the aristocrat down to the apprentice”. Nationhood is defined in ethno-linguistic terms: as Szabó points out, language is “the root of national pride” attested also by such notions as ‘magyaráz’ (‘to explain’ – coming from the Magyar ethnonym). This stress on the language does not lead to a conflicting vision of ethnic otherness. In Szabó’s opinion, eventually going back to the Herderian vision, the existence of Hungarian spirit, “ingrained in the child’s mind” does not hinder the harmonic co-existence with others: self-esteem and esteem of others are mutually conditioning each other. Reflecting the Transylvanian background of the author, which was a region marked by centuries-old traditions of religious tolerance but also of a violent clash of national movements in 1848-49, his example of peaceful co-existence are the Transylvanian Saxons, who had been able to retain their own constitutional structure and cultural individuality within a political system dominated by the Hungarians.

This characterological sketch sought to underpin a project of ‘national revival’, resuming the political aims of the Reform Age of the 1830-1840s as it were, in the new context of the relaxation of pressure coming from Vienna. Subscribing to the interpretation elaborated by the most prominent liberal

(Karánsebes), a preponderantly Romanian electoral district in the Banat. In 1892, however, he withdrew from parliamentary politics.

52 Károly Szabó, “A magyar nemzeti büszkeségről” (1865), in *Kisebb történelmi munkái* (Budapest: Ráth Mór, 1873), vol. I, 285-298.

historian of the Reform Age, Mihály Horváth, Szabó contrasted the revival of the 1830s to the previous epoch of national alienation marked by “conservatism” and “laziness”, lack of vernacular culture (Latinism), and retreat from public affairs. The growth of national consciousness, and the concomitant progress of civilization were based on the revived image of national past. This means the organic connection between modernity and antiquity: the nation has to learn history to cultivate its pride and thus to attain new heights of self-realization. This ‘normative past’ is fusing ethnically and historically constituted aspects: Szabó thus links language, ancient customs, laws and national costume as fundamental markers of nationality. Typical for the liberal nationalist generation of the mid-nineteenth century, however, this cultivation of national tradition is not defined in an exclusivist manner, as the author also stressed the need “to learn what is useful” from other nations.

The linking of civilization and national traditions prepared the road for the symbolic and conceptual conflation of the Hungarian ethno-cultural identity with the state ideology, in the context of the increasingly obvious failure in integrating the bulk of the nationalities. The experience of national division became rationalized in view of a discourse of civilizational supremacy fashionable worldwide in these decades of liberal imperialism, albeit in this case the subject of this *mission civilisatrice* became the internal other.

The most grandiose scheme of Hungarian liberal imperialism was devised by the historian and diplomat, Béni Kállay (1839-1903). He was also the mastermind of Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the occupation in 1878, serving as its governor between 1882 and 1903. Beyond his political involvement, Kállay authored a history of Serbia, and in his youth also translated J. S. Mill’s *On Liberty*, publishing it with a theoretical preface that is among the most sophisticated theoretical statements of Hungarian liberalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. Kállay’s programmatic essay, *Hungary on the border of East and West*⁵³ published after he assumed his task in Sarajevo, might be read as the synthesis of the underlying assumptions of the Hungarian ‘geopolitical’ project in Southeast Europe, devising a sweeping symbolic geographical tableau and also reassessing the previous tradition of ‘national philosophy’, defining the national mission in terms of a spiritual synthesis.

Kállay based his argument on a geographical narrative contrasting the “Orient” and the “Occident”, describing the Baltic Sea, the Carpathians, the Lower Danube, and the Adriatic Sea as the borderline between these two worlds, although stressing the permanent interplay of the two zones and defining the European East and the Levant as some sort of buffer zone. The principal feature of the Orient is the duality of a cultivated minority and the uncultivated masses – leading to an autocratic form of government, which is based on the rule of one tribe over all the others, with the dynasty as its personification. As it is attested

53 Béni Kállay, *Magyarország Kelet és Nyugat határán* (Budapest: MTA Könyvkiadó Vállalata, 1883).

by the history of Hellenistic states, the subjected peoples did not become citizens – instead Alexander the Great and his successors adopted the oriental structures. In general, Greek civilization cannot be considered to be the spiritual basis of the West, as culture remained in the hand of the elite, while the masses were kept in subjection. In the oriental political frameworks, the powerful individual always over-rules the collective solidarity and therefore nothing restrains oppression, leaving no chance for individual liberty to develop. This is also exemplified by the oppression of women. Liberty can only be based on mutual self-restraint, while in the Orient the stronger enforces his power and the weaker forcibly retreats, thus democracy, even if it emerges, is easily transformed into tyranny. The despotic power of the minority explains the lack of patriotism in the East, which is a feeling based on shared rights and responsibilities, integrating the state as a legal and national unity. The Orient is thus marked by the lack of an integrated political structure and consequently the failure to form a united political nation.

In contrast, the West – rooted principally in Roman political culture – is characterized by constitutional development, with the plebeian element step-by-step becoming part of the political system. This process catalyzed the emergence of a contractual relationship among the citizens, symbolized by the notion of *res publica*, aiming at the common good. Therefore, individual liberty was not weakening, but exactly strengthening the state. The main aspects of the Western world are thus the emergence of uniform legal systems, a state integrating the different classes and ethnicities, the emancipation of women and eventually the formation of a political nation, based not on ‘tribal’ allegiance but on identifying with institutions. This form of statehood is coupled by the existence of “society”, developing self-conscious aims, forming a powerful public opinion (in contrast to the East, where “public opinion” simply does not exist), marked by the permanent clash of different ideas, which eventually leads to a rational compromise. Based on this social dynamism, Western democracy is sustained by the efforts of the citizens to reach equality of legal status and extend their civil liberties.

In Kállay’s vision, Hungary was exactly in-between the Orient and the Occident. The Hungarians were originally Easterners who became very early transformed by Western influence. Thus, adopting Christianity and establishing a Western-style *regnum*, King Stephen successfully broke up the tribal structures of nationality and led his country to political integration with the West. Rather than envisioning some sort of primeval democracy, Kállay asserted that the “feudal” Middle Ages witnessed a development towards parliamentarism and extension of the political community which, however, was broken by the fatal Battle of Mohács (1526) and the ensuing disintegration of the unitary monarchy under the Ottoman pressure. Nevertheless, culturally Hungarians still participated in Occidental culture – especially by adopting the various trends of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

However, due mainly to the lasting social and political misery, the Hungarian national character remained in-between the Oriental and the Occidental types.

Among its principal traits one can find the resistance against influences from outside, less assiduousness, the desire of innovation but lack of systematic work, and an inclination to speculation without yielding results. Similarly, in Kállay's understanding the famous "Hungarian tolerance" towards the nationalities was also a transitory case, as the Hungarians did not impose the oppressive ethnic separation typical of the East, but were also unable to create a united political nation as it was the rule in the West. Nevertheless, the imperfect, but existing Hungarian political nation was a genuinely Western formation and held the promise of further development towards a more encompassing civic nation. Along these lines, Kállay saw the essence of the Hungarian cultural and political mission in "mediation" – for him even the two parts of the Hungarian crown symbolize this duality, one being of Western and the other of Byzantine origin. Capable of understanding the Eastern way of thinking but eventually being part of the West, Hungarians are destined to transfer Western ideas and institutions to the Southeast-European zone, and also explain the local specificities of this region to the Westerners⁵⁴.

Kállay's understanding of the national mission was in many ways representative of the generally optimistic political and cultural atmosphere of the first two decades after the *Ausgleich*. His very radical conceptual distinction between nationality based on ethnic and cultural markers and political nationhood, although it represented the spirit of the Nationality Law of 1868, was becoming increasingly atypical, as most of the participants of the public sphere kept conflating the ethno-cultural and the political-institutional aspects. Thus, in different scientific and rhetoric registers, one finds various attempts to fuse the ethnic and historical definitions of the national community, and especially to re-define the ethnic (in the contemporary usage, "racial") character of the nation in terms of its *mission civilisatrice*, extolling its capacity of assimilating the ethnic others throughout the centuries. This discourse reached its climax in the last generation of liberal nationalists dominating the scene from the 1880s to the turn of the century. Often stemming from assimilated families, having ascended into the state bureaucracy, they exemplified the power and plausibility of the assimilatory offer (e.g. Győző Concha had Italian ancestors, Gusztáv Beksics came from Serbian background, while Béla Grünwald and Jenő Rákosi were assimilated Germans). The protagonists of this generation were all steeped into the positivist scientific canon, seeking to bring together personal liberty and organic social development. The most important modification on the liberalism of the previous generation proposed by these authors was the extolling of state intervention. They considered that an organic process of social modernization was only possible if the state fulfilled its regulatory functions as they did not consider the society sufficiently mature to initiate the reforms. The reforms and

⁵⁴ It is remarkable in this context that Kállay's main efforts in Sarajevo were exactly aiming at the creation of a Bosnian "political nation", overwriting the ethnic and denominational differences.

projects for social and political integration could only come from an enlightened bureaucratic elite, in possession of scientific knowledge and a developed national consciousness, with the population envisioned as a rather formless mass to be “educated” and integrated into the national community.

In a way, this program was based on the master-narrative of Hungarian liberalism originated in the Reform Age, focusing on the “extension of rights” and the “elevating of the people into the nation”. What made this discourse, however, radically different was that in the 1830s this project did not have a quasi-nation-state infrastructure available to actually undertake the task of turning the people into a nation in the sense of ‘fabricating Hungarians’ – it was envisioned more in terms of extension of privileges to the population, which was supposed to catalyze a national identification. In the heyday of ‘neo-liberals’ in the 1880-90s, the proliferation of non-Hungarian ethno-cultural identities in general came to be considered a hindrance to modernization, which in the vision of these theoreticians was conditioned by cultural and social homogeneity. The references to national character amply present in the writings of these authors were thus used to underpin the project of ‘national engineering’. A classic statement of this sort is the prominent historian and political scientist Győző Concha’s (1846-1933) commemorative oration on the anniversary of the “Arad martyrs” of 1849⁵⁵. Concha’s overall message was that the “Hungarian race” (defined in terms of a fusion of ethnic and historical markers) proved to be capable of expanding civilization in the region throughout the 1000 years of the existence of the Hungarian state due to its extraordinary qualities of political organization and cultural creativity. In contrast, the other nationalities of the country are characterized as basically benevolent but somewhat retarded “children” (the Romanians of Transylvania, for instance, are described as having a “primitive character”⁵⁶) in need of guidance as they are culturally and politically insufficient to form an autonomous polity. In this logic, the rule of the “Hungarian race” is legitimized with regard to universal human progress – the progressive features of the Hungarian liberal government, rooted in the progressive character of the Hungarian national project as such, make the suppression of ‘separatism’ and the forceful extension of nationality acceptable in front of the judgment of world history.

The attempts at redefining liberalism in line with a more straightforwardly homogenizing agenda, however, were not able to forestall the increasingly obvious drift between the liberal ideological tenets and the nationalist rhetoric and practices. There are basically two phases of this separation: until the turn of the century the co-existence of the Hungarian ‘imperialist’ and

55 Győző Concha, “A magyar faj hegemoniája” (1890), in *A konzervatív és a liberális elv* (Piliscsaba: Attraktor, 2005) 100-110; the “Arad martyrs” were generals of the Hungarian revolutionary army executed by the Austrian authorities after the surrender of the Hungarian troops in October 1849.

56 Concha, “A magyar faj hegemoniája”, in Concha, *A konzervatív és a liberális elv*, 107.

the liberal elements were at least subjectively feasible. The 1890s saw the immense propaganda-campaign of a liberal project of assimilation, together with the nationalistic turn of the anti-Habsburg Independence Party. There is, however, a further shift as well: as Miklós Szabó documented it, the turn of the century brought a new kind of anti-liberal nationalism to fore⁵⁷. While conservatism was anti-national for quite a long time before, this new trend of protectionist anti-liberalism began to forge a somewhat xenophobic version of the nationalist canon, drawing on the European examples of emerging anti-liberal mass mobilization (anti-Semitism, agrarianism, Christian Socialism). In turn, we see the contrary process as well: the formation of a neo-liberal canon which was defined precisely as anti-nationalistic and which considered the ‘national’ gentry to be the cause of all evils⁵⁸.

This development also signaled the end of the construction of ‘political nationhood’ and the emergence of a new vision of competing – and incompatible – ethno-cultural projects. While it already had strong signs at the turn of the century, this ideological framework, fusing the agenda of nation-state building with ethno-cultural homogenization, became central after the lost World War I and the ensuing territorial losses. Never completely abandoning the vision of restoring the supra-ethnic state, the Hungarian political elite thus entered an irresolvable dilemma, on the one hand shifting away from the idea of political nation towards and ethnic definition, but at the same time keeping the illusion of the viability of the Greater Hungarian project, defining the Hungarians as the natural leaders in the multi-ethnic Danubian region.

While the Hungarian national discourse after 1918 thus came to be wedged between an increasingly ethno-culturalist understanding and the ‘historical’ multi-ethnic imaginary framework, most of the other nation-building projects of the region (Romanian, Czechoslovak and/or Slovak, Yugoslav and/or Serbian and Croatian) had a trajectory towards the opposite direction: being rooted in a more ethnic understanding of the nation, they were experimenting with redefining themselves in terms of an assimilatory model. Needless to say, all these projects were torn by internal contradictions, leading eventually to the abandonment of the principle of civic equality in the name of the urgent task of national homogenization to prevent the impending dissolution of the nation-state. The clash of the Hungarian nation-building project with other similar endeavors in the region, which was originally catalyzed by the “non-contemporaneous

57 Miklós Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus és a jobboldali radikalizmus története (1867-1918)* (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2003).

58 On the *fin-de-siècle* political discourses in Hungary see Zoltán Horváth, *Die Jahrhundertwende in Ungarn. Geschichte der zweiten Reformgeneration (1896–1914)* (Budapest: Corvina, 1966); Béla Németh G., *Létharc és nemzetiség* (Budapest: Magvető, 1976); György Litván, *Magyar gondolat - szabad gondolat: Nacionalizmus és progresszió a századeleji Magyarországon* (Budapest: Magvető, 1978); Péter Hanák, *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1998).

contemporaneity” of these projects and the concomitant failure to devise a discursive technique of accommodation, thus led to a lasting conflict and a self-perpetuating dream-world of national ‘homogeneity’ on all sides, still poisoning the coexistence of titular nations and ethnic minorities (the few which survived the twentieth century) in East Central Europe.

The Holy Land in British eyes: sacred geography and the ‘rediscovery’ of Palestine, 1839-1917

MAGGY HARY

In his address to the audience of a Palestine exhibition held in 1908, Lord Curzon explained how a visit to Palestine had changed his perception of the Bible and helped him to understand the Scriptures:

[...]whenever I hear the Old Testament read, I recall the scenes I have visited, I place the figures in their surroundings, and this makes the narrative more vivid and personal to myself. And although you will not feel this in the same degree, not having been in the country, yet in a small way, from what you will see here and from what you will be told in the addresses and lectures, I hope that Old and New Testaments, the Scriptures of your faith, may become a little more real to all of you, both in church on Sundays and in your everyday life¹.

This exhibition, organized to bring the Holy Land to those who could not afford the trip there, was supposed to allow the British masses to get a more vivid and personal understanding of the Revelation. Curzon’s statement was not original: in the nineteenth century, it was commonplace to consider that the Bible was the best handbook for travelers to the Holy Land² while knowledge of Palestine’s

1 Quoted by E. Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture, 1799-1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 162.

2 *Murray’s Guide to Syria and Palestine*, quoted by S. Searight, *The British in the Middle East* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 165.

landscapes and geography was supposed to enhance Christian faith because it was seen as evidence of the Scriptures' veracity.

In Britain, the Victorian era was characterized by a growing interest for Palestine among travelers but also diplomats and scholars. It was the country of the Middle-East that the British élite visited most, after Egypt. Between 1869 and 1882, the Holy Land attracted 5,000 tourists set on an 'Eastern Tour' popularized by Thomas Cook. Parallel to this, many travel accounts describing the Holy Places of Jerusalem as well as the geography and the people of Palestine were published for the benefit of those who, unlike the privileged few, stayed at home. In fact, a great part of Victorian cultural life was stimulated by a rediscovery of the Holy Land, which, according to Trollope, became as familiar and accessible to the British public as France. In his *Travelling Sketches* published in 1866, Trollope indeed wrote: "Jerusalem and the Jordan are as common to us as were Paris and the Seine to our grandfathers"³.

This article will focus on the emergence of the specific genre of 'sacred geography', a pseudo-scientific discipline which aimed to ascertain the truthfulness of Scriptures through a careful examination of Palestine's contemporary characteristics. My purpose is to show that, in spite of its controversial methods and its partisan conclusions, the contribution of sacred geography to British knowledge of Palestine was decisive and paved the way to imperialist projects in the region. After briefly sketching the intellectual as well as the diplomatic context which led to the development of this new 'science', I will examine how geographers of Palestine postulated an absolute sameness between the Holy Land described in the Bible and the Ottoman province of the nineteenth century. Taking this equivalence for granted led them to ignore the possibility of historical change hence to conclude that the 'decay' they perceived in Palestine was wholly imputable to the Turks. Likewise, since landscape and geography played a predominant part in their investigation, Palestine came to be seen as an empty land whose Arab inhabitants were simply erased from the picture. As a consequence, their discourse, which echoed common Orientalist stereotypes, contributed to a cultural appropriation of Palestine and paved the way to European imperial designs.

If sacred geography contributed to a closer intimacy of the British public with modern Palestine, the Holy Land had long been a *topos* of British culture. When protestant reformers replaced the clergy with the Bible as the sole source of spiritual authority, they emphasized the significance of Scripture and contributed to the familiarization of all believers with the landscapes and the geography of Old and New Testaments. In addition, pilgrimages were discarded and replaced by spiritual quests for, as Luther explained, the Promised Land should be found in the believer's heart. This doctrinal shift, which replaced the earthly Jerusalem with a metaphor of the Promised Land⁴, was suited to the

3 A. Trollope, *Travelling Sketches* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1866), 92.

4 Consider for instance the metaphorical dimension of Christian's journey to the Promised Land in Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress* (1678).

circumstances of the time. Indeed, after the Ottomans conquered Jerusalem in 1516, travelling to the Holy Land was a journey fraught with difficulties. With the Reformation, Protestant Christianity was therefore drawn away from the real Jerusalem to a metaphorical Holy Land which was within everybody's reach. This process of internalization of the Promised Land was also fostered by the political discourse, especially in the seventeenth century, when the Biblical narrative and vocabulary were regularly conveyed to shed light on contemporary events that were interpreted in the light of the prophecies. In sum, British Protestants developed a close intimacy with the Bible which, at times, led them to picture Britain as the New Jerusalem and think of themselves as the Chosen People⁵.

To a considerable extent, the familiarity between the British and the Holy Land was sustained and reinforced by the evangelical revival of the nineteenth century. The Evangelicals' zealous activism encouraged Bible-preaching and Bible-reading, especially among the often illiterate urban lower classes⁶. The success of the Sunday school movement, which was particularly crucial to working-class children, ensured that the British people as a whole shared a common and basic knowledge of Scripture, regardless of their social origin. Thus, as was noted by Thomas Huxley, the Bible "ha[d] become the national epic of Britain"⁷, while Matthew Arnold likened the English to the Hebrew people for the "strength and prominence of the[ir] moral fibre"⁸. Yet, at the same time, the Bible started to be criticized by scholars who questioned the truth of its narrative and chronology. Arguably, this was not the first time that doubts were voiced about Scripture. However, while the attacks from Enlightenment thinkers had relied on polemic assumptions, in the nineteenth century, Biblical criticism was supported by scientific evidence. The conclusions of geologists, reached thanks to the study of fossils, indicated that the earth was millions, not thousands of years old and could not have been created in its final form in a week. The publication of Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* between 1831 and 1833 made the coexistence of scientific rationalism with faith in the revelation

5 This identity was taken literally by the British Israelites who began to prosper in the 1870s. According to them, the British were the true Israelites while the Jews descended from the Judeans. Maintaining that the Israelites had been exiled from Palestine before the Judeans, they, unlike their brothers, had taken no part in the persecution of the Messiah. J. Wilson, "British Israelism: The Ideological Restraints on Sect Organization", in B. R. Wilson (ed.), *Patterns of Sectarianism: Organization and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements* (London: Heinemann, 1967); E. Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture*, 199-202. On the British metaphorical identification with the Chosen People, see also L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 11-54.

6 In order to ensure Bible-reading, many societies simply distributed Bibles while many cheap editions of the Holy Book were issued.

7 T. Huxley, "The School Boards: what they can do and what they may do" (1870), *Collected Essays*, volume III: *Science and Education* (London: Macmillan, 1893), 374-403.

8 M. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy. An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1869), 258.

uneasy. Meanwhile, in Germany, the development of philology enabled the study of hitherto unknown European languages and allowed the analytical study of the Scriptures in their historical and cultural context. Scholars from the Tübingen school concluded that the Bible could not be one document but a collection of texts from various periods and pointed out to inconsistencies and chronological impossibilities. Faced with such doubts about the Holy Book, churches had only two ways of defending the truth of the Bible: either to dismiss scientific evidence or to provide equally scientific evidence of the accuracy of the Biblical narrative. The second option, which was endorsed by sacred geography⁹, however made physical access to the Holy Land indispensable.

The development of sacred geography owed much to the evolution of the political relationships between the Ottoman Empire and the European powers in the nineteenth century. When Muhammad Ali, the Egyptian ruler, conquered Syria from the Ottomans in the 1830s, he allowed the Europeans to expand their religious missionary activity in Palestine and enabled them to open consulates, which Britain did in 1839. He also introduced tough policing measures which made the journey through the Holy Land safer for European travelers. When Ottoman rule was re-established in 1840, this policy was pursued, namely through the reforms of the *Tanzimat* which introduced a greater measure of protection of non-Muslim individuals. These measures, which allowed a growing European intervention in the Ottoman Empire, clearly contributed to the development of sacred geography. Indeed without consuls in Palestine, explorers of the Holy Land would have lacked a protection that was crucial for their inquiry.

While geography appeared as a distinct academic discipline in the 1870s only, 'sacred geography' emerged long before¹⁰ and was given a new impulse when Britain opened a consulate in Jerusalem. Since the objective of sacred geography was to refute Biblical criticism and authenticate Scriptures, its method consisted in describing the landscapes, the topology, architecture and monuments of modern Palestine which corroborated the Bible. Insofar as modern Palestine was considered as the mere replica of the Biblical Holy Land, everything that did not confirm the Old and New Testaments or fit in the Biblical narrative was simply ignored. This pseudo-scientific approach implied a careful selection of

9 Most of the authors writing on the geography of Palestine were clergymen while 'scientific' societies were usually closely linked to churches. For instance, the President of the Palestine Exploration Fund was the Archbishop of York and the society's patron was the queen. The majority of the PEF membership was clerical and Anglican, though mostly Low Church. On the other hand, William McClure Thomson had been a Christian missionary in Syria for more than forty years when he published *The Land and the Book, Biblical Illustrations drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land* (New York: Harper and bros, 1860).

10 One of the first descriptions of Palestine published in Britain was T. Fuller's *Pisgah Sight of Palestine* (1650). In 1805, the "Palestine Association" was established in London "for the purpose of promoting the knowledge of the geography, natural history and antiquities of Palestine and its vicinity with a view to the illustration of the Holy Writings". However, due to adverse conditions in Palestine at that time, its activity remained limited.

information in order to reach conclusions which had been postulated before starting the enquiry. This deeply entrenched bias was for instance illustrated in the title of the Palestine Exploration Fund, a society established in London in 1865 “for the accurate and systematic investigation of the archaeology, topography, geology and physical geography, and manners and customs of the Holy Land for *Biblical Illustration*”.

Soon, books and societies specifically dealing with sacred geography influenced all the literature on Palestine, including general works like encyclopedias. Considering Palestine as “one vast tablet whereupon God’s messages to men have been drawn and graven deep in living characters”¹¹, the descriptions of this Ottoman province only sought to emphasize traces of sacred history. As the author of the article devoted to Palestine confessed in the 1846 edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Geography*:

The deep interests we attach to this region of Asia depend little on the divisions established by the Turkish government. It calls them pachalics, from each being governed by one of its modern satraps. This circumstance often seriously affects, for a time, the destiny of the people; but it does not, to European eyes, form any permanent or distinctive features. We know these territories, not under the names of the pachalics of Acre, of Tripoli, of Istchil; but under others, which refer to the memory of their departed glories, and to what they were when they presented to the eyes of mankind the Holy Land, Troy, Tyre, Syria and Babylon. We seek on these shores exclusively the monuments and traces of the period when they bore these immortal names; and we gaze on the modern inhabitants and their abodes, chiefly in wonder at the sad and surprising contrast which they exhibit¹².

It appeared clearly that Palestine, far from being a *terra incognita*, was a *terra sancta* and that what British explorers and geographers were looking for in Palestine were the traces of a glorious past which formed the basis of their own culture. In other words, they were not bent on ‘discovering’ Palestine as a figure of the Other but rather intended to recognize in this foreign territory aspects of their own identity¹³. Significantly enough, Palestinian chronology was distorted to focus exclusively on Biblical and Crusader periods. In 1885, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* invited the reader to consult the article on “Israel” to learn about the history of Palestine¹⁴, while in the 1911 edition, fifteen pages were devoted to sacred and

11 W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, xv.

12 H. Murray, *The Encyclopaedia of Geography Comprising a Complete Description of the Earth*, vol. II (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1836; English edition 1846), 249.

13 In this respect, Palestine was fundamentally different from other countries of the Middle East which were often described through an orientalist paraphernalia of exotic topoi derived from the Arabian Nights. It should however be noted that it was customary for travelers in the East to find echoes of the Bible in the landscapes that they saw. Another commonplace consisted in drawing a parallel between the Bedouins and the Patriarchs of the Old Testament.

14 The article entitled “Palestine” only gave geographic information.

antique history while the period spanning from the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. to the present day was summarized in five pages. Islam and the Ottoman presence in Palestine were reduced to insignificant elements and evoked in a characteristically derogatory way.

To a certain extent, reducing Palestine to its Biblical equivalent amounted to a form of cultural appropriation. The focus on the Holy Land and sacred history indeed allowed the British to ignore the influence of other civilizations and consider that Palestine, quite simply, was theirs. At the opening meeting of the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1865, the Archbishop of York, then President of the Fund, felt entitled to say:

This country of Palestine belongs to *you* and *me*, it is essentially ours. It was given to the Father of Israel in the words: "Walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee". *We* mean to walk through Palestine in the length and in the breadth of it, because that land has been given unto us. It is the land from which comes news of our Redemption. It is the land towards which we turn as the fountain of all our hopes; it is the land to which we may look with as true a patriotism as we do in this dear old England, which we love so much¹⁵.

As a consequence, the Arab inhabitants of Palestine rarely appeared in geographical studies of Palestine and when they did, their manners, clothes and habits were systematically compared with those of Biblical characters. As was noted in 1865 by George Grove, the Secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund, a work minutely describing "the manners, habits, rites and language of the present inhabitants" was urgently needed because:

Many of the ancient and peculiar customs of Palestine are fast vanishing before the increasing tide of Western manners, and in a short time the exact meaning of many things which find their correspondences in the Bible will have perished¹⁶.

Likewise, in the photographs taken at the time, the Palestinians appeared in traditional costumes that made them look like Patriarchs of the Old Testament. After being colorized, these photographs often found their way into cheap editions of the Bible intended for children's use¹⁷.

Because it ignored the Ottoman and Arab characteristics of Palestine and instead underlined the Biblical elements which made sense to the British protestant

15 *Report of the Proceedings at a public meeting, 22 June 1865*, 8, PEF/1865/2. Quoted by E. Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture*, 7-8.

16 Grove quoted Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1837) as an exemplary work which should inspire a similar account of Palestine's customs, *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund* (1869), 1-2. This text, taken from the first quarterly statement issued by the PEF, was first published in the original prospectus of the Society, issued on October, 1st, 1865.

17 The Cassell's family edition of the *Bible* (1859) was for instance lavishly illustrated. For photographs from the period, see E. Sanbar, *Les Palestiniens, La Photographie d'une terre et de son peuple de 1839 à nos jours* (Paris: Hazan, 2004).

public, sacred geography can be perceived as a form of cultural imperialism. A few authors have already highlighted that the topographical and cartographical surveys of the Palestine Exploration Fund were in fact undertaken by Royal Engineers lent to the society by the Ordnance Survey Department of the War Office. The maps of Palestine thus produced helped the British conquer Palestine in 1917¹⁸. On the other hand, General Allenby confessed that he carefully read George Adam Smith's classic handbook, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (1894), when preparing his offensive during the First World War¹⁹. The Palestine Exploration Fund, unmistakably, was not only a learned society but also a tool to extend British imperial influence. On the spot, its scientific activities were a cover for obtaining strategic information to support British military interests.

Yet, less attention has been paid to the way in which geographical studies of Palestine contributed to an intellectual climate which helped to legitimize colonization projects. In spite of the centuries that separated modern Palestine from her Biblical past, geographers as well as travelers considered that the Holy Land had not evolved. On the one hand, this unchanging quality was positive: since the Holy Land was eternal, it was legitimate to explore it in search of a confirmation of events that had taken place centuries before. But on the other hand, Palestine's eternity could also be considered as a synonym for stillness and stagnation. True, many authors found signs of the Holy Land's past grandeur in modern Palestine but they also plainly pointed out that the times when Canaan was a "land flowing with milk and honey" were over. As was noted by an author, geographers "gaze[d] on the modern inhabitants and their abodes, chiefly in wonder at the sad and surprising contrast which they exhibit[ed]"²⁰. The numerous ruins which dotted the landscape were perceived as a sign that the population of Palestine used to be far more numerous in the past. This demographic decline was in turn explained by a fall of productivity in agriculture. This reasoning seemed to be confirmed by some of the country's arid regions²¹ with found no parallel with the luxuriance extolled in the Bible. In part, this

18 The first survey of Western Palestine was undertaken in 1871-1877 and the second, of Southern Palestine, in 1913-14. E. Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture*; J. J. Moscrop, *Measuring Jerusalem: The Palestine Exploration Fund and the British Interests in the Holy Land* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000).

19 R. Butlin, "George Adam Smith and the Historical Geography of the Holy Land: Contents, Contexts and Connections", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 14 (1988): 381-401. George Adam Smith's book remained a classic in the first half of the twentieth century. In his travel account, *A Socialist in Palestine* (1922), Ramsay MacDonald refers to George Adam Smith's book as a reliable source of information for Palestine.

20 H. Murray, *The Encyclopaedia of Geography Comprising a Complete Description of the Earth*, vol. II, 249.

21 The stress laid on the aridity of Palestine was partly due to the itinerary taken by geographers and travelers often coming to Jerusalem from Jaffa or Egypt via the Sinai. The landscapes that they crossed were indeed desert. By contrast, the green landscapes of Galilee were rarely noted since the region was hardly ever visited by Europeans.

barrenness could be interpreted as an additional sign that the Scriptures were right. In his *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy* (1828), Reverend Alexander Keith noted that the desolation of the soil, the ruin of the cities and the expatriation of the people had all been prophesized in the Old Testament. But although his opinion fitted well into the agenda of sacred geography, many authors provided a different explanation for Palestine's deterioration. They took the opposite view that natural conditions like climate and potential fertility of the soil could not have changed. Therefore, instead of ascribing the responsibility for Palestine's decline to God, they argued that it must have been caused by man. In the *British Cyclopaedia* published in 1838, the author for instance blamed the laziness of the natives:

Palestine was one of the most fertile countries of the old world. Wine, salt, wild honey, balsam, olives, dates, figs and pomegranates; with large flocks and herds, were its productions. The alternation of mountain and valley, the temperate climate, the numerous streams and the rains of spring and autumn caused its fertility. Its present barrenness arises from the inactivity of its inhabitants, who obtain their living either from the pilgrims or as robbers²².

But more frequently, the origin of all the evils which plagued the Holy Land was said to be Ottoman despotism. In his conclusion to the first part of the *Survey of Palestine* undertaken for the Palestine Exploration Fund, Claude Conder wrote:

To sum up, the change in Palestine is one of degree only and not of kind. The curse of the country is bad government and oppression. Justice and security of person and property once established, Palestine would become once more a land of corn, vine and olives, rivalling in fertility and in wealth with its ancient condition, as deduced from careful study of such notices as remain to us in the Bible and in the later Jewish writings²³.

The Ottoman Empire was indeed proverbial for unfair taxation, harsh conscription and a corrupt administration²⁴ and the latter provided a convenient explanation for the desolation of the country. Yet, in this passage, Conder clearly indicates the possibility of restoring the Holy Land to its ancient magnificence.

22 *The British Cyclopaedia of the Arts, Sciences, History, Geography, Literature, Natural History, and Biography*, ed. C. F. Partington, vol. V (London: WM.S. Orr and Co., 1838), 187.

23 C. R. Conder, *The Survey of Western Palestine, Special Papers* (London, 1881), 207.

24 According to William Thomson, these had been longstanding characteristics which already cursed the country in Biblical times. W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book. Biblical Illustrations drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land* (London & New York: Harper and bros., 1860), 497-498. Comments about Ottoman bad government had been commonplace since the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, although the Ottoman Empire underwent significant reforms under the *Tanzimat*, the Europeans continued to judge that these changes were not far-reaching enough. Paradoxically, some of the characteristics which they castigated, notably the "oppressive" nature of the pashas' rule, were in fact a result of the reforms initiated by the Ottomans under European pressure.

In another article, Conder implied that, provided they were rid of Ottoman despotism, the Arab peasants of the region possessed all the necessary qualities to regenerate their country:

The peasantry are an energetic and very stalwart race, with immense powers of endurance, seasoned to the climate, temperate, good-natured and docile. They are accustomed to obey their chiefs and elders, and when they see any prospect of fair pay and just taxation they can be made to work very hard, as has been proved in more than one instance. They are a people capable of great improvement, their faults are those of an oppressed race, and their natural quickness and power of adaptation would render it easy to accustom them to European improved methods of agriculture if gradually introduced and not forced upon them²⁵.

However, Conder underlines the natural docility of the peasants and seems to suggest that the Arabs would need European guidance to cultivate their country properly (“they can be made to work very hard”). Conder then asserted that the Jews were the best suited people to “direct” the Arab peasants:

none are better fitted to carry out these improvements and to direct the present population in agriculture than the descendants of the ancient conquerors who made hewers of wood and drawers of water of the present aboriginal population. The energy, industry and tact, which are so remarkable in the Jewish character, are qualities invaluable in a country whose inhabitants have sunk into fatalistic indolence; and Palestine is still so cheap a country and requires a capital so moderate for investment, that it may well attract the attention of the middle class among its rightful owners²⁶.

Beyond the claim that the Jews were the “rightful owners” of the country, the respective characteristics attributed to both Arabs and Jews by Conder justified his colonization project: the Jews were industrious, rich and tactful capitalists who also possessed linguistic skills that would help them to communicate with the natives while the Arabs, on the other hand, were fated to remain passive and indolent if not stirred by some masters. While the Jews meant progress and modernity, the Arabs stood for apathy and stagnation. Conder’s proposal illustrates how the suggestion made in sacred geography that the Holy Land should be restored to its past grandeur, could be easily reconciled with the millenarian project of the restoration of the Jews²⁷. British explorers had come to a diagnosis which blamed the Ottomans and the antidote that they proposed consisted in taking the Jews back to Palestine, not for the accomplishment of the prophecies but, more simply because Jews, as the medium of European values,

25 C. R. Conder, “The Present Condition of Palestine”, *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* (Reprinted from the *Jewish Chronicle*), (1879): 10-11.

26 Conder, “The Present Condition of Palestine”: 7-8.

27 Born out of a literal reading of the prophecies, this idea involved the conversion of the Jews to Christianity as well as their gathering in the Holy Land. Such were, according to Scripture, the conditions of the advent of God’s Kingdom on earth.

could make Palestine blossom again. Although the protestant doctrine of the restoration of Israel had gained a new lease of life with the establishment of the British consulate in Jerusalem²⁸, by the end of the nineteenth century, in Britain, millenarians started to be considered with suspicion. They were often viewed as fanatics whose theories were little more than Christian eccentricities²⁹. And it is worth noting that, even if Conder's scheme echoed plans for the restoration of Israel, he himself never used religious arguments. Likewise, in *The Land of Gilead*, Laurence Oliphant also defended the colonization of parts of Palestine by Jews by using, political and diplomatic arguments, even though he was a convinced millenarian himself. In his introduction, he underlined that his project had "no connection whatever with any popular religious theory on the subject" and that it was unfortunate that Jewish colonization was now associated with a "sentimental" religious theory which discredited it:

It is somewhat unfortunate that so important and strategical a question as the future of Palestine should be inseparably connected in the public mind with a favourite religious theory. The restoration of the Jews to Palestine has been so often urged upon sentimental or Scriptural grounds, that now, when it may possibly become the practical and common-sense solution of a great future difficulty, a prejudice against it exists in the mind of those who have always regarded it as a theological chimera, which is not easy to remove. The mere accident of a measure involving most important international consequences, having been advocated by a large section of the Christian community, from a purely Biblical point of view, does not necessarily impair its political value. On the contrary, its political value once estimated on its own merits and admitted, the fact that it will carry with it the sympathy and support of those who are not usually particularly well-versed in foreign politics is decidedly in its favour. I would avail myself of this opportunity of observing that, so far as my own efforts are concerned, they are based upon considerations which have no connection whatever with any popular religious theory on the subject³⁰.

Being aware of the stigma attached to the "theological chimera" of the restoration of Israel, Oliphant took great pains to demonstrate that what he

²⁸ Thanks to the protection afforded by the British consul, societies which had tried to convert Jews in Britain, where their enterprise met limited success, could now settle in Jerusalem and direct their attention towards the Jews of Palestine. M. Scult, *Millennial Expectations and Jewish Liberties: A Study of the Efforts to Convert the Jews in Britain up to the mid-nineteenth century* (Leiden: Brill, 1978). In 1841, the Anglican episcopate founded jointly with Prussia put the conversion of the Jews on its agenda. Although the initial motivations for such a project were spiritual, Britain had rapidly grasped the imperial advantages that could accrue to her if she took Jews under her wing. Indeed, while Russia was the traditional guardian of the Orthodox Christians and France that of the Catholics, Britain lacked a Protestant community of protégés in Palestine. Thus, by affording protection to the Jews of Palestine, Britain could intervene in the Ottoman Empire and thus vie with the other European powers. See A. Schölch, "Britain in Palestine, 1838-1882: The Roots of the Balfour Policy", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 22, 1, (Autumn 1992): 39-56.

²⁹ E. Bar-Yosef, "Christian Zionism and Victorian Culture", *Israel Studies*, 8, 2, (Summer 2003): 18-44.

³⁰ Laurence Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead, With Excursions in the Lebanon* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1880), xxxiii.

had at heart was not the accomplishment of the prophecies but the redemption of the Holy Land. In order to appear as practical and rational, he chose to emphasize the economic, political and strategic aspects of Jewish colonization instead of an eschatological discourse concerned with the end of times. In other words, Oliphant laid stress on the restoration of Canaan (the territory) instead of the restoration of Israel (the people).

Nineteenth-century British geographical studies of the Holy Land therefore represented an unconscious strategy of dispossession. Sacred geography gave evidence that, since the bygone days of the Bible, Palestine had undergone a considerable decline for which the Ottomans were held responsible. It therefore suggested that the restoration of the Holy Land would only be possible if the Turks were ousted and replaced by Palestine's rightful owners, the Jews. To justify this project, rational arguments were elaborated and were, unsurprisingly, taken up by Jewish Zionists. In a letter to the Mayor of Jerusalem written almost twenty years after Conder's or Oliphant's texts, Theodor Herzl defended Zionism in economic terms:

The Zionist idea of which I am the humble servant, has no hostile tendency toward the Ottoman Government, but quite to the contrary this movement is concerned with opening up new resources for the Ottoman Empire. In allowing immigration to a number of Jews bringing their intelligence, their financial acumen and their means of enterprise to the country, no-one can doubt that the well-being of the entire country would be the happy result. It is necessary to understand this, and to make it known to everybody [...] ³¹.

To a great extent therefore, geographers of Palestine in the nineteenth century elaborated a rationale which contained the seeds of the future Zionist discourse.

³¹ Theodor Herzl to Yusuf Zia al-Khalidi, 19 March 1899: *From Haven to Conquest. Readings in Zionism and the Palestinian Problem until 1948*, ed. W. Khalidi (Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), 91-92.

À la quête du passé des autres: les expéditions des voyageurs Dupaix et Waldeck à Palenque (Mexique) dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle

MONIKA WEHRHEIM

Depuis *Les mots et les choses* de Foucault, les XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles sont considérés comme les siècles de l'histoire, c'est-à-dire les siècles dans lesquels la pensée historique commence à dominer la science. Il va de soi que l'épistème historique porte un grand intérêt à la recherche archéologique. Dans le cadre de cette contribution, nous allons analyser l'argumentation discursive développée à propos de l'origine des ruines de Palenque dans quelques textes qui traitent des expéditions archéologiques dans la Nouvelle Espagne. Il sera donc question de savoir comment l'histoire d'un peuple indigène non-européen est construite par deux chercheurs européens à partir de la découverte et de l'examen de quelques ruines impressionnantes cachées dans la forêt vierge américaine.

I. LES EXPÉDITIONS ARCHÉOLOGIQUES AU MEXIQUE

Depuis la conquête et le début de la colonisation de l'Amérique, la couronne espagnole accumule le plus de savoir possible afin de connaître et de pouvoir contrôler son territoire récemment conquis (cf. Scharlau 1982). Mais ce n'est qu'au 18^e siècle, dans l'esprit des Lumières, que l'on commence à s'intéresser aussi aux antiquités indigènes et aux recherches archéologiques, ce qui est encouragé par le roi Charles III

d'Espagne¹. D'une certaine manière, l'intérêt du pouvoir colonial à mieux connaître les antiquités américaines rejoint celui des élites créoles des pays américains qui cherchent, comme p. ex. le jésuite Javier Clavijero dans sa fameuse *Historia Antigua de México* (1780), à revaloriser leurs propres cultures notamment par opposition à ce discours philosophique européen (p.ex. de de Pauw, Buffon et Robertson) qui niait toute disposition et capacité de développement culturel en Amérique espagnole².

II. LES PREMIERS PAS VERS PALENQUE

Le site archéologique de Palenque, qui est aujourd'hui l'un des plus connus et visités du Mexique, a dormi du sommeil de la Belle au bois dormant pendant presque toute l'époque coloniale. Ce n'est qu'en 1773 que la première expédition de Ramón Ordóñez y Aguiar (de la région du Guatemala actuel) fut organisée. Quand, par la suite, on jugea que le site pouvait avoir un certain intérêt, le gouverneur du Guatemala demanda une expertise à José Antonio Calderón qui y répertoria 215 maisons et un palais. Calderón estima que l'ensemble était l'œuvre des Romains puisqu'on y trouvait un décor de demi-lune comme on en avait trouvé à Rome³.

Après une deuxième expédition menée par Antonio Bernasconi, une étude fut envoyée au roi Charles III qui fit faire d'autres investigations. C'est surtout Juan Bautista Muñoz (1745-1799), chroniqueur officiel des Indes, qui se rendit tout de suite compte de l'importance de la découverte. Selon lui, les ruines pourraient contenir des informations quant à l'origine et au passé des Américains⁴ – question largement discutée depuis l'époque de la découverte⁵. Pourtant, il considérait que les bâtisseurs appartenaient à une époque beaucoup antérieure à la conquête. Comme la plupart de ses contemporains, il estimait que ce n'étaient pas les Indiens mais un peuple hautement civilisé qui avait construit les bâtiments⁶.

Grâce à Antonio del Río, qui écrivit son rapport sur Palenque lors de son expédition en 1787, le site commença à être connu en Europe. Lorsque le document fut publié en 1822 à Londres, il éveilla l'intérêt des chercheurs John L.

1 En tant que vice-roi de Naples, Charles III avait déjà guidé de complexes travaux de fouilles archéologiques à Pompéi (à partir de 1743). On sait bien que depuis cette époque, les voyages scientifiques dans des pays lointains, qui visent à approfondir le savoir en géologie, minéralogie, botanique et zoologie mais aussi en anthropologie, sont très répandus (cf. Moravia 1977, Fendler 2006). Avec Charles III, un nouvel intérêt entre en jeu et la recherche archéologique s'étend aussi à l'Amérique (cf. Alcina Franch 1988: 258-265).

2 Cf. Gerbi 1955, Quesada 1982.

3 Cf. Bernal 1979, 79-81.

4 Cf. Muñoz 1946, 42.

5 Cf. Huddleston 1967.

6 Cf. Bernal 1979: 81-82, Muñoz 1946, 42-43

Stephens et Frederick Catherwood – considérés plus tard comme les découvreurs de Palenque. En ce qui concerne la question des constructeurs du site, del Río défend une thèse tout à fait originale: les Phéniciens, les Grecs ou les Romains sont venus en Amérique où ils ont transmis leur savoir aux indigènes. Il écrit:

Y por tanto es de recelar, que alguna de estas naciones adelantaron sus conquistas hasta este país, en el cual se conoce no permanecían más tiempo que el que bastó a estas gentes indias, para retratar sus ideas y tomar un rudo y tosco estilo de las artes que les querían enseñar⁷.

Par conséquent, le chercheur, un créole de la Nouvelle Espagne, était d'avis que les Indiens avaient été instruits par ces peuples de l'antiquité méditerranéenne et avaient essayé de copier de leur mieux l'art de leurs maîtres. Comme le démontre Ignacio Bernal, on a ici une certaine réconciliation de deux thèses contradictoires (la thèse diffusionniste et la thèse américaine) en ce qui concerne l'origine des ruines: certes, les ancêtres des Indiens, qui vivent dans la région de Palenque, sont considérés comme les constructeurs des bâtiments, mais non pas comme les inventeurs des techniques de construction, ni comme les créateurs originaux de l'art.

III. GUILLAUME DUPAIX (1750-1817)

Les nouvelles de la découverte d'une cité cachée et énigmatique et les récits des créoles américains atteignirent la cour espagnole et provoquèrent des expéditions consacrées aux recherches archéologiques. Une des premières descriptions de Palenque est celle de Guillaume Dupaix.

Par ordre de Charles IV, Dupaix – descendant d'une famille autrichienne qui vivait en Flandres – parcourt le Mexique pendant trois années et visite et décrit différents sites archéologiques de la Nouvelle Espagne. Tout au long de ses expéditions, il est accompagné du peintre Luciano Castañeda qui va fournir de nombreux croquis des sites, des objets trouvés, des bas-reliefs, des glyphes etc. Donc, nous pouvons qualifier toute l'entreprise de projet d'inventorier et de cataloguer les antiquités mexicaines.

Si nous nous concentrons particulièrement sur la description de Palenque, c'est parce que ce lieu caché dans la forêt du Petén provoque un trouble singulier dans les milieux scientifiques passionnés pour les antiquités américaines – un trouble comparable peut-être au vertige provoqué par les lignes de Nazca au Pérou qui forment de grandes images lorsqu'on les voit de haut, c'est-à-dire d'avion. On se souvient très bien de l'hypothèse de Däneken qui y voyait les traces d'une communication oubliée avec des extraterrestres.

En ce qui concerne Palenque, les voyageurs se posaient une question analogue puisqu'on se demandait qui pouvait avoir construit cette vaste cité dans la forêt.

⁷ del Río 1948, 65.

Le problème spécifique que posait Palenque, c'est qu'apparemment la ville avait été abandonnée avant l'arrivée des Espagnols⁸. Pendant que les conquérants et les chroniqueurs décrivaient encore la vie culturelle et les pratiques religieuses ayant lieu sur les pyramides de Cholula et du Mexico-Tenochtitlán, Palenque n'a nullement été mentionnée par les conquérants espagnols. Par ailleurs, dans les régions où vivaient et vivent encore les Mayas, l'éradication des traditions culturelles était plus radicale que dans la région des Aztèques. Pendant qu'au Mexique central les missionnaires, comme p.ex. Bernardino de Sahagún, entreprenaient des recherches ethnographiques pour mieux connaître la culture et la religion des Indiens, et que le premier vice-roi de la Nouvelle-Espagne, Antonio de Mendoza (1496-1552), demandait aux Indiens d'écrire leur histoire à travers leur peinture (c'est ainsi qu'on nommait alors les glyphes aztèques), ce qui donna naissance au fameux code Mendoza (1540), au Yucatan et au Guatemala, l'évêque Diego de Landa fit brûler tous les codes qu'il pouvait se procurer⁹.

Le fait que le lieu n'était pas connu des premiers Espagnols comme site important, la destruction des textes et de la mémoire culturelle des Mayas, tout ceci avec un fort mépris et une grande arrogance envers les Mayas de l'époque, eut pour conséquence qu'on jugea impossible que les monuments trouvés eussent été construits par les ancêtres des indigènes de la région.

La question de la provenance des monuments est aussi largement discutée par Dupaix, ce qui est d'autant plus surprenant puisque l'auteur évite normalement toute allusion spéculative pour obéir à un paradigme strictement scientifique, et – comme l'indique Alcina Franch – il a même éliminé toute sorte d'anecdote et de description du paysage de son récit¹⁰.

Mais on peut noter que l'auteur a un sujet qui revient constamment lorsqu'il décrit le lieu: ce sont l'oubli et le secret qui cachent le passé au chercheur. Le nom du lieu déjà entraîne une réflexion sur la perte de l'authenticité puisque le nom de Palenque a été attribué par les Espagnols:

Inmediatamente [...] me transferi [...] al tan celebrado sitio llamado con impropiedad Palenque Viejo, pues el nombre es nuevo, puesto posteriormente por los Españoles. Concluiremos por ultimo, que asi como desaparecieron sus primitivos moradores se llevaron con ellos su legitimo apellido. Lo unico que de ésta antiquisima nacion nos resta en [sic] el lastimoso Esqueleto o norma de sus bellas artes, que lla [sic] no ha de renacer¹¹.

Ainsi, en mentionnant la perte du nom propre du lieu, il traite, dès le début du récit sur Palenque, le sujet de l'oubli et du peuple inconnu dont il ne reste plus

⁸ On date le déclin de Palenque entre la fin du 8^e et le début du 9^e siècle. Les causes de l'abandon de la ville sont un sujet de discussions scientifiques.

⁹ A cause de l'autodafé de Mani en 1561, il ne nous reste que quatre codes mayas.

¹⁰ Alcina 1969, 3-4.

¹¹ Dupaix 1969, 195.

que les ruines comme témoins du passé. On voit un squelette de bâtiments – des constructions pyramidales (196), de grands escaliers (203), une tour élégante (203) – l'architecture et la répartition des monuments suit un plan et un ordre qui suscitent une admiration profonde pour les constructeurs de sorte qu'il fait l'éloge de "nuestros celeberrimos [sic] Palencanos" (201).

Mais il n'est pas facile de savoir de qui il s'agit. C'est la raison pour laquelle il demande de s'intéresser particulièrement à la recherche des armes, des outils, des céramiques. Pourtant, les fouilles n'aboutissent à rien. La recherche d'ossements s'achève également sur un résultat décevant: on ne trouve rien. Et Dupaix en conclut que lorsqu'on ne sait rien des habitudes et des mœurs des constructeurs, on ne peut même pas être sûr qu'ils ne réduisaient pas leurs défunts en cendres (203; f. 12-v).

Même si on ne trouve rien dans la terre, il reste quand même beaucoup de choses à décrire et à peindre: il avance l'hypothèse que certains reliefs seraient une sorte d'annales de l'histoire du peuple, où on peut voir des dieux, des rois, des héros (205-208; f. 15-r; t.2, lámina 27, 28, 29, 30, 31) et "alguna Diosa de aquella nacion" (212, 17-v, t.2, lámina 32). Mais comment décrire les figurations historiques d'un peuple que l'on ne connaît pas? Il est évident que cette description doit être assez spéculative au moment où Dupaix dénomme ce qu'il voit et y cherche un sens. Lorsqu'il décrit un relief qui montre quatre personnages (t.2, lámina 35), il essaie de trouver des explications pour ce qu'il voit: "notamos en sus ademanos una misma intención o voto, y se dirigen al centro del santuario y lateralmente dos de cada lado, ofreciendo al Dios o Diosa por homenaje un ramillete y una Criatura que llevan en las manos cada uno o un sacrificio de sus propios hijos o advocación de la fecundidad." (214, 18-r). On voit bien que les interprétations ne sont pas du tout évidentes: entre "sacrifier ses enfants à un Dieu" et "montrer au Dieu les enfants pour demander la protection de la fertilité", il y a une différence assez remarquable. Pourtant, Dupaix ne fige jamais un savoir assuré: il ne cesse de nous rappeler qu'on ne sait rien de la culture et de la spiritualité de la nation – de manière que "por ignorar absolutamente el conocimiento de su Ritual, nos vemos presidados a guardar el Silencio" (218, f. 39-v; t.2, lámina 39 qui montre une croix).

Dans le cas des hiéroglyphes, la tâche du déchiffrement s'avère tout aussi difficile¹², mais une fois de plus Dupaix évite les spéculations. Contrairement à d'autres explorateurs et surtout à son propre récit concernant les Aztèques et leurs écritures, Dupaix évite une comparaison avec les hiéroglyphes Egyptiens et dément même une interdépendance:

Solo estos pocos [relieves; t. 2, lámina 40, 41, 42, figs. 35, 55, 56] serviran de muestra a los sabios anticuarios, para que conozcan la forma [...] y para que también conoscan su

12 À propos des hiéroglyphes, il exprime son fort désir de pouvoir déchiffrer les signes: "Ojala nos fuera dado, la interpretacion veridica no solo de las figuras historiadas (t.2, figs. 35, 55, 56), si de los Geroglíficos, aun mas impenetrables su comprehencion como quiera que pudieron haber tenido dos artes de espresar un concepto, el uno por letras o figuras alfabeticas, [/ / f. 20-r.] y el otro por Simbolos oscuros, otros escollos" (218).

originalidad pues no tienen conexión alguna con las letras simbólicas de los antiguos Egipcios, Mejicanos. (220, 21-r)

En regardant de plus près la description d'un aqueduc (t.2, fig. 61), on peut très bien observer l'écriture hésitante de Dupaix: il nous rappelle qu'on ne sait rien des constructeurs, ni à quoi servait la construction même. Les spéculations concernant la fin et l'usage de l'appareil sont bien marquées comme telles et n'apparaissent jamais comme des certitudes.

Ignoramos como otras muchas cosas, de esta antigua Nacion a que se destinaba esta obra hidrolica: al parecer, para conservar el agua limpia y fresca, para baños publicos, o sea en fin de facilitar el paso o la union de un barrio con otro barrio, a manera de un Puente de una estrema anchura, en el tiempo de su mayor poblacion, las ruinas inmensas esparcidas en un terreno dilatado y casi todas Sepultadas ofrecen un Espectaculo interesante a la imaginación de un anticuario (223).

De cette façon, à plusieurs reprises il insiste sur son non-savoir mais en même temps il nous invite à participer à quelques spéculations des antiquaires qui sont quasiment tout de suite mises entre parenthèses.

En comparaison avec l'esprit positiviste et très peu spéculatif qui (comme on l'a vu) domine dans le texte de Dupaix, sa thèse sur l'origine des Palencanos est assez étonnante car apparemment hautement spéculative. Dupaix présente la thèse de l'Atlantide, civilisation légendaire à laquelle remonte, selon lui, l'origine des Palencanos¹³.

Selon Dupaix, les habitants de l'Atlantide auraient migré vers l'Ouest où ils auraient introduit l'art et le savoir de leur culture. Ce style se serait mêlé aux cultures préexistantes du lieu, de sorte qu'on y trouve des éléments qui ressemblent à l'art des Romains et des Grecs en même temps qu'il met en relief une originalité sans comparaison. Pour aller un peu plus loin, on pourrait affirmer que Dupaix nous présente l'idée d'un métissage culturel remontant à la préhistoire du continent. Mais, à la différence de del Río qui a avancé une thèse similaire, Dupaix nous présente une origine engloutie par la mer et par conséquent marquée d'un certain flou.

Quand il s'agit de comparer le style architectonique de Palenque avec celui des autres peuples mexicains, l'auteur arrive à la même conclusion: il constate une telle originalité qu'il exclut toute relation culturelle avec les Mexicains et les Zapotèques. Et s'il découvre des ressemblances entre les Mexicains et les

13 Il explique sa thèse de l'Atlantide comme origine de Palenque de la façon suivante: "No me haria fuerza en creer que la transmigracion fuere antes o en el mismo acto convulsivo de la Naturaleza dando sin embargo tiempo y lugar a una porcion de sus moradores, huir del proximo y eminente peligro y forzados tal vez por las impulsiones irresistibles de los vientos generales a seguir el rumbo Occidental, llevando consigo las semillas de las artes las que en un clima favorable, tomaron raizes y pie, y con el curso del tiempo florecieron y fructificaron admirablemente como consta por sus obras arquitectadas y Esculpidas, lo que prueva la remota antiguedad de dichas obras, es haber llegado en ellas a un grado magistral, pues la Suma lentitud con que se propagan las artes, y ciencias sin auxilio (f. 23-r.) conocido requieren una Serie de muchos Siglos" (224).

Egyptiens (p.ex. les pyramides) et entre les Zapotèques et les Mexicains, il n'en va pas de même pour Palenque et il insiste sur l'originalité des œuvres qui ne doivent rien à aucune autre nation célèbre du globe ("las obras Palencanas son originales y no son deudoras a ninguna nacion de las celebradas del Orbe", 229). Mais en plus, les bâtisseurs de Palenque n'ont rien en commun avec les habitants actuels, de sorte que Palenque est tout à fait unique au monde, ses origines ont disparu et ses constructeurs se sont perdus dans les ténèbres de l'histoire.

Malgré son insistance sur l'originalité du style et sur l'incertitude de tout savoir concernant l'origine des constructeurs de Palenque, Dupaix n'arrive jamais à se libérer vraiment d'un fondement eurocentriste. Il constate une originalité mais ne cesse de chercher des liens avec le monde classique. Ce fondement eurocentriste se manifeste p. ex. aussi dans les analogies entre les hommes disparus et les coquilles et les fossiles qui venaient toujours d'Orient:

Se podria comparar estas antes perdidas, a ciertas especies de conchas marinas, o las muelas de animales fosiles, cuyos analogos vivos no parecen, o se perdieron para siempre. Pero siempre las juzgaremos procedida del oriente, pues la Naturaleza se inclina a verificar las grandes emigraciones, de este rumbo al Occidente (230).

IV. JEAN FRÉDÉRIQUE WALDECK (1766-1875)

Il est encore plus surprenant que Dupaix n'ait pas été capable de se libérer des modèles diffusionnistes si on compare son scepticisme avec le fameux Jean Frédéric Waldeck qui – dans ses *Descriptions des ruines de Palenque* (1866) – cherche sans cesse et partout des analogies qui relient Palenque à l'Orient et à la région méditerranéenne dans son récit et dans ses images qui vont être très critiqués par la communauté scientifique de son époque¹⁴.

En 1822, Waldeck est confronté pour la première fois aux ruines de Palenque lorsqu'il lithographie les dessins (dont l'auteur est Ignacio Armendáriz) qui accompagnent le rapport d'Antonio del Río (publié en 1822 à Londres). Pour mieux comprendre ce qu'il voit, il semble qu'il cherche des analogies qu'il trouve un peu partout dans le monde connu. En 1833, Waldeck entreprend son voyage à Palenque. À l'instar de del Río, il établit une relation entre Palenque et les ruines du Yucatán en les attribuant à une même civilisation. Pourtant, même si Waldeck décrit un ensemble culturel et livre ainsi, sans le savoir, une description de la civilisation maya, il est loin d'échapper au paradigme diffusionniste.

¹⁴ Waldeck paraît être un personnage haut en couleurs comme son récit de voyage. De temps en temps, Waldeck changeait de nom. Il est connu sous le nom de Jean Frédéric Maximilien de Waldeck ainsi que de Graf Johann Friedrich von Waldeck et il se réclamait de différents lieux de naissance: Prague, Vienne, Paris. Il est né en 1766 à Prague et décédé en 1875 à Paris. Durant sa très longue vie, il a beaucoup voyagé: il a proclamé qu'il avait participé à l'expédition de Napoléon en Egypte (ce qui n'est pas prouvé). Mais il est prouvé qu'il a travaillé à partir de 1825 pour une entreprise anglaise comme ingénieur dans les mines d'argent au Mexique et qu'il a entrepris un long voyage au Yucatan où il a visité les ruines de Palenque et d'Uxmal (cf. Baudez 1993, Brunhouse 1975, Leinen 2005).

Pendant que Dupaix constate une grande originalité, Waldeck découvre partout des relations et des analogies qui visent en même temps les cultures orientales et méditerranéennes. On sait bien que le choix des analogies, pour décrire d'autres cultures, n'est jamais neutre et indique toujours soit une valorisation soit un mépris. Indépendamment de la valeur mise en jeu, l'analogie sert toujours à intégrer l'altérité dans les paramètres d'un savoir européen.

Dès le début de la description, la comparaison avec l'Égypte est omniprésente:

Ces curieux édifices, qui rappellent l'Égypte d'une manière si frappante, sont situés près d'un cours d'eau, dont ni les Indiens ni les habitants n'ont pu me dire le nom [...]¹⁵.

Mais la comparaison avec l'Égypte ne s'arrête pas ici – l'analogie insère aussi les plus petits détails. Ainsi, Waldeck croit avoir découvert un *T* dans une muraille, qui lui rappelle le *tau* Égyptien (III se référant à la planche VI). Quelques pages, après il reprend l'idée du *tau*:

Les taus ici figurés ne traversent pas la muraille, ils ne sont pas profonds, et servaient la nuit à recevoir des lampes, dont la fumée a laissé à la partie supérieure de ces excavations des traces qu'on voit encore aujourd'hui (V, se réfère à la planche X).

Apparemment, Waldeck ne manque pas d'une imagination assez forte lorsqu'il identifie un globe ailé comme symbole du retour de l'âme à sa source chez les Égyptiens – sous le pied droit d'une statue dans laquelle il reconnaît un vainqueur (V, planche XII, à droite). Selon Baudez, on y voyait un oiseau dont la tête a disparu¹⁶.

Même si, au niveau des peintures, on peut encore remarquer d'autres types d'analogies (p. ex. le fameux bonnet phrygien sur la tête d'un Maya, planche XLII), les relations et analogies entre Palenque et les cultures méditerranéennes et l'Égypte paraissent être le point de référence clé pour Waldeck. La référence à l'Égypte est multiple: il est évident qu'on compare les pyramides et l'écriture avec celles des Égyptiens et penche même pour une relation directe. Mais – comme on l'a vu – cette comparaison inclut aussi de petits détails des bas-reliefs. Dans sa préférence pour les analogies avec la culture ancienne des Égyptiens se reflète la nouvelle mode du 19^e siècle: à savoir l'Égyptomanie¹⁷.

V. CONCLUSION

On voit bien que les Européens du début du XIX^e siècle ont toujours du mal à imaginer une culture qui se soit développée indépendamment de l'Europe ou bien du monde

¹⁵ Waldeck 1866, II. Selon Baudez, on trouverait encore d'autres comparaisons, p. ex. des figures et planches qui font allusion aux dieux hindous Vishnou et Brahmà (Baudet 1993: 76-78, fig. 8, 9). Cette référence asiatique fait défaut dans notre édition.

¹⁶ Baudez 1993, 110.

¹⁷ Cf. Baudez 1993, 18

connu depuis l'âge biblique ou de l'antiquité européenne. Loin d'être remis en question ou contesté, le paradigme diffusionniste qui remonte aux premiers conquérants et aux chroniqueurs du XVI^e siècle est adapté et varié selon les nouveaux besoins, c'est-à-dire que le diffusionnisme aussi a ses modes. Mais si l'Égyptologie exerce une séduction puissante au début du XIX^e siècle, ce n'est pas seulement parce que l'Égypte a toujours fait partie du répertoire diffusionniste et a joué de tout temps un rôle central dans les projections européennes¹⁸. Il y a un autre aspect qui entre en jeu.

Depuis l'expédition de Napoléon (1798) et le déchiffrement des hiéroglyphes par Champollion (1822), l'Égypte a beaucoup perdu de son caractère énigmatique. Elle est devenue alors le symbole du pouvoir de l'esprit scientifique européen – capable de découvrir et de comprendre le passé des autres cultures, des cultures perdues et oubliées par les habitants des lieux. On peut constater qu'avec l'Égypte, une autre culture non-européenne entre en jeu comme point de référence à la culture indigène. De cette façon, l'esprit scientifique européen est présenté comme le seul capable de résoudre les problèmes posés par les ruines, les témoins silencieux du passé. Ainsi, au moment de son déchiffrement, l'Égypte est conçue comme un objet d'étude de la part de l'esprit européen. Ce succès scientifique conduit à d'autres procès de déchiffrement. Que les cultures des autres soient déchiffrables, voilà l'idée qui se traduit aussi dans l'analogie entre l'Égypte et Palenque. En reliant entre eux les peuples non-européens et la recherche de leur histoire respective, le monde européen se replie sur lui-même et marque son altérité – concept qui, plus tard, va se traduire dans une discipline comme l'ethnologie.

Mais pourquoi Dupaix avait-il choisi un terrain mythologique comme l'Atlantide pour désigner l'origine des Indiens? D'une part, à l'époque de son voyage, l'Égyptomanie n'est pas encore aussi répandue qu'au temps de Waldeck. D'autre part, il s'est déjà servi de l'analogie Égyptienne en décrivant les cultures aztèque et zapotèque. Pour lui, Palenque paraît être un lieu extraordinaire qui échappe à toute comparaison. C'est un lieu a-historique – qui surgit au milieu d'une terre sans histoire et sans culture. Comme le dit Bernal en traitant le cas de Prescott, l'évolution était souvent niée puisqu'on ne se demandait jamais comment se transformait une société rurale en une société urbaine et vice versa:

[...] hubo que importar pueblos anteriores más civilizados, lo que elimina la necesidad de investigar un desarrollo cultural local (116).

C'est-à-dire qu'il était plus facile d'introduire un concept mythologique et vague comme l'Atlantide pour expliquer l'apparition et la chute d'une civilisation que de fournir une explication historique. Dans cette perspective, l'Atlantide deviendrait alors une métaphore pour le flou, l'impossibilité de fixer des liens fiables à partir des objets trouvés dans les fouilles archéologiques et refléterait, d'une certaine manière, l'incertitude du savoir sur Palenque qui évite de mettre en question les modèles parcourus.

18 Cf. Hartog 1980.

Le troisième point à souligner est enfin le fait que, dès que les Américains forment des nations indépendantes, le paradigme diffusionniste se dissout. C'est un Américain des Etats-Unis, Stephens (avec son compagnon anglais Catherwood) qui, pour la première fois en 1841, conteste la théorie diffusionniste et désigne les Mayas, c'est-à-dire les habitants de la région, comme les véritables constructeurs des bâtiments en affirmant que le site était l'œuvre des ancêtres des indigènes de la région même¹⁹.

Voilà qu'avec l'indépendance (des anciennes colonies anglaises et espagnoles), le centre du monde et de la civilisation ne se trouve plus en Europe ou, pour mieux dire, dans un passé commun de la région méditerranéenne. Il y a plusieurs centres historiques et les Américains réclament leur propre passé et intègrent les sites archéologiques dans leur histoire nationale respective. C'est ainsi que le rapport de Stephens va être chaleureusement reçu par les Mexicains qui cherchent à se construire un propre passé, indépendant de l'eurocentrisme, et qui eux-mêmes réclament le passé de Palenque²⁰. Palenque, après avoir été vu comme trace d'un peuple surgissant de l'antiquité méditerranéenne, retrouve une origine indigène et fait alors partie du projet de construction des nations américaines, plus concrètement du *nation building* mexicain.

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¹⁹ Cf. Stephens 1980, 381.

²⁰ Dans la revue culturelle *El Museo Mexicano*, on trouve p.ex. en 1842 un article qui considère (suivant ainsi Stephens) les Mayas comme les constructeurs de Palenque (1842: T.2, 205-207).

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Snapshotting the 'Other': images of the 'otherness' in Samuel Butler's life and work (1835-1902)

IRENE GADDO

We had better live in others as much as we can if only because we thus live more in the race, which God really does seem to care about a good deal, and less in the individual, to whom, so far as I can see, he is indifferent. After we are dead it matters not to the life we have led in ourselves what people may say of us, but it matters much to the life we lead in others and this should be our true life.

S. Butler, "Living in Others", The Notebooks

There is a peculiar heroism abroad in the world since the invention of cameras: the heroism of vision.

S. Sontag, On Photography

I.

Samuel Butler is generally known as the author of *Erewhon* to distinguish him from his two namesakes, the seventeenth-century poet, author of *Hudibras*, and the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, headmaster of the Shrewsbury public school, his grandfather. His father, Revd. Thomas Butler, was a practical and reserved man who brought up his first son Samuel for a destined career in the Anglican church. Refusing to be ordained, Samuel first left England for New

Zealand and, once he came back, he attended an art school in London with the aim of becoming a painter. Progressively disillusioned with academic training, he devoted himself to a multifarious activity as a musician, photographer and writer of pungent and far-reaching literary, artistic, religious and scientific critique¹. By family origins and educational background, Butler belonged to that intellectual élite so brilliantly portrayed by Stefan Collini². For that reason, the image of an isolated and unheard debunker of the Victorian *mores* can be regarded rather as a ‘myth’ built up by the anti-Victorian and modernist writers at the beginning of the twentieth century³. Yet the silent contempt adopted by contemporary critics towards many of Butler’s writings is as well-known as it is the form of sneer expressed by other critics in front of his shifting, sharp irony and the difficulty of positioning him in the context of Victorian literature⁴.

Among the growing tendencies toward specialization in Victorian times, Butler remained an outcast. His contemptuous remarks aimed at scholars, experts and the whole academic establishment, consciously shut him out of intellectual circles. In opposition to the officially recognized centers of learning and training, he sided himself with the out-of-date tradition of the eighteenth-century polymath, the amateur escaping every disciplinary definition⁵. Far from isolated himself from his own age, his writings voiced the increasing sense of discomfort and anxiety in front of the unresolved ambiguities and growing contradictions of the first industrialized country and Imperial world power. Even though

1 *Samuel Butler: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him*, eds. H.-P. Breuer and R. Parsell (New York-London: Garland, 1990); *Samuel Butler, Wollschwein und Tafelsilber. Notizen eines viktorianischen Querdenkers*, hrsg. Studententeam der Freien Universität Berlin unter der Leitung von M. Pfister (Passau: Stutz, 2005). For recent biographical works, see: L. M. Holt, *Samuel Butler, Revisited Edition* (Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall & Co., 1989); P. Raby, *Samuel Butler: A Biography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1991); and *Samuel Butler, Victorian against the Grain: A Critical Overview*, ed. J. G. Paradis (Toronto [etc.]: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

2 S. Collini, *Public Moralists. Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

3 The view has been endorsed on the basis of the admiration Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster and G. B. Shaw, among others, expressed in the early Twenties. See: V. Woolf, “A Man with a View” and “The Way of All Flesh”, *Contemporary Writers* (New York: Hartcourt, 1965), 28-35; E. M. Forster, “The Legacy of Samuel Butler”, *The Listener*, 12 June 1952; G. B. Shaw, “Samuel Butler: The New Life Reviewed”, *The Works of George Bernard Shaw*, XXIX (London: Constable, 1931), 55-67.

4 This line of criticism persisted well into the 1930s, when biographical studies focused on Butler’s personal character, especially his private relations, idiosyncrasies, and sexual dispositions, rather than on his literary production. For example, M. Muggeridge, *The Earnest Atheist: A Study of Samuel Butler* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1936), and P. Henderson, *Samuel Butler: The Incarnate Bachelor* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967²). An overview of opinions on Samuel Butler is given in P. Cohen, “Stamped on His Works: The Decline of Samuel Butler’s Literary Reputation”, *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 18 (1985): 64-81.

5 Once asked to identify himself for cataloguing purposes, Butler gave a self-definition as ‘philosophical writer’. The episode is in Butler’s essay “Quis Desiderio... ?”, *Essays on Life, Art and Science* (London: Grant Richards, 1904), reprinted in S. Butler, *Collected Essays*, II (New York: AMS Press, 1968²). The text is available from the Project Gutenberg website.

sometimes Butler presented himself as a curmudgeonly English philistine, he was in fact an assiduous traveler and well-read cosmopolitan who spoke and wrote French and Italian, taught himself German well enough to follow learned controversy, translated the classics and considered Italy his second country.

Over years of travelling and sojourning outside his motherland, Butler's literary endeavors covered different genres: letters, diaries, tourist and art books. They all feature a worldview at work, conveying a notion of cultural history through encounters with landscapes, works of art, and individuals – past and present, real and imaginary. Even Butler's most famous book, *Erewhon*, is the story of a journey, one of a very peculiar kind: it is an adventure in a bizarre world representing a satire of the Victorian society in all its aspects, along the tradition of *Gulliver's Travels*⁶. Behind the 'incarnate bachelor', the eccentric and the aesthete, through the bulk of his letters, journey's accounts and travel guides, the reader discovers a restless traveler, curious and attentive, sometimes daring, always respectful of peoples and places abroad. His occasional excursions into satire and criticism are good-humored and show an intimate and direct involvement of the author with his chosen subjects.

New Zealand was Butler's first formative experience. After acquitting himself well in the first class of classic trips at Cambridge, where he ranked 12th, he worked among the poor in London in order to prepare for ordination. This provided him with his first direct experience of the 'others', whose welfare was the object of one's duty, according to the moral sensibility of Victorian educated classes. The 'culture of altruism', in its interrelations with selfishness and other human motives, belonged to the dominant Victorian culture: a system of obligations, in which others' identity was not problematized, accepting the notion of the human community as a whole⁷. From his experience in the parish of St. James's, Piccadilly, the young Butler began to elaborate a critical view on the whole system of tenets that he received from his education and gradually assumed an antagonistic position. Challenging his family traditions, he refused to be ordained: as a response to his parents' discomfiture, he declared his will to be an artist⁸. As the family letters reveal, his father finally came to terms with his decision of not becoming a clergyman and proposed a compromise regarding alternative professions, since that of artist was out of question⁹. After distressful arguments (among them, Samuel's proposal to move to Liberia as a cotton-

6 *Erewhon, or Over the Range* was published anonymously in London by Trübner & Co. in 1872. Its sequel, *Erewhon Revisited*, was published in 1901.

7 Collini, *Public Moralists*, 64. Also, T. Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: British Academy, 2008).

8 As biographical studies show, Butler's experience in London affected his decision. That resolution was not taken on the basis of any kind of social criticism: it was rather his acquaintance with non baptised poor and the 'empirical' observation of the inconsistencies of his Christian upbringing that generated doubts and finally rebellion.

9 See: *The Family Letters of Samuel Butler (1841-85)*, ed. A. Silver (London: J. Cape, 1962), 88-89.

planter, which was dismissed by the father as “the wildest conceivable vision”), he succeeded in obtaining permission, and economic help, to leave for New Zealand and settle there as a sheep farmer¹⁰. The Reverend regarded this activity as socially decent and economically profitable, if well run, and so fit to earn his son the means to be independent. At the same time, it was a good chance to test his capacity to deal with real life and take advantage of the wide possibilities offered by the new colony, which was established only a decade before. In accordance with the ‘energizing myths of English imperialism’, quite popular among the masses at home, new territories overseas were then seen as lands of opportunity for the “troubled generation” of mid-Victorian upper-class young men by whom the conventional paths of employment were no longer taken for granted¹¹.

II.

The ship ‘Roman Emperor’ sailed from Gravesend on 30th September 1859 and reached Lyttelton in New Zealand at the beginning of the following year. During the voyage, and when he settled in the part of the island he named ‘Mesopotamia’, Butler wrote letters home to inform his father about the state of his new business. These letters, together with daily records and few articles for a local newspaper, formed the volume *A First Year in Canterbury Settlement*¹². The book was published in 1863 after the initiative of Reverend Butler, for he supposed that his son’s experience would be of interest for general readers at home and an inspiration for other young men willing to emigrate to Canterbury settlement, which had been started under the aegis of the Anglican clergy¹³.

Although heavily altered by the editors, *A First Year in Canterbury Settlement* is an interesting source of knowledge about Butler’s experience in the colony, the only available one, since he admitted to have destroyed all his papers related to this

10 *The Family Letters*, 67-68. Also, *The Correspondence of Samuel Butler with his Sister May*, ed. D. F. Howard (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), 38-42.

11 Collini, *Public Moralists*, 37-50. See also: K. T. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Besides the positive notion of the colony as land of chances waiting to be grasped, there were also images of opposite sign, as places of confinement, savageness, alienation. See: M. Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London; Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 3; A. Thompson, *The Empire Strikes back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the mid-Nineteenth Century* (Harlow [etc.]: Pearson; Longman, 2005); on the complexity of the British experience of empire and the shaping of a ‘dream of global supremacy’ from a different perspective, that of captivity narratives, L. Colley, *Captives. Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (London: J. Cape, 2002).

12 S. Butler, *A First Year in Canterbury Settlement*, eds. A. C. Brassington and P. B. Maling (Auckland-Hamilton: Blackwood & J. Paul, 1964; orig. ed. 1863). The text can be found on the Project Gutenberg website.

13 It would also meet the reader’s taste for adventure and travel stories. Later on, Butler dismissed the authorship of the book because of its ‘priggishness’ and numbered *Erewhon* as his ‘Opus 1’, cf. letter to Mr. Alfred Mars (1889), cit. in W. G. Bekker, *An Historical and Critical Review of Samuel Butler’s Literary Works* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1964), 96.

period abroad¹⁴. The account begins with the description of the vessel journey; although the voyage is narrated in a quite usual way for the genre (complete with emigrant *nécessaire*, advices for travelers, descriptions of voyagers' conditions and pastimes, sea storms and fish), there are humorous intervals and instances of keen observation that the author moulds in a plain, colloquial narrative style. The comic flare of the author can be glimpsed in the opening narration: the confusing scene of the crowd boarding the ship; Butler looks at the picturesque characters with a sort of snobbish detachment mingled with sympathy and subtle irony. During the journey, between his reading of Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and Liebig's *Agricultural Chemistry*, he will occupy his time by setting up a choir, directing it and inviting members of inferior classes as well¹⁵.

Upon arrival at Lyttelton, Butler did not spare time in order to find a suitable plot of land. The land rash had begun shortly before, but by the time Butler arrived, there was no unoccupied estate in Canterbury. On a good horse, one of the main characters in his narrative, he set off Westwards, into the still unexplored mountain ranges. His first home was 8 miles up a remote tributary of one of the great snow-fed rivers, deep in the mountains, far from the nearest human setting¹⁶. Wild areas of tussock slopes, bushes, wide river-beds and narrow rough gorges, sprawling glaciers and sharp peaks are not leading features in the narratives: the rough landscape provides the background where the race to claim land takes place. The main concerns are practical and economic matters: building a suitable hut, improving the farm, keeping the flock healthy, following the market's fluctuations and government's land policy¹⁷. The romanticizing, lavish descriptions of nature, by then so fashionable, have little right to existence in those wild quarters. He describes his awe at the summit of Mount Cook, truly amazed by the view from the mountain-top that he conquered after an arduous seven-hours-trek. Soon afterwards, all the suggestive power of the narrative is

14 Apart from other emigrants who mention Butler in their memoirs, which are not numerous anyway, a source of references and information is P. B. Maling, *Samuel Butler at Mesopotamia* (Wellington: R. E. Owen, 1960). This publication, supported by the National Historical Place Trust of New Zealand, offers introductory chapters to some of the remaining letters and manuscripts of Butler's period in the colony. On Butler's initial years, see the well-informed biography: Raby, *Samuel Butler: A Biography*.

15 *A First Year*, 26.

16 The description of the struggle against the wild and the quest for usable land closely reminds of the opening of *Erewhon* and its location, evidently inspired by the rugged landscape of New Zealand, cf. J. Jones, *Cradle of Erewhon, Samuel Butler in New Zealand* (Parkville: Melbourne University Press, 1960).

17 After the failure of a first expedition, Butler straightforwardly noted: "our motives were pounds, shilling and pence, and where this failed us, we lost all excitement and curiosity". Little hankering was felt in gazing at the virgin environment and in the pleasure of discovery *per se*. Since the priority was mainly economic in kind, more enthusiastic tones were displayed in the long descriptions of the tenure. The letters to his father are extremely detailed about the business, from botanical and zoological aspects to material and economic improvements of the sheep-farming.

reversed by a most mundane remark, which cannot but create a satirical effect of the breathless vista and, by contrast, of the different values of the colonial man:

I am forgetting myself into admiring a mountain which is no use for sheep. This is wrong. A mountain here is only beautiful if it has grass on it. Scenery is not scenery – it is ‘country’, *subaudita voce* ‘sheep’. If it is good for sheep, it is beautiful, magnificent, and all the rest of it; if not, it is not worth looking it¹⁸.

After discussing the different methods to make money in the colony, he describes life in the back-country in full detail: discovery expeditions, dangers of a completely unknown environment, hardships, routine activities and tough way of living, lacking the essential comfort. Episodes of everyday life, where gentlemen are described breakfasting “mutton and bread” at dawn, washing themselves in streams and lakes, attending their flock after having quizzed the boys at the city College or read Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*, depict vibrant highlights of colonial life¹⁹. Such a frugal living, “between that of a dog and an emperor”, played an indelible part in the development of Butler’s character. As he wrote to his aunt in September 1861, it was for him a way out of an increasingly oppressive situation at home, the only chance to gain the means to follow his aspirations without depending on his father’s financial control²⁰. In the new country, however, Butler preserved his gentleman-styled manners as far as he could. Robert B. Booth, one of Butler’s employees, recorded his memories of a hard life with a tinge of British glamour under Butler’s management. Butler is recalled as “a literary man”, his sitting-room filled with books, easy-chairs and a piano²¹.

Butler enjoyed the company of neighbors and occasional visitors and seemed satisfied with his new homestead: he finally had acquired whatever a “mortal can desire”. Yet, he added, he missed “the intellectual society of clever men”²². He

18 *A First Year*, 63. The same denigration towards the awe-inspiring panoramas and scorn for ‘purple’ prose will return in Butler’s autobiographical posthumous novel *The Way of All Flesh* (1903).

19 A life that to many emigrants, used to that ‘training of well-made characters’, i.e. the late Victorian public schools, ought not have appeared so harsh. Even Butler, whose health had been often weak, wrote to his family that he had never felt so fine before. Cf. *The Family Letters*, 93-106, esp. 104; *A First Year*, 37, 48-49, and “Our Emigrant”, article written in 1861 for *The Eagle*, the St. John’s College journal, reprinted in *A First Year*, 129-130. See also the two-volume biography by Butler’s inseparable friend, his ‘Boswell’, H. Festing Jones, *Samuel Butler, Author of Erewhon (1835-1902): A Memoir, with Bibliography*, I (London: Macmillan, 1919), 87.

20 Samuel wrote long letters to explain his reasons against his father’s objections. The strict attitude and the lack of sympathetic feelings notwithstanding, Canon Butler’s biggest worry was to save his son from taking impulsive and unconsidered decisions, cf. *The Family Letters*, 62-90.

21 R. B. Booth, *Five Years in New Zealand (1859-1864)* (London: J. Hammon & Co., 1912), cit. in Maling, *Samuel Butler at Mesopotamia*, 26-27. The complete text of Booth’s memoirs can be found on the Project Gutenberg website. On colonial experience in New Zealand: I. Hunter, *Age of Enterprise: Rediscovering the New Zealand Entrepreneur, 1880-1910* (Auckland, N. Z.: Auckland University Press, 2007).

22 Cf. Samuel Butler to his aunt Mrs. Philip Worsley, September 19, 1861, in *The Family Letters of Samuel Butler*, 102-106.

entertained other farmers who came to visit Mesopotamia and left positively impressed by Butler's hospitality and manners. In his turn, Butler appreciated them for their lack of pretension, plain manners and sheer cordiality. In the abovementioned letter to his aunt, he states: "I like the squatters here as a class very much. They are fine fellows. There is more liberal feeling prevalent here than at home. The very atmosphere seems unsectarian, but on the whole sheep, horses and scab are the main topics of the day". Other annotations in his correspondence complete the picture of the first immigrants and offer some interesting information regarding the state of the colony. In the last chapter of the book, Butler repeats the opinion on his fellows, but he incidentally adds that they are fine "when they are away from drink [...] they are often admirable men save in the one point of sobriety. Their political knowledge is absolutely nil, and, were the colony to give them political power, it might as well give gunpowder to children"²³. As far as Butler became used to the colonial life and could have originally planned to settle down for a long period, he never identified himself with other colonists nor did he take interest in the social setting of his new home. Neither nature nor inhabitants were particularly interesting to him. As his observations on New Zealand flora and fauna are written in a quite literary, descriptive prose, for his father's perusal (he was an amateur botanist), so the scarce remarks on the natives do not register a deep sensitivity beyond the curiosity for the novelty and strangeness of the place²⁴.

The fact that for his dark complexion he was once mistaken for a Maori provoked a hilarious outburst in him. He did not see much of the natives whom he deemed to be on the verge of extinction. In political terms, he endorsed the government line towards them, because in his words "the only effectual policy in dealing with them is to show a bold front, and at the same time, do them a good turn whenever you can be quite certain that your kindness will not be misunderstood as a symptom of fear"²⁵. The encounter with the exotic in the foreign country is offered by Butler's visual prose in a brief portrait of a Maori woman he once saw in town, a passage excluded from the publication.

I saw her standing near the market place in X'Church the day before I left it last – her petticoat was of dark green and the upper part of her dress was scarlet – a kerchief was folded not ungracefully about her head and she was smoking a short black pipe – splendidly coloured. There she stood staring vacantly at the sky in the middle of the street – her face not unpleasing, with a gentle patient expression rather resembling that of an amiable good tempered animal than an intelligent being – her stature wonderfully tall so much so as to have won for her the appellation among her kindred of 'Mary in the clouds'. [...] My eyes were rivetted at once by a figure so

23 *A First Year*, 116.

24 Different in tone and style, much simpler and direct, were the notes written for his personal record, cf. Bekker, *An Historical and Critical Review of Samuel Butler*, 99-100.

25 *A First Year*, 115.

new & so picturesque, and the same sensation of what a jumble it all was came over me as I noticed that the name of the shop against which she stood was 'Turnbull' – Turnbull – and Mary in the clouds – there was no doubt however whose star was in the ascendant [...]²⁶.

The vividness of the image and the subtle irony emerge from the contrast between the female figure in a gaudy, Westernized dressing, and the shop sign, symbol of the advancing modernization²⁷. The rhetoric beyond Butler's scenes of local life is thus conformed to the official imperialistic discourse: far from the old notion of the good savage, the indigenes are to be treated with firm hand by their Western rulers, be domesticated – meaning, civilized – by imposing English paradigms on them. Butler's Mary-in-the-Clouds, that "amiable good tempered animal", has nothing to do with the "wild and gorgeous apparition" in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, of course: the bulk of turn-of-the-century works originating in imperial travel had yet to come, just as the pluralist notion of cultures conceptualized around 1900. The implicit equation between culture and civilization was still the dominant view, as it was displayed by the Victorian ethnological writings of E. B. Tylor or, later, J. G. Frazer²⁸.

Nonetheless, a sense of situational displacements of colonial experience arises from Butler's narrative; his prose suggests a personal quest for an idiom to cope with the incongruities of images and impressions of the colonial country²⁹. From the beginning, the narrative is built on the contrast between civilization, human activity and English tidiness, from the one hand, and the mobility and desolation of the local environment, from the other. His arrival in the colony starts with the description of the meal at the local pub, "so foreign and yet so English": the reader is immediately made aware of both the differences and similarities with England.

26 Maling, *Samuel Butler at Mesopotamia*, 43. Probably the same female figure inspired the joke about his choosing a Maori wife in the letter to his aunt: "I want a wife dreadfully here. What will you say if I marry a Maori? Unfortunately there are no nice ones in this island. They all smoke, and carry eels, and are not in any way the charming simple-minded innocent creatures which one might have hoped".

27 A similar incongruity reappears in *Alps and Sanctuaries*. In the final chapter, the description of the popular festivity in Locarno, celebrating the Virgin Mary, is darkened by big advertisements hanging around in town: at the end of the sacred procession, the advertising figures (a man in a hat smoking Richmond Gem cigarettes and a woman working Wheeler & Wilson's sewing machine) seem likely to substitute the religious images of the saints and the Madonna as new icons in the imaginative world of laymen, cf. S. Butler, *Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont and the Canton Ticino, with illustrations of the Author, Charles Gogin, and H. Festing Jones* (London: A. C. Fifield, 1881), chapter XXIV.

28 Tylor's *Primitive Culture* was published in 1871; *The Golden Bough* came out in 1890. See: G. W. Stocking, jr., *After Tylor: British Social Anthropology, 1888-1951* (London: Athlone Press, 1996), and the monographic issue of *Victorian Studies* (spring 1998) on Victorian ethnographies.

29 On this point, R. Norrman, *Samuel Butler and the Meaning of Chiasmus* (Houndmills [etc.]: MacMillan, 1986), and R. Norrman, *Wholeness Restored. Love of symmetry as a shaping force in the writings of Henry James, Kurt Vonnegut, Samuel Butler and Raymond Chandler* (Frankfurt am Main [etc.]: Peter Lang, 1998), 31-94.

To convey the unfamiliarity and diverseness of the world at the antipodes, Butler begins to place various perspectives alongside each other, drawing references, images and idiom from diverse and incongruous sources. It is the kind of style Butler would develop in his satire of the Victorian values, *Erewhon*, that world apparently similar to England, yet disturbingly different, where the sick were criminals, the colleges taught unreason, and the churches were banks³⁰.

III.

Though the cultural milieu in the colony was unsophisticated and quite tedious, living there did not stifle Butler's intellectual vitality. It was in the four years and a half that he spent there when he gathered much of the materials he then revisited in *Erewhon* and its sequel. It was there, during the long nights in his hut, where he cultivated the germs of his religious and scientific thinking, a sign that even at the antipodes it was possible to follow the issues of the day³¹. *Darwin among the machines* and *Lucubratio Ebria* were written in New Zealand and published respectively in *The Eagle* and in *The Press*³². In New Zealand, Butler began to write the pamphlet entitled *The Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as given by the Four Evangelists, critically examined*, printed afterwards in London by Williams and Norgate³³.

The quarrel with Darwin and his ideas about religion have already been examined³⁴. Nonetheless, the concepts of 'cunning', 'habit', 'unconscious memory', as treated by Butler in his attempts to restore the place of 'mind in the universe',

30 For a discussion of Butler's narrative, *Erewhon* in particular, as a Menippean satire, see: N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 1957), esp. 229-232. F. Marroni, "Nel mondo alla rovescia di *Erewhon*", *Spettri senza nome: modelli epistemici e narrativa vittoriana* (Roma: Carocci, 2007).

31 In the colony Butler began to collaborate with the local newspaper *The Press*, founded by James Edward Fitz-Gerald, the first Superintendent of the Province. In times of Fitz-Gerald's periodical leaving, Butler acted as editor in charge, see: Bekker, *An Historical and Critical Review of Samuel Butler*, esp. 12 on; Maling, *Samuel Butler at Mesopotamia*, 28-29; Holt, *Samuel Butler*, chapter 1.

32 *The Eagle* was the journal of St. John's College, Cambridge. The first essay was re-written and enlarged when he came back in London and appeared in *The Reasoner*; it was then finally elaborated in chapters XXIII, XXIV and XXV of *Erewhon*, composing "The Book of the Machines".

33 It was "the blind deference that is usually paid to the letter of Scripture", in spite of the discrepancies in it, which mostly inspired his critique and sardonic remarks, cf. *The Family Letters*, 104-105. For a revised analysis of Butler's attitude towards religion, cf. T. L. Jeffers, *Samuel Butler Revalued* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981), chapter 2.

34 See: B. Willey, *Darwin and Butler: Two Versions of Evolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), and P. Greenacre, *Quest for the Father: A Study of the Darwin-Butler Controversy* (New York: International Universities Press, 1963). More recent, D. Amigoni, "'The Written Symbol Extends Infinitely': Samuel Butler and the Writing of Evolutionary Theory", *Samuel Butler, Victorian against the Grain*, 91-112.

played such a pivotal role in the path of his intellectual development that it would be simplistic, even pretty unfair, to dismiss the issue as a mere provocation by a rancorous and ambitious amateur who was “desperately trying to say something original without possessing an original mind”³⁵. Setting apart the issue of originality, he used all his irony skills to exhibit the complexity and the infinite variety of human experience against the cult of progress and the dominant scientific episteme³⁶.

In the struggle for his own identity (against all the revered institutions of religion, family and education), he found in the Darwinian concept of evolution a potent ally and a means to debunk the foundations of received truths. His initial enthusiasm towards Darwin’s work was supposedly genuine, as suggested by his early letters³⁷. By pushing to the extreme the ideas expressed in his early essays on Darwinism, reflecting upon the consequences implicit in the theory of the ‘survival of the fittest’, Butler detected what it seemed to him a dogmatic and teleological argument at the basis of the whole scientific system. In his detection of paradoxes in the evolutionary theory, Butler discovered a less mechanical explanation in the Lamarckian idea of instinct (what Butler called ‘unconscious memory’ or ‘inherited mind’) against that of accidental mutations put forth by the new scientific orthodoxy. Reason or logic were not enough to account for the richness and complexity of human experience. From a more limited viewpoint, he was living proof of the important role that intimate inclinations and personal ambitions played in the ‘evolution’ of the individual³⁸. Such ideas were expressed in a key passage of *Life and Habit*, where a meaningful mental agent was brought to the fore and introduced as another force beside that of chance variations³⁹. He regarded evolution as a series of functional adaptations, which an organism cunningly performed for the fulfillment of its own needs. In the human domain in particular, Butler paid special attention to ‘culture’ (meant at large as an expression of peculiar needs) and its influence on the formation of identity. Against the leading anthropological theories of the day, his insights into evolutionary

35 A. O. J. Cockshut, *The Unbelievers. English Agnostic Thought, 1840-1890* (Collins: London, 1964), 105.

36 Butler deeply disliked the Crystal Palace and everything it symbolized: Britain’s pretence of grandeur and its confidence in an unlimited and positive progress. *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*, eds. J. A. Auerbach and P. H. Hoffenberg (Aldershot [etc.]: Ashgate, 2008).

37 See: Samuel Butler to Charles Darwin (13 May 1872), cit. in Holt, *Samuel Butler*, 28. On Butler’s first adherence to Darwinism and his subsequent reaction to it in the context of Victorian scientific debate, see: M. Verzella, “Darwinism and its Consequences: Machines Taking over Man in Samuel Butler’s ‘Absurd’ Tableau”, *Rivista di Studi Vittoriani*, 18-19 (2004-2005): 151-168.

38 As Ernest Pontifex, main character and Butler’s alter-ego in *The Way of All Flesh*, who is able through many experiences to break free from his family heritage and follow his own path.

39 The relations between those two dimensions were at the centre of *Luck, or Cunning?* (1886) which completed Butler’s forays into evolutionary speculations. In *The Way of All Flesh* the role of accidental processes was parodied in the episode of Christina Pontifex, Ernest’s mother, who decides important matters in her own life by playing at cards with her sister, cf. *The Way of All Flesh*, chapter 11.

processes subverted the traditional hierarchy between race, culture and identity: shifting the attention at the level of the inventive capacity in meeting conscious or unconscious requirements, he redefined the evolution of culture in Lamarckian terms and posed the questions of racial identity on a different ground. He rather focused on humans' creative and dynamic dimension, that "unconscious memory" supervising the "other departments" by which the organism is composed. It was the creative power of the mind and its possibility to work consciously on thought or reason, as on other "machinate extensions", that, in his view, granted continuity and uniqueness to human life, beyond any mechanistic or biological account⁴⁰.

Such a view Butler extended to other fields of research; in particular his works on Italy are shaped by his interest on identity in the sense that what he found striking in a piece of music, a work of art or any human process, was the creative mind behind it and the social relations which supported and gave expression to it. He first visited Italy with his family in 1843 and afterwards he paid many visits to the south, even when he was burdened with financial troubles. He found in Lombardy, Piedmont and Canton Ticino his personal "playground", a country where landscape, art and people had not yet been corrupted by what he called "priggishness", that formal adherence to conventions that he detected in his protestant and rational homeland⁴¹. Elinor Shaffer, in her *Erewhon of the Eye*, convincingly discusses how Butler, in his notes on his travel through Italy, displayed lines of thought that had begun in *The Fair Haven* and had been developed through the series of his essays on evolution⁴². Supported by an amazing photographic apparatus, she also points at the fundamental interweaving between the photographic medium and Butler's written notes, in order to understand his appeal for the oddities and 'sports' of human behavior and appearance⁴³. Photography appears to have been for Butler the ideal medium

40 On this point, see Amigoni, "The Written Symbol Extends Infinitely".

41 *Alps and Sanctuaries*: Italians are praised as "the quickest witted people in the world, and at the same time have much more of the old Roman steadiness than they are generally credited with [...] they have all our strong points, but they have more grace and elasticity than we have" (140). The same attitude is even more evident in *Ex Voto: an Account of the Sacro Monte or New Jerusalem at Varallo with some notice of Tabachetti's Remaining Work at the Sanctuary of Crea* (London: Trübner, 1888). The page numbers in the footnotes refer to the Jonathan Cape edition (1924). The English text is also available from the Project Gutenberg website. See: C. Zdanski, "Alps and Sanctuaries Revisited", *Culture*, 7 (1993): 31-45, and C. Zdanski, "Samuel Butler, Local Identity, and Periodizing of Local Italian Art: the Travel Writer-Painter's View of Art History", *Samuel Butler, Victorian against the Grain*, 223-250.

42 E. Shaffer, *Erewhon of the Eye. Samuel Butler as Painter, Photograph and Art Critic* (London: Reaktion Book, 1988). *The Fair Haven, A Work in Defence of the Miraculous Element in Our Lord's Ministry upon Earth, both as against Rationalistic Impugners and Certain Orthodox Defenders* (London: Trübner, 1873) is a parody of Christian belief where two imaginary characters discuss the veracity of miracles just in order to prove the opposite, i.e. the inconsistencies and contradictions in the Gospel on the basis of rational thinking.

43 Along with drawings, paintings and watercolours, Shaffer's book provides some 90 photographs out of more than 3000 shot by Butler during his journeys. St. John's College, Cambridge, houses Butler's materials (notes, letters, drawings, snapshots, etc.). From the college website it is possible to consult the complete list of Butler's photographs, see: <<http://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/db/node.xsp?id>

for casting his sardonic eye on others and expressing his vision of the world with a powerful visual imagination⁴⁴.

The accounts of his wandering around the alpine valleys, his sojourns in out-of-the-ways inns, and the description of the local 'low' art, reveal his curiosity about every little thing. The narrative is full of witty and colorful anecdotes and practical information on places, food and accommodation which are as integral a part of the descriptions as his comments on religion, culture, art. His attention upon the Italian Sacri Monti (Sacred Mountains), with their complex of architecture, frescoes, and sculptures featuring peculiar forms and ways of seeing, was not a mere expedient to write about something new for the English audience. On one side, Butler's choice of artists, epochs, regions and styles was a deliberate provocation against the usual itinerary of the Grand Tour; on another, the fondness of sacred representations, produced in a verist style by despised or neglected craftsmen, corresponded to a precise idea of art, its social function and its relation with reality. Moreover, the theatricality and populist literalism of the Sacri Monti were features extraordinarily well-suited to the photographic medium and to Butler's interest for the interaction between verbal and visual, real and representation.

Contemporary controversies on art criticism were the immediate context of Butler's writings on Italy. But behind the polemical purpose of offering his personal response to the diatribe on the decline of contemporary art (against the Aesthetic and Classicist movements), an implicit but no less important aim can be acknowledged by his use of images. In the opening pages of *Alps and Sanctuaries*, Butler reflects on the effect of stimulating one's way of being or line of thinking by the experience of something different, but something not *too* different⁴⁵. He considers the power of illusion and the temporary sense of departing from the usually accepted set of standards as powerful modes of filling some of the gaps in life experience. He states that "it is a bad sign for a man's peace in his own convictions when he cannot stand turning the canvas of his life upside down, or reversing it in a mirror, as painters do with their pictures"⁴⁶. The direct allusion is to the loss of critical capacities among his contemporaries who find easier to rely on ready-made and received opinions, delivered by the Church of England, the British Academy, or the Darwinian scientists⁴⁷. For Butler, cultural evolution does

=EAD%2FGBR%2F0275%2FButler>. See also J. G. Paradis, "Photography and Irony: The Samuel Butler Photography Exhibition at the Tate Britain", *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 33 (2005): 318-322, on the London exhibition dedicated to Butler between November 2002 and May 2003.

44 Shaffer, *Erewhon of the Eye*, esp. chapter 4; E. Edwards, "Samuel Butler's Photography: Observation and the Dynamic Past", in *Samuel Butler, Victorian against the Grain*, 251-286.

45 The process is different from the nonsense tradition, which confined in "disjoined world [...] removes the reader (and, indeed, the author) from the anxiety of difference", cf. A. Colley, "Edward Lear's Limerick and the Reversals of Nonsense", *Victorian Prose*, 26 (1988): 285-300.

46 *Alps and Sanctuaries*, 50.

47 The scarce consideration for the critical capacities of his contemporaries is a recurrent topic: "The public buys its opinions as it buys its meat, or takes in its milk, on the principle that it is

take place in the rare moments of exemption from imposed norms: in art from what he called “the aesthetic reign of terror”, in science from the evolutionary theory, in religion from the established dogmas.

In order to learn “what one likes and what one does not like”, it is not necessary to contemplate nor to study for hours on end, as the academics want us to believe, says Butler. In art, as in every field where the human is involved, it is the rapidity of the first impression that gives way to catch one’s inner thoughts and feelings; a more rational meditation is not excluded, but more often than not it risks blurring the whole process⁴⁸. Presenting something abnormal (i. e. out of the accepted norms), by words or pictures, forces the reader or the viewer to the perception of the unknown or undefined details, involving that ‘affective consciousness’ mentioned by Roland Barthes in his work on photography⁴⁹. The technique Butler recurrently uses is the one already seen in his youthful description of the Maori woman. A suggestive *pendant* is given in the first chapter of *Alps and Sanctuaries* by the anecdote of an Italian woman in London, who, missing the wayside shrines, says her prayers in front of a dentist’s shop. The humorous cameo is followed by remarks about the power of imagination and illusion and their role in the progress of mankind, suggesting how worthy results can rise from unworthy causes or irrational motives⁵⁰. The incongruous setting of the old female figure praying in the middle of Hampstead Road and its unfamiliar effect find more than one echo in the scenes of the life of Christ and Saints, re-enacted in the remote mountain chapels of Italian sanctuaries which Butler described in words and photographic illustrations⁵¹. The holy scenes, combining life-size statues and frescoes gazed only through grilles and peepholes, represent virtually that kind of tragicomic, paradoxical and estranging reversals of form and matter Butler was so fond of. He gives an

cheaper to do this than to keep a cow. So it is, but the milk is more likely to be watered”, S. Butler, “Public Opinion”, *The Notebooks*, ed. H. Festing Jones (London: Chatto and Windus, 1985; orig. ed. 1912). The text is available on the Project Gutenberg website.

48 *Alps and Sanctuaries*, 23-24.

49 Elements of disturbance are characteristic of the photographic representations because of their theatricality, what is called the *punctum*: R. Barthes, *La chambre claire: Note sur la photographie* (Paris: Gallimard: Seuil, 1980). On the photograph’s effects on consciousness, F. J. Raddatz, “Does a Photograph of the Krupp Works Say Anything about the Krupp Works?” (from *Die Zeit*, Feb. 3 1978), in *Conversation with Susan Sontag*, ed. L. Poague (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995), 88-96.

50 *Alps and Sanctuaries*, 27. In this passage he talks about the positive power of alcohol upon human intellectual progress, since “the human intellect owes its superiority over that of the much lower animals in greater measure to the stimulus which alcohol has given to imagination”.

51 His admiration for the primitive and popular forms of art is revealed in his letters to Italian friends and in his determination to have his writings published even at his own expense. Cf. the selection of correspondence with Italian friends A. Durio, *Samuele Butler e la Valle Sesia. Da sue lettere inedite a Giulio Arienta, Federico Tonetti e Pietro Calderini* (Varallo Sesia: Tipografia Testa, 1986), and the letters from Italy to his sister in *The Correspondence of Samuel Butler*.

example of this visual form of grotesque in a hilarious description of the search, beyond the illusionistic framework, of the true statues of Adam and Eve in the chapel of the Capture of Christ in Varallo:

On investigation, we found, against the wall, two figures dressed as Roman soldiers that evidently had something wrong with them [...]. Then the question arose, which was Adam, and which Eve? The farther figure was the larger and therefore ought to have been Adam, but it had long hair, and looked a good deal more like a woman than the other did. The nearer figure had a beard and moustaches, and was quite unlike a woman; true, we could see no sign of bosom with the farther figure, but neither could we with the nearer [...]. The drapery showed that curiosity had been already rife upon the subject, and, observing this, Jones and I gently lifted as much of it as was necessary, and put the matter for ever beyond future power of question that the farther, long-haired, beardless figure was Adam, and the nearer, moustached one, Eve⁵².

The discovery of the replacement of the original Eve with a Roman soldier and the identification of the smaller figure with Adam suggests an exchange of roles which only a farsical 'anatomical' inspection by Butler and his friend Henry Festing Jones can ascertain.

IV.

The power of the holy representation to create uncertainty and a sense of displacement in the visitor, making him wonder whether what he is seeing is real or not, is amplified by Butler's use of photography⁵³. Butler's humorous photograph of himself with the statue of Scotto (the forgotten craftsman who, for Butler, was Gaudenzio Ferrari's master) shows his self-identification with the minor, almost forgotten artist; so much is his pose similar to the terracotta statue that the distance between what is real and what it is not becomes unclear.

Beside those of the Italian chapels, most of Butler's photographs belong to the Victorian genre of street scene, portraits, and architecture. Many were taken in Italy, in places he knew well because he had stayed there for some time, like Varallo or Trapani, where he spent some months on the trails of the 'authoress'

52 *Ex Voto*, 120-122. Thanks to their friendship with the local authorities, Butler and Jones were permitted to enter the chapels of the Sacro Monte after the closing time, explore them and take pictures at their ease.

53 He first got acquaintance with photography during his days at Heatherley art school in London. Here photography was mainly used for portrait pictures in Pre-Raphaelite mode; besides, a practice of humorous photographic poses was growing in the path of the satirical tradition in painting and graphics. Butler would have been more attracted by the latter ironic development. Cf. G. Seiberling, *Amateurs, Photography and the mid-Victorian Imagination* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), L. Smith, *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry. The Enigma of Visibility in Ruskin, Morris and Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), Shaffer, *Erewhon of the Eye*, 19-26.

of the *Odyssey*, another example of the ambiguity of identification⁵⁴. Many snapshots present naive or distorted subjects and the so-called ‘imaginary portraits’ of humans likened to animals. The comical vein of these images is striking, as was in the grotesque realism of the Sacri Monti. There is a parallel between the groups because the world of the holy mountains is reflected in the photographs of peasants and townspeople of the mountain valley: the funny boy, the lame boy, the beggar, scenes of market place life, local festivals and animals. Here, another reversal is at work: hyperreal statuary and human subjects blur into each other, resulting in ambiguous and tricky meanings. The camera seems to give Butler the chance to play a sort of ‘Guess Who?’ game that the viewer has little probability to win since the joke often depends on the changeability or unlikely success of the identification. He plays with trivial details – as in the case of the statues of Adam and Eve – or insists on reading the figures not simply as ‘types’ but through a sort of ethnographic realism, as the social and cultural are read off the appearance of the figure – as in the case of one of the finest statues at Varallo: il Vecchietto (the old man) whose direct gaze and simple pose Butler re-encounters in many of the town-people portrayed in his snapshots.

Moments of strange recognition are numerous in Butler’s prose, too: in his writings he often indulges in a guessing game, identifying Rameses II with an old woman in Holborn “holding a tin cup”, Mary Queen of Scots is a lame woman wearing surgical boots “near the Horse Shoe in Tottenham Court Road”, Henry VIII runs a restaurant in Oxford Street, Falstaff is a driver “of the St. Gothard diligences” now retired, and Dante is a waiter on the Lake Maggiore⁵⁵. Butler himself gives some clues accompanying his photographs with Homeric passages or brief ironical comments. A case in point is “Snapshotting the Bishop” (1892), where in a few lines Butler conveys his sense of irreverence and the pleasure he derives in playing with visual representations:

I must some day write about how I hunted the late Bishop of Carlisle with my camera, hoping to shoot him when he was sea-sick crossing from Calais to Dover, and how St. Somebody protected him and said I might shoot him when he was well, but not when he was sea-sick. I should like to do it in the manner of the *Odyssey*:

...And the steward went round and laid them all on the sofas and benches and set a beautiful basin by each, variegated and adorned with flowers, but it contained no water for washing the hands, and Neptune sent great waves that washed over the

54 In *The Authoress of the Odyssey* (1897) Butler interpreted the epic poem as written not by a blind itinerant poet but by a Sicilian young woman he identified with Nausicaa. Revisiting one of the exemplary author for the education of the male ruling class, both in gender and in style, was a sharp indictment of Victorian establishment, which in fact considered Butler’s interpretation as scandalous. D. Bebbington, *The Mind of Gladstone. Religion, Homer and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), esp. chapter 6; M. Beard, “Why Homer Was (Not) a Woman: the Reception of the Authoress of the *Odyssey*”, *Samuel Butler, Victorian against the Grain*, 317-341.

55 S. Butler, “Ramblings in Cheapside”, *Essays on Life, Art and Science*.

eyelet-holes of the cabin. But when it was not the middle of the passage and a great roaring arose as of beasts in the Zoological Gardens, and the promised hecatombs to Neptune if he would still the raging of the waves...

At any rate I shot him and have him in my snap-shot book, but was not sea-sick⁵⁶.

For Butler, photography is like hunting, there is something aggressive in it, something that violates the intimacy of the chosen prey, an intrusion into its hiding places. At the same time, he is playing with the new medium: he mocks the supposed realism of photographs, then supported by the positivistic belief in the possibility of measuring and systematizing everything, from the objects of the outside reality to the twists of the innermost human feelings⁵⁷. From this viewpoint, Butler's uses of written and visual images can be seen on the background of that "semiotic angst of inevitable regressive effect" leaning to the dissolution of the referent's pivotal function in the Victorian *Weltanschauung*⁵⁸.

In the ambiguous, cheating dimension of the visual images, Butler found his favorite means: it gave him the chance to indulge in his inner wit, more related to speed and fugacity than to permanency and majesty of Victorian aesthetics⁵⁹. The ephemeral moment of the snapshot, along with its uncertain identification, allowed him to represent a reality which was undergoing quick changes: indeed, the multiplication of the representational modes of the real and the imaginary was casting doubts on the very notion of reality and the belief in the objective knowledgeability of it. Consequently, questions of identity too were formulated in new, precarious and fragmented forms in a process of re-negotiation that in the industrialized society would often end in forms of alienation. Recognizing the fragmentation of the human experience (a dividing process potentially *ad infinitum*, in spite of any attempt at containing it), Butler anticipated a fundamental aspect of the modernist sensibility, which elaborated on the idea of the impracticality of coping with the outer world without involving the subject's identity in a self-reflexive process. An idea which still bears profound implications nowadays.

56 S. Butler, "Snapshotting a Bishop", *The Notebooks*.

57 S. Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990; orig. ed. 1973).

58 F. Moretti, *Il romanzo di formazione* (Torino: Einaudi, 1999), 212: "un'angoscia semiotica" stemming from the end of a particular phase of Western sociability and affecting late-Victorian literature.

59 Shaffer, *Erewhon of the Eye*, 29-39.

Abstracts

GUIDO ABBATTISTA (Università di Trieste), *Trophying human 'otherness'. From Christopher Columbus to contemporary ethno-ecology (fifteenth-twenty first centuries)*

Recent studies on human live ethno-exhibitions have concentrated on their nineteenth-twentieth centuries forms, considering them as a typical expression of Western capitalist, imperialist and racialist culture and using for them the definition of 'human zoos'. This essay aims to put in a longer historical perspective the phenomena of live human ethno-exhibitions, suggesting, first, to connect them to the practice of abducting exotic humans at the epoch of the discovery of the New World, and, second, to underline their relationship with the ancient "Roman triumphal culture" and its public exhibition of stranger, exotic captives as preys and trophies on the same plane as booty of other kinds. At the same time, a continuity can be envisaged between early modern practices of ethno-exhibitions of exotic living humans and present-day episodes registered by news reporting which testify how the use of reifying human beings and making of them 'trophies' of ideological discourses of different sort – humanitarian, conservationist, ecological – has survived in many unexpected contexts even in the twenty first century and not only in the Western World.

LUCIA FELICI (Università di Firenze), *Una nuova immagine dell'Islam (e del cristianesimo) nell'Europa del XVI secolo*

The new image of Islam that spread in sixteenth-century Protestant Europe marks a fundamental shift in the relationship with the 'Other' in modern times. The analysis carried out in this essay focuses on the cultural initiatives and reflections of the non conformist scholars and reformers, Theodor

Bibliander (1506-1564) and Giovanni Leonardo Sartori (1500?-1556). These two intellectuals transformed the political role of the religious and political image of the Turkish Ottoman world. From enemy *par excellence* of the Christian society, and the very embodiment of evil, Islam became for them an object of enquiry, discussion and examination. It contributed also to the birth of a new, ethical and almost a-dogmatic, conception of Christianity. Bibliander's and Sartori's prospect was undoubtedly a Christian one. For them the final aim of apprehending the religious 'Other' still consisted in its inclusion within Christianity. However, their ideas contain in embryonic form the future developments of the modern attitude to 'other' cultures and religions and to religion itself. This research therefore points to identify some significant elements of the birth of the modern idea of religious tolerance.

GUILLERMO PÉREZ SARRIÓN (Universidad de Zaragoza), *The idea of 'naturality' in the Hispanic monarchy and the formation of Spanish identity between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries: an approach*

'Naturality', a juridical and political concept, was fundamental in creating the Spanish identity. The article examines six existing varieties of 'naturality' in Spain: in Castile, Aragón, Valencia, Catalonia, Mallorca and Navarre. It draws its evidences from legal compilations. Comparative analysis shows up that they consisted in the privilege of serving the king by being appointed to occupy secular and ecclesiastical offices. All of them evolved equally but the Navarrese 'naturality'. At the beginning of the eighteenth century three decrees suppressed all naturalities but the Castilian and Navarrese, and gave the king the full control on 'naturality' but in Navarre. The new Castilian 'naturality' had no name at first and included all others. The subsequent legislation was focused on fixing the condition of being stranger, creating a central vacuum that by usage came to be called Spanish 'naturality'.

JOAN-PAU RUBIÉS (London School of Economics), *Ethnography, philosophy and the rise of natural man 1500-1750*

In his still today indispensable *The Fall of Natural Man*, Anthony Pagden drew a distinction between a natural man 'living outside human society', as understood in the sixteenth century by those scholastic theologians and humanist rhetoricians he was concerned with, and the Enlightenment (or Rousseauian) view of natural man as a man stripped of the artificial trappings of civilization. If the history of the European intellectual encounter with the American Indian could be construed as the "fall" of the Aristotelian image of natural man as a man who had failed to fulfill its pre-determined social condition (a distinct theme from the Christian idea of the fallen condition

of mankind into sinfulness), the early modern trajectory more generally is surely the history of the opposite process, the *rise* of natural man as a central concept of the Enlightenment. While, from the perspective of cultural and intellectual history, the rise of natural man to a position of prominence is beyond any dispute, its relationship to actual encounters and ethnographies of the savage is far less clear. In any case this rise, or any previous fall that we might want to talk about, can not be seen as relating to one single idea or interpretation. Rather, what needs to be emphasized is the plurality and even ambivalence of ideas of savagism and natural man in a variety of early modern anthropologies. In this essay I shall distinguish the role of three elements in the early-modern history of natural man: classical primitivism, with its often under-appreciated theory of the origins of civilization; 'modern' ethnographies of savages (more or less fictionalized), with their increasingly appreciated complexity; and theories of natural law, natural rights and the state of nature. The latter theories constituted in some respects a self-contained debate within a theological and juridical tradition mainly concerned with legitimizing power in European contexts, but often bore upon the question of the legitimacy of conquering barbarians or settling their lands, and had enormous implications for the emergence of a theory of universal rights in modern political thought. Although the uses of ethnography could be limited and highly selective, this political debate was at some crucial points either inspired, or informed, by empirical ethnographies of savages in America, Africa and the Pacific. However, both ethnographies of savages and classical accounts of the origins of civilization could be rather ambivalent in their assessment of the extent to which civilization involved moral progress from the savage condition or, rather, a moral loss, however partial. Any answer involved solving additional questions about the point where the three elements of this complex story met, that is, the point at which natural man ceased to be simply natural man: could humans be fully human – by which *rational* and *moral* was implied – without being to some extent civilized? Could they have rights before being fully civilized? And at which point was natural man no longer natural man, but at the bottom of a ladder that led towards a global civilization? Of course, given the context of early modern colonialism, in the background there was always another question: what were the rights of the more civilized nations to conquer savages or settle amongst them? The sixteenth century answer was conditioned by Christian universalism and was inevitably yes, Europeans have such a right, although one might deplore the manner in which the conquest of barbarians was being conducted. However, as the religious discourse of European Christendom became questioned within Europe, and as Europeans demonstrated their technological superiority in a variety of encounters, the issue reverted to a simpler question of whether civilization was such a good thing, and could be imposed without embarrassment.

LÁSZLÓ KONTLER (Central European University, Budapest), *The Lapon, the Scythian and the Hungarian, or our (former) selves as others. Philosophical history in eighteenth-century Hungary*

This paper investigates some applications of the discursive patterns and the vocabulary of Enlightenment philosophical history to themes of national history at the beginning of the period of ‘national awakening’ in Hungary (1770s and 1780s). This innovative language was adopted from European models where it was developed in strict reliance on the achievements of the eighteenth-century sciences of man. At the same time, when applied to confronting a theory of linguistic kinship (Finno-Ugrianism) and by implication of national origins which was at variance with the inherited master narrative on the subject (Scythianism), became instrumental in reaffirming the traditional view. It did so by underpinning a quasi-racialist ‘othering’, characteristic of ethno-nationalist discourses of identity arising later on in the nineteenth century, and still preserving their vigour. In all of this, the political climate of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1770s, and the fact that during this period the relevant trends of Enlightenment were predominantly embraced by nobles strongly attached to the ideology of social distinction posited by the above-mentioned master narrative, played important role.

BORBÁLA ZSUZSANNA TÖRÖK (Universität Konstanz), *The ethnicity of knowledge: statistics and Landeskunde in late eighteenth-century Hungary and Transylvania*

This essay analyzes the adaptation of the discipline of descriptive statistics in the multiethnic lands of the Habsburg Monarchy and discusses how the former used ethnographic description to underscore the claims to social hegemony of German and Hungarian elites in Hungary and Transylvania. Focusing on the statistical account by Martin Schwartzner, the Author demonstrates how the local application of the modern statistical methods of the University of Göttingen also imported the social conservatism of the leading German professors. The ethnic descriptions of *Staatenkunde* redefined the hierarchies of the estate-based society into new, ethno-cultural ones, creating thus the basis of modern regional ethno-cultural hierarchies. The study reflects on the ambiguous political ends of scholarly modernization and on the resistance to the impulse to regard ‘Westernization’ in the ‘provinces’ of Europe as a story of progress.

JESÚS ASTIGARRAGA (Universidad de Zaragoza), *Les images de l’Espagne chez les économistes napolitains des Lumières: le cas de Filangieri*

Naples was a powerful centre of the European Enlightenment during the entire eighteenth century. Some of the most important treatises of the Neapolitan Age

of the Reason enjoyed considerable success in Spain between 1780 and 1840. This was the case of the G. Filangieri's *Scienza della Legislazione* (1780-1791). This book, as well as the Genovesi's *Lezioni di commercio* and Galiani's *Dialogues sur le commerce des blés*, contained detailed reflections on Spain and on its economic, cultural, religious and political background. At the same time, Filangieri suggested numerous and sharp proposals for the reform of the Spanish Monarchy. This article goes on to provide an in-depth analysis of the images of Spain contained in the *Scienza della Legislazione*.

JAVIER USOZ (Universidad de Zaragoza) - JUAN ZABALZA (Universidad de Alicante), *Political economy and the mirror of 'otherness': moral and foreign political models in the works of the Spanish economist T. Anzano (1768-1795)*

This article focuses on two aspects of the works of the leading Spanish economist of the second half of eighteenth century Tomás de Anzano which are concerned with the idea of 'facing otherness': the opposite interests of merchants and consumers and big landowners and agrarian workers on the one hand; and the impact of some foreign influences in Spanish economic thought on the other. The analysis is contextualized within the realm defined by Anzano's moralistic approach to subsistence goods markets related to the question of their liberalization which embodied scholastic concepts and was essentially influenced by Jacques Necker's doctrine. Consequently, it goes beyond economic issues and addresses social, cultural and political questions that are usually neglected by the analysis of the historians of political economy. Among other outcomes the article demonstrates how the British representative political system could be a desirable utopia to Spanish Enlightenment.

ASHLEY MILLAR (London School of Economics), *Your beggarly commerce! Enlightenment European views of the China trade*

This article studies the European confrontation with and conceptualization of the China trade in the early-modern world, and in particular during the Enlightenment. International trade was of central importance to Enlightenment European conceptions of wealth and European intellectuals and a broader audience of popular authors, merchants and interested parties hotly debated international trade policies. In these debates, China was largely portrayed as having a more cautious, restricted approach to foreign trade. This contrast between the optimism for trade and rejection from the Chinese led to a consistent expression of frustration in many European sources. The narrative of Chinese isolation, however, should not be removed from the wider context of eighteenth-century views on the China trade. Recent scholarship has questioned the dominance of the idea of an isolated Chinese state. Revisiting eighteenth-century sources in light of these new perspectives, it is clear that early-modern European discussion of the China trade reflected a wider

variety of views than simple frustration with Chinese restrictions on trade. The paper concludes that the narrative of China's isolation should be seen as only one part of a wider picture of the China trade and eighteenth-century observers were very much aware of the complex dynamics involved in the China trade.

PAUL COHEN (University of Toronto), *The power of apprehending 'otherness': cultural intermediaries as imperial agents in New France*

Facing 'otherness' was not merely an inevitable feature of life in France's culturally diverse North American empire, it stood in some fundamental sense at its very center. While scholarship in recent years has shed crucial light on the importance of Amerindian-European relationships in the history of the early modern Americas, the goal of this article is to argue that scholars have not fully acknowledged the full and peculiar importance of coexistence in the case of New France. In particular, I argue that cultural intermediaries played an especially important role in French North America, and contributed to the establishment, extension and perpetuation of French imperial power in decisive ways. It is argued further that intermediaries' particular prominence was specific to the French case, far surpassing that enjoyed by their counterparts in the other European powers' spheres of American influence. The article presents two explanations for why cultural intermediaries enjoyed special prominence in New France. First, the very character of France's presence in North America – sparsely populated French settlements in close proximity to Amerindian groups, commercial activity grounded in the fur trade, and missionary campaigns aimed at bringing the Christian gospel to the native populations of the Americas – guaranteed that French and Amerindian communities entered into a variety of strong relationships. Second, the character of the French presence in North America also defined an environment which made intermediaries' skills invaluable. Go-betweens played a crucial role not only in making French-Amerindian coexistence possible, but in extending and sustaining French influence.

HANS-JÜRGEN LÜSEBRINK (Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken), *L'expérience de l' 'Autre' des missionnaires et le discours anthropologique. À propos des Nouvelles de la presqu'île américaine de Californie (1772) du missionnaire jésuite Johann Jakob Baegert*

This contribution presents and analyzes the work of the Jesuit missionary Johann Jakob Baegert who was born in Alsatia in 1717 and sent to the Californian Peninsula in the mid-eighteenth century, in a threefold perspective: in the first part the specific characteristics of Baegert's biography are presented and pointed out; the second part considers Baegert's main work, the *Nachrichten von der Amerikanischen Halbinsel Californien (Nouvelles de la presqu'île américaine de Californie)* published in German in 1772 in Mannheim, as an ethnographic counter-discourse directed

against dominant European visions of South America and Lower California, exemplified in the article on the subject published by Bruzen de la Martinière in his *Grand Dictionnaire géographique, historique et critique* (1723). Finally, the third part of the contribution analyzes the anthropological dimensions of Baegert's discourse, especially the use of comparisons and the perception of intercultural encounters and cultural particularities in his main work as well as in letters addressed to his brother, which were published in an Alsatian periodical.

ANN THOMSON (Université de Paris VIII Vincennes-Saint Denis), *Thinking about the history of Africa in the eighteenth Century*

It is generally believed that sub-Saharan Africa was largely unknown to eighteenth-century Europeans except as the source of slaves, and it is largely absent from philosophical history. However, eighteenth-century writings about Africa provided many histories of nations with different types of government, which belie the view of one undifferentiated mass peopled by savages with no history. But abolitionist writings represented Africans primarily as innocent children of nature, the victims of European traders who provoked wars by their Machiavellian maneuvers. This made it impossible to place them in a coherent historical narrative or to accord them a political history of their own, and as Africans could not be assigned a clear place in the stadial scheme of history, they were generally excluded from historical thinking. They became childlike victims to be enslaved or, increasingly, converted and civilized by the Europeans. Thinking about the Africans was increasingly confined to the field of natural history and anthropology and to their place in the racial hierarchy.

MARCO PLATANIA (J.-W. Goethe Universität, Frankfurt), *Madagascar 'possession française'? L'historiographie coloniale en débat: une mise en perspective*

This article traces the development of the major historical narrative of French colonization of Madagascar and questions the capacity of this narrative to account for local culture and local history. Since its very beginning in seventeenth century up to late twentieth century, this narrative looked at Madagascar from a national and Eurocentric point of view: indeed, the history of Madagascar was confused with the history of France in Madagascar, or oriented by the French interests in Madagascar. Given this general settings, the article pleas for a closer recognition of different moments and actors that constructed French historical imagination of Madagascar. Focusing on some major historical writings, it provides examples of the tensions, ruptures, and criticism that agitated the production of colonial historiography. By doing so, the article suggests that non-retrospective and non-teleological study of the transformations and diversity

of historical writings on non-European cultures can indeed cast a new light on European culture itself, and increase dialogue with other cultures. This consideration brings to the recognition that the writing of colonial history has undergone a sharp transformation since the last twenty years at least.

NICCOLÒ GUASTI (Università di Foggia), *Catholic civilization and the evil savage: Juan Nuix faces Spanish Conquista of the New World*

This paper analyzes the *Riflessioni imparziali sopra l'umanità degli Spagnuoli nell'Indie*, published in 1780 by the exiled Spanish Jesuit, Juan Nuix (1740-1783). This work, conceived as an extensive commentary on Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes* and Robertson's *History of America*, presented two main points: a strong censure of the *black legend* version of the Spanish enterprises in America and, secondly, a peculiar point of view on 'otherness' in relation to the Spanish *conquista* of America. The most interesting aspect of the *Riflessioni* is its explicit attempt, according to the ideological positions of a 'conservative' Jesuit like Nuix, to revive – through a modern language – the 'Imperial Spain paradigm' within a Counter-reformist frame: to this purpose he simply turned upside down, by claiming them as positive, all the *black legend* arguments.

BALÁZS TRENCSENYI (Central European University, Budapest), *Civilization and originality: perceptions of history and national specificity in nineteenth-century Hungarian political discourse*

The article is an overview of the development of Hungarian cultural-political discourses focusing on the notion of 'national specificity' during the nineteenth century. It seeks to link these conceptual developments to the transformation of the underlying vision of historicity and that of the socio-political context of nation-building, caused by such collective experiences as the 'national revival' or the 1848-49 Revolution. It argues that in the process practically all the key ideological stances changed their content. While at the beginning of the nineteenth century conservatives were supra- and often anti-nationalist, by the end of the century they developed their own specific 'national conservatism'. Similarly, the relationship of liberalism and nationalism underwent a fundamental reconfiguration, and by the end of the period the 'liberal nationalist' ideology practically disintegrated. Reconstructing the complex conceptual itinerary of the notions of national specificity thus serves as a litmus test for grasping the ways Hungarian national discourse changed over the century and also offers a conceptual framework for a broader trans-regional analysis of romantic and post-romantic nationalism.

MAGGY HARY (Université de Paris VIII Vincennes-Saint Denis), *The Holy Land in British eyes: sacred geography and the 'rediscovery' of Palestine, 1841-1917*

Due to the relative weakness of the Porte in the nineteenth century, access to and circulation in the Ottoman Empire were facilitated for European travelers and diplomats. In 1838, Britain opened a consulate in Jerusalem and, soon afterwards, British explorers and geographers began to survey the Holy Land in search for evidence that would allow them to authenticate the biblical narrative whose veracity was then increasingly questioned. 'Sacred geography', as such enterprise became known, emphasized the features of modern Palestine that confirmed Scriptures while everything that did not fit in the biblical framework – notably Islam and the Ottoman presence – was either ignored or disparaged as the reasons of the Holy Land's supposed decline. Such discourse laid the foundations of future imperialist designs on Palestine, notably Zionism, which was to be officially endorsed by Britain in the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

MONIKA WEHRHEIM (Universität Bonn), *À la quête du passé des autres: les expéditions des voyageurs Dupaix et Waldeck à Palenque (Mexique) dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle // In search of the past of the 'Others': archæological expeditions to Palenque in nineteenth-century Mexico*

This study analyzes the discursive constructions which underlay the descriptions of the ruins of Palenque (Mexico). It is focused on the question of how history of non-European people is constructed by taking into account the example of the two European voyagers Guillaume Dupaix and Jean Frédérique Waldeck, who described the ruins discovered in the rainforest of Mexico. While Dupaix and Waldeck as scholars of a trans-cultural diffusion still rejected the idea that the indigenous could have built this impressive site of temples and houses, John L. Stephens and Frederick Catherwood, two explorers from North America, promoted the opposite thesis that the ruins had been built by the Maya of the region. It is obvious that the century of Latin American independence is confronted with a paradigmatic change: the center of the world's history no longer focuses on the Mediterranean past as imagined by the Europeans for a long period of time.

IRENE GADDO (Università del Piemonte Orientale, Vercelli), *Snapshotting the 'Other': images of the 'otherness' in Samuel Butler's life and work (1835-1902)*

A fierce satirist and debunker of Victorian values, Samuel Butler (1835-1902) offers an interesting viewpoint on the contradictions and tensions that characterized the first imperial world power at the end of the nineteenth century.

His voice, in a peculiar, idiosyncratic and brilliant way, was discordant with the mainly buoyant, optimistic and somewhat opinionated mood of mid- and late-Victorian period. Concepts of expansion, progress and civilizing mission were just beginning to be questioned, affecting the whole ideological construction which the British nation had been relying on. Butler, with his sardonic and corrosive irony, showed a growing unease about the dominant image of national identity; while criticizing the main institutions of society, he also attacked another component of Victorian mind: Darwinism. He did so not only in satirical prose and essays, but also in photography, which he regarded as a sort of 'externalized maker of experience' and memory or, in his words, "unconscious mind", against any casual or evolutionary explanation of humankind. Even though he misread many of Darwin's achievements, Butler's case provides the opportunity to approach some of the complexities of an age when the notion of identity was confronting the challenges of a new, multifarious and problematic conceptualization of 'otherness'.

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