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POLITICS OF PASTS AND FUTURES IN (POST-) IMPERIAL CONTEXTS

Edited by Sebastian Fahner, Christian Feichtinger and Rogier E.M. van der Heijden

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This edited volume derives from the first annual conference of the DFG Research Training Group 2571 “Empires: Dynamic Transformation, Temporality and Post-imperial Orders”, held at the University of Freiburg (Germany) on 1–3 December 2022. Covering only a part of the thematical scope of the RTG, we aimed to explore in an interdisciplinary way how references to past empires and imperiality shaped and still shape perceptions of history and imagined futures, both in empires and in post-imperial contexts. The result is the edited volume that lays before you. In 11 chapters written by scholars from seven countries and from several disciplines, including history, art history, comparative literature, and Middle Eastern Studies. Temporally, the case studies range from the Seleucid empire (early third century BCE) to the modern day and cover regions in western and eastern Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The paper presentations held at the conference by Deborah Holmes (History, Paris-Lodron Universität Salzburg) and Fatma Eda Çelik (Political Sciences, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris) are not published in the edited volume, but deserve a special mention for their valuable contribution to the scope of the conference and the fruitful discussions both during and after the event.

Furthermore, we would like to say a special thanks to Élise Mazurié and Cornelius Beckers, our two colleagues at the RTG who helped to organise the conference, and to the coordinator of the RTG Philip Straub, without whose tireless dedication to the project the conference and this volume would not have been possible. The same goes to Peter Eich, *Sprecher* of the RTG, whose guidance at the start and free hand after that allowed us to shape the conference into an inspiring event that enriched our understanding of the political manipulations of the past. Finally, we acknowledge the financial support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), the Stiftung Humanismus Heute, and the Open Access Publication Fund of the University of Freiburg.

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Sebastian Fahner, Rogier E.M. van der Heijden,
and Christian Feichtinger

Introduction: Politics of Pasts and Futures

This volume aims to explore how references to past empires and imperiality have shaped perceptions of history and imagined futures, both in imperial and in post-imperial contexts. These include, for example, not only references to imperial foundation narratives, but also stories of success and resilience during times of crisis and uses of imperial symbolism and history to express civic, national, and/or imperial identity. Our focus on temporality aims to reflect on an aspect of empire and imperiality that has often been pointed out without taking centre stage. These are, for example, the ways in which peoples and polities relate to other epochs (temporality), how that changes the way in which they perceive their own position in time, and the extent to which this leads to a reshaping of told histories. Just as much as "space," "time" influences and shapes empire and imperiality.

In the wake of the so-called "new imperial history," many aspects of empire have been object of studies that challenge previous notions of empires as top-down structures imposed from the centre on the periphery.[1] In particular, the modes with which empires governed diverse territories and their ways of mapping, managing, and ruling over a multi-ethnic and multi-religious populace have been in the focus of these studies.[2] Although "new imperial history" opened up a wide field of possible lenses through which imperial rule can be studied, most definitions and analyses of empire employed by scholars in this field still focus on spatial order. For example, it is stressed that empires generally operate on a logic of expansion both through conquest and through networks or intermediaries, or it is pointed out that empires govern their territories unequally instead of trying to homogenise them.[3]

1 For an introduction into New Imperial History, see Ulrike von Hirschhausen, "Diskussionsforum: A New Imperial History? Programm, Potenzial, Perspektiven," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 41, no. 4 (2015), doi:10.13109/gege.2015.41.4.718.

2 Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History*: *Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, eds., *Comparing Empires*: *Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century,* Schriftenreihe der FRIAS School of History 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012); Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung Der Welt*: *Eine Geschichte Des 19. Jahrhunderts* (München: C.H. Beck, 2020), doi:10.17104/9783406751653, 565–672.

3 Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 8; see also Heinrich Münkler, *Imperien: Die Logik Der Weltherrschaft - Vom Alten Rom Bis Zu Den Vereinigten Staaten* (Berlin: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2005), 15–26, who has rejected the notion that multi-ethnicity is a meaningful

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While this time-transcending aspect of imperiality is well known, there still is a lack of understanding regarding the many ways the engagement with imperial pasts can shape (post-)imperial societies.[4] The contributions to this volume are united in the assumption that it is valuable to analyse the relationship of empires and time just like it has been proven to be valuable to understand their special connection to space. The unique quality of imperial rule is not only shown in regard to the way their rulers and elites imagine and manage spaces but also in the way that they manage and imagine time. One of the main threads of this volume is the different ways in which empires, the people living in them, their enemies, and scholars nowadays interested in their history shape perceptions of time and history in a way that is recognisable as "imperial." We do not aim to give all-encompassing definitions of empire and imperiality, but rather to broaden our understanding of the use of time and history to assert or deny political legitimacy, to bolster or criticise imperial rule, and to invoke or reject an imperial lineage.[5] This volume aims to present a wide array of contributions from the disciplines of history, archaeology, literary studies, and political science that deal with the diverse ways in which imperial pasts can be instrumentalised and engaged with. While the thematic scope of the contributions is broad, there are a number of perspectives that will be emphasised throughout, which will be discussed below.

Temporal Longevity as an Imperial Characteristic

One of the commonly attributed temporal characteristics of empires is their alleged longevity, in other words, their long temporal existence and their ability to continue under the rule of an external dynasty or even a different ruling ethnic

characteristic; for a discussion and review of epoch-transcending literature on empires, see Jürgen Osterhammel, "„Imperiologie"? Neues Nach Der New Imperial History," *Neue Politische Literatur* 67, no. 3 (2022), doi:10.1007/s42520-022-00446-7.

4 The chapters in e.g. Peter F. Bang and Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, eds., *Universal Empire*: *A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), discuss the temporality of "universal empire."

5 There has been a variety of studies in recent years that centre temporality in one way or another, for example: Holt Meyer, Susanne Rau, and Katharina Waldner, eds., *SpaceTime of the Imperial*, De Gruyter eBook-Paket Geschichte 1 (Berlin, Boston, CT: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017); Wouter Bracke, Jan Nelis, and Jan de Maeyer, eds., *Renovatio, Inventio, Absentia Imperii*: *From the Roman Empire to Contemporary Imperialism,* Etudes (Institut Historique belge de Rome) 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018); Hans-Christian Maner and Ioannis Zelepos, eds., *Antike Und Byzanz Als Historisches Erbe in Südosteuropa (19.-21. Jahrhundert),* Südosteuropa-Jahrbuch Band 45 (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2020).

group.[6] This does not have to mean that all empires pose as coming from an uninterrupted tradition. For example, there are instances in which parts of history are erased from a certain narrative to create a seemingly seamless transition between a glorious past and the present. Imperial legacies, as is seen in these cases, not only enjoy long lifespans, but can also be revived and used to overwrite the parts of history that run counter to the desired narrative of whoever wants to reference them. For example, references to alleged longevity and ancient tradition have been a common element in the construction of nationalist historical narratives and identities in the nineteenth and twentieth century. A closer study of imperial longevity can help to show both the overlap and the differences between imperial identities and other forms of political uses of history that have been used to foster allegiance to a national, ethnic, or civic community.[7]

Furthermore, the longevity of imperial time can be a source of contention. For example, an empire's claim to fulfil a historical mission can be challenged if the empire does not live up to its supposed ancient forebears. Opponents of imperial rule can subvert and attack the notion of imperial longevity as an outdated and anachronistic idea and thereby challenge the empire's legitimacy. In post-imperial contexts, connecting one's political enemies with imperial legacy can be a powerful tool to establish a new order or to criticise it by comparing it unfavourably to the imperial past. These discussions about the lingering effects of the imperial legacy can be much more complex than simply claiming successorship or opposition to imperialism. Effects of empire that are felt long after its fall can be engaged with in surprising ways that do not necessarily fall into a dichotomy of imperial nostalgia in the former core and remembrance of resistance in the former periphery.

Reviewing the many ways in which the ideal of imperial longevity can be expressed unveils the flexibility of imperial heritage. The celebration and commemoration of imperial histories and achievements occur in lots of different ways: conquerors can pay reverence to other empires because they want to appear as their heirs, and post-imperial polities can glorify the empires that they replaced by framing the imperial history as a part of their own history, just as they can try

6 At the same time, a significant number of short-lived empires have also existed, some of them creating similar long-lasting legacies. See Robert Rollinger, Julian Degen, and Michael Gehler, eds., "Approaching Short-Termed Empires in World History, a First Attempt", in *Short-Term Empires in World History*, ed. by Robert Rollinger, Julian Degen, and Michael Gehler, Universal- und kulturhistorische Studien. Studies in Universal and Cultural History (Wiesbaden: Springer VS), 2020.

7 Stefan Berger with Christoph Conrad, *The Past as History: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Modern Europe,* Writing the Nation (Camden: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).

and pose as the brave resistance that finally brought the empire down. This flexibility has made imperial longevity an excellent tool in political discourse, in public contention, and in self-representation. As a trope it can rely on figures of thought and ways to conceptualise the flow of time that are themselves tightly intertwined with the legacy of empires, the most well-known of which would be the notion of *translatio imperii*.

Translatio Imperii: The Succession of Empires as a Figure of Thought

As a pivotal point in the annals of history, Rome has transcended its physical existence on the banks of the Tiber River having become an enduring archetype traversing the epochs of Europe and the world since the decline of the Western Roman Empire. The notion of "translatio imperii" finds its origins in the belief that the transfer of power follows a divine or cosmic order governing its passage from one centre of authority to another. This concept can be traced back to the ancient civilizations of the Near East and the Mediterranean, where the transference of power was perceived as an integral part of a cyclical historical pattern. The idea of this imperial power transition, however, predates the Christianized interpretation of "translatio," as elucidated by Werner Goez in his seminal study.[8] This ceaseless relay of authority is classically encapsulated through the Assyrians/Babylonians, Persians, Greeks/Macedonians, and Romans.[9] Within the framework of the four-kingdom doctrine, Rome occupies the final position among these four global empires, marking the culmination of world history.[10] Its decline, perpetually postponed by its transmission, is envisaged from the perspective of salvation history as the dawn of the Kingdom of God, transcending the confines of time itself.

The transfer of power and its legitimacy constitutes a recurring theme in the exploration of imperial legacies that we endeavour to dissect in this collection.

8 Werner Goez, *Translatio Imperii Ein Beitrag Zur Geschichte Des Geschichtsdenkens Und Der Politischen Theorien Im Mittelalter Und in Der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958).

9 Daniel 2:31–45; Iust., *Epit.*; for a recent study on the notion of succession of rule in Antiquity prior to *translatio imperii*, see Marie Oellig, *Die Sukzession von Weltreichen*: *Zu den antiken Wurzeln einer Geschichtsmächtigen Idee,* Oriens et Occidens 38 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2023).

10 Iohannes, *Apocalypsis* 17:9; Tert., *Apol.*; see also Tamás Nótári, "Translatio Imperii–Thoughts on Continuity of Empires in European Political Traditions," *Acta Juridica Hungaria* 52, no. 2 (2011).

Figures of thought such as *translatio imperii* served as a prevalent strategy to legitimise one's exercise of power while delegitimising others, and functioned to invoke an ancestral lineage legitimising a particular rule. In Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, references to the Roman Empire as *exemplum* and legitimation became widespread, both in Christian Europe and beyond. As perspectives on time changed, the teleological aspect of Christian *translatio imperii* did not align anymore with newly developing linear views of time and corresponding political concepts. Genealogical constructs à la *translatio imperii* have continued to be used until this very day in different shapes and forms, always with Hellenistic or Roman empires in mind as example.[11] Hence, *translatio imperii* represents merely one angle to treat imperial history and ascribing meaning to the past. In tandem with the departure from this conceptual framework, as exemplified by Petrarch in his pursuit of r*enovatio imperii*, and continued by the French humanists of the sixteenth century, a plethora of alternative imperial constructs emerged.[12]

With the passage of time, diverse conceptual frameworks have emerged to challenge the "translatio imperii" paradigm, offering alternative viewpoints on imperial history. Notably, an emphasis on moments of transition and upheaval underscores instances where established systems disintegrate, giving rise to new ones. Conversely, the will for continuity and restoration focuses on preserving and perpetuating a specific way of life or political order. Another conceptual framework centres on the notion of a distant and lost or again rising golden age, shaping our comprehension of imperial history. In totality, the exploration of an idealized imperial past is an intricate and multifaceted undertaking, demanding a nuanced comprehension of abstract entities such as time, power, and knowledge. The concept of "translatio imperii" serves as just one lens through which we can interpret imperial history. This collection aims to delve into the variety of other figures of thought that have emerged over time, each contributing to a richer understanding of the studied phenomena. The diverse narratives and tropes employed to engage with imperial legacies have also played a pivotal role in shaping collective memory and political discourse.

11 See e.g. Pierre Briant, *The First European*: *A History of Alexander in the Age of Empire*, with the assistance of Nicholas Elliott, (trans.) (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2017); Bracke, Nelis, and Maeyer, *Renovatio, inventio, absentia imperii.*

12 On typologies of early modern founding narratives see Judith Frömmer, *Italien im Heiligen Land*: *Typologien frühneuzeitlicher Gründungsnarrative* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2018); Petrarca, Africa and his letters, for example Sen. IX, 1; Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad Facilem Historiarum Cognitionem* (1572).

Cultural Memory and Imperial Histories

A study of the usage and utilisation of imperial history cannot move past a discussion of the concept of memory. Especially since the later 1980s and 1990s, studies discussing the way the past is remembered have relied heavily on a number of influential scholars. By developing the concept and theory of collective memory, Jan and Aleida Assmann have argued that memory can exist outside an individual as the memory of a group.[13] They have further made the distinction between social and cultural memory, where social memory features memories which have been experienced by the group or by members of the public, whereas cultural memory features recollections of the past which lie beyond the experienced memory of the group, as the memory happened before members of the public were born.[14]

An increasing circulation of a certain highlighted past can lead to a development or establishment of a cultural identity of a group, of which nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe is a prime example. Certain nationalistic movements based and still base their identities, and their commemorated and activated histories, on imperial pasts, whether in the contemporary present, the relatively near past, or the distant past. Such differentiation in pasts remembered can lead to a change in temporality, that is, the way in which time and one's relative position is experienced.

Also, the use of imperial pasts for contemporary matters of (collective) identity and political power is not exclusive to the modern and contemporary ages.[15] In fact, several studies over the last decade have shown how history was reimagined and instrumentalised already in Antiquity. This was the case both on a level of ruler ideology and legitimation, but also for local communities in new empires, as imperial conquerors would try to establish their position relying on

13 Following philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs: Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire Collective*, with the assistance of Alexandre, J. (ed.) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950).
14 Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995); in Aleida Assmann, "Memory, Individual and Collective," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis, Vol. 5*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), a distinction is made between political and cultural memory. Although they both distinguish themselves from individual and social memory by going beyond the time – they are no longer based on shared experiences, but are mediated and transgenerational – cultural memory consciously selects the episodes it wants to remember ("active memory") against a background of the available knowledge of the past ("archival memory").
15 Maria Mälksoo, ed., *Handbook on the Politics of Memory* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2023), doi:10.4337/9781800372535.

former imperial might.[16] In particular, the idea of a succession of empires (*translatio imperii*), as mentioned above, formed an important part of Christian medieval and early modern discussions about empires, their rise and downfall, and their *Nachleben*, causing an almost teleological linearity in its thinking.[17]

In many of these instances, a shift in experience of time, and one's position in time and history, occurs. As certain historical events, episodes, or time periods are invoked in public discourse, a differentiation in hierarchy between historical pasts can occur, which can lead to canonisation of a collective's history, but also to a conscious or unconscious *forgetting* of other episodes.[18] Both canonisation and forgetting can manifest in the identification with a person or a group of people in the past – also sometimes called a "time collapse" or a "folding" of time – or rather a distancing to the activated past. Selecting and highlighting remembered pasts push other pasts to the background, at least in that narrative. At the same time, a multiplicity of memories and narratives remains inherent to the phenomenon, causing constant interaction between conflicting memories.[19]

Memory and remembrance are not just about the past and the present, but also relate to the future, for example by shaping expectations and nourishing fears and hopes.[20] As observed by Phiroze Vasunia, when talking about "memory of empire," this phrase can be understood in two different ways: first, as the memory to a past empire, and second, as an empire having memory itself.[21] However, these two understandings of the phrase in many cases also engage with each other, when one imperial order engages with or even appropriates memory of another empire. This volume, therefore, combines these two angles and hopes to engage with these levels of temporality. It attempts to show the entanglement of imperial orders, the evocations of imperial histories, and the role of temporality in this.

16 See e.g. Rolf Strootman and Miguel J. Versluys, eds., *Persianism in Antiquity* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017); Julian Degen, *Alexander III. zwischen Ost und West. Indigene Traditionen und Herrschaftsinszenierung im makedonischen Weltimperium*, Oriens et Occidens 39 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag), 2022.

17 Oellig, *Die Sukzession von Weltreichen*.

18 Assmann, "Memory, Individual and Collective"; on memory and canonisation, see Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *Cultural Memories. The Geographical Point of View*, ed. Peter Meusburger, Michael Heffernan, and Edgar Wunder, Knowledge and Space 4 (Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York, NY: Springer, 2011), 22–25.

19 Gregor Feindt et al., "Entangled Memory: Toward a Third Wave in Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 53 (2014): 37–38.

20 Feindt et al., "Entangled Memory," 29, 40–41.

21 Phiroze Vasunia, "Memories of Empire: Literature and Art, Nostalgia and Trauma," in *The Oxford World History of Empire: Volume 1: The Imperial Experience*, ed. Peter F. Bang, C. A. Bayly, and Walter Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 499–500.

The Outline of the Volume

The volume is divided into three parts, each of them discussing certain ways in which individuals, communities, and imperial powers dealt with imperial histories and legacies. The contributions in Part 1 discuss ways in which the transfer of (imperial) power and authority, both political and cultural, has been used to legitimise power relations and to establish new (cultural or political) authority. Although classically entitled "Translatio imperii," Part 1 goes beyond the traditional classical reception, showing the relevance of ancient Greek and Roman empires both in Rome and European states and in Western Asia.

Part 2 focuses on the legitimation and discrediting of imperial and authoritarian rule in cases where the historical identification "leapfrogged" over the immediate predecessor to more distant pasts. Especially in the case of empires, legitimation with an older imperial order could be beneficial as it allows a distinction between contemporary structures and the preceding ones to be created. The relevance and seemingly ubiquity of imperial leapfrogging is shown by the temporal extent of the cases and historical connections, reaching from the Archaic period until the present day.

Part 3, on the other hand, delves into situations in which local communities in (former) imperial territories and declining empires dealt with the decline or even disappearance of the imperial structures. Focusing on cases from the nineteenth and twentieth century, this part unequivocally offers perspectives into the modern empire and post-imperial contexts in Eurasia. In Part 3, individual experiences and structural societal legacies of imperial and colonial policies, in particular, are studied, focusing less on imperial strategies, as was the case for the first two parts.

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Part I: *Translatio Imperii*

Christine Tauber

Emperor in his Own Castle: Francis' I *Translatio Imperii* to Fontainebleau

Abstract: After his defeat in the battle of Pavia in 1525, the French king Francis I adopted the strategy of importing Italy to France and building his own new Rome in Fontainebleau, that would eclipse the old Rome in virtuosity, differentiation, and modernity. This Translatio Artis expands to an imperial claim to power in the sense of the Translatio Imperii. A demonstrative act of the import of Romanità is the commission to Primaticcio to cast those Roman antiquities that were linked to the highest papal claim to representation: the statues in the Cortile del Belvedere, whose power-politically highly charged semantics are used for his own demonstration of power. Fontainebleau thus becomes a "state as a work of art", for there the French king created a cosmos of art, over which he could dispose at any time in the sense of interpretive sovereignty as an act of rule. These strategies can be seen most clearly in the Galerie François I^{er}, whose programme focuses on an aesthetic of intellectually overwhelming the viewer through iconographic sophistry. The Roman-German Emperor Charles V, to whom this message of overbidding was directed, was expectedly overchallenged by this decoration, which repeatedly trumped up with imperial iconographies.

We know next to nothing about the political appropriation of the Grande Galerie in Fontainebleau by the French king Francis I for the purpose of demonstrating imperial claims to power – at least not if we wish to rely exclusively on written sources in exploring its representative and emblematic use in the ritual of visiting the château by high-ranking guests.[1] A single visit by a foreign diplomat to the French court is documented in the first half of the sixteenth century which provides some important information for our question, that of Henry Wallop, the ambassador of Henry VIII of England, who visited Fontainebleau in 1540 and was accorded an extraordinary honor; on 17 November, the owner of the castle himself led him through the representative heart of his main residence – through the

1 For this and the following Christine Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis. Die Kunst der Politik und die Kunstpolitik am Hof von François I^{er}* (Berlin: Akademie, 2009), chapter 6: "*Arcana Imperii et Artis:* Die *Grande Galerie* und die königliche Deutungshoheit," 195–289; id., "Die politisch-zeremonielle Nutzung der Grande Galerie in Fontainebleau durch François I^{er}," in *Die Bildlichkeit symbolischer Akte. Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme*, ed. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger et al. (Münster: Rhema, 2010).

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gallery (Figure 1) which was built in the course of the redesign of the castle complex in the years following 1528 and decorated in 1533–39 by the Florentine artist Rosso Fiorentino and his assistants (Figure 2).[2]

Figure 1: Rosso Fiorentino and Collaborators, Galerie François I^{er}, Fontainebleau castle, around 1534/39 (Neil Rickards – originally posted to Flickr as DSC01529, CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4279131).

2 On the construction of the gallery see Maurice Roy, *Artistes et Monuments de la Renaissance en France*, vol. 1 (Paris: H. Champion, 1929), 226–37; id., "La Galerie de François I^{er} à Fontainebleau," *Mémoires de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France* (1914): 205–24; Sylvia Pressouyre, "Le cadre architectural," *La Galerie François I^{er} au Château de Fontainebleau. Numéro spéciale de la Revue de l'art* 16–17 (1972): 13–24; Françoise Boudon, Jean Blécon and Catherine Grodecki, *Le château de Fontainebleau de François I^{er} à Henri IV: les bâtiments et leurs fonctions* (Paris: Picard, 1998), 31–33, 150, 156; Eugene E. Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino. Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts*. Exh. Cat., (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1987), 222–26; Henri Zerner, *L'art de la Renaissance en France. L'invention du classicisme* (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), 66–67.

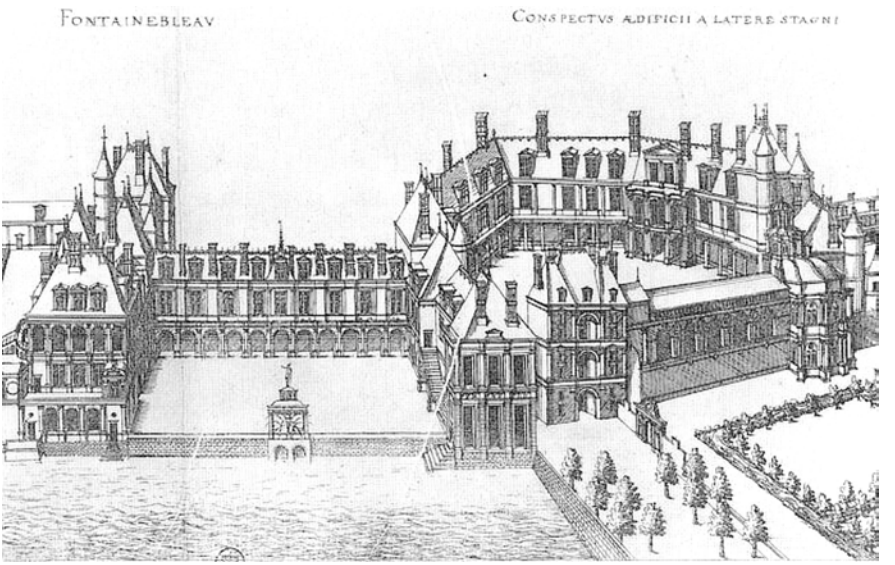

Figure 2: Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, Château de Fontainebleau, Veues du logis du coste de lestang, from: Les plus excellents bastiments de France, 1576–79 (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, fig. 29).

In the forefront of the visit, the French king first inquires in great detail about the furnishings of the English royal castles Windsor Castle and Hampton Court, thus documenting his competitive relationship with Henry VIII not only with regard to precedence in the European power system after 1515, but also with regard to building activities. In general, the French king does not seem to have overestimated (and therefore taxed accurately) the artistic sensibility and iconographic knowledge of the diplomat he led, since his tour emphasises more the material value of the gallery than its genuinely artistic value:

> [He] took grete pleasure to commen with me therin, showing me He hard saye that Your Majestie did use muche gilding in your said howses and specially in the rowffes, and that He in his buylding used litle or none, but made the rowffes of tymbre fyndly wrought with dyvers collers of woode nautrall, as ebeyne, brasell, and certayne other that I can not wel name to Your Majestie, whiche He rekeneth to be more riche then gilding, and more durable.[3]

3 Wallop's account on his visit to Fontainebleau was published by William McAllister Johnson, "On Some Neglected Usages of Renaissance Diplomatic Correspondance," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 79 (1972): 52–54, here: 53.

The famous scene in which the king even offers his hand to his visitor as he climbs a bench so that the latter can appreciate the materials up close also speaks for Wallop's fixation on materials, which is likely to have corresponded to the average visitor to the castle:

> And for bycause in suche my communication had with Hym before, I did not gretely prease the mattyer and stuff that the said borders was made of, geving no good luster, the said Frenche King requiered me to go uppon a benche to feele the said matier and stuff; unto whom I saied, 'Sir, the benche is to highe, and shal hardly gett upp,' and began tassaye. He, lyke a good gratiouse Prince did help me forward with his hande, orelles, to be playne with Your Majestie, I shuld hardly have gotton upp; and likewise at my cummyng downe stayed me agayn [. . .]. And if in case the Frenche King or he had myslyked my said Lordes going, I shuld neither have ben holpe upp ne downe the benche, nor yet have cume in his gallerey [. . .].[4]

Should the English king want to know more about the gallery's decorations, Wallop recommends in his report to Henry that he ask his own court artist Nicolò Belin da Modena, who had worked on the gallery decoration in Fontainebleau before he fled to England around 1535/37. Wallop himself does not feel sufficiently learned for the iconographic subtleties and thus gives hardly an accurate account of what he thinks he sees, for example, when he mistakes a Venus for a Lucretia: "[. . .] betwixt every windowe standes grete anticall personages entier, and in dyvers places of the said gallerey many fayre tables of stories, sett in, very fynely wrowght, as Lucretia, and other, as the said Modon can muche better declare the perfytnes of the hole to Your Majestie, then I."[5] Obviously, the king did not consider him as worthy of a more detailed explanation of the subject due to his subaltern rank. He would never have been able to adequately pass on such a thick description to his employer anyway.

The fact that the *Grande Galerie* in Fontainebleau was a representational space deliberately stylised as a private space is shown, amongst others, by Wallop's remark that the French king himself kept the key to his sanctuary of art and thus strictly guarded accessibility with help of his personal key power.[6] In the ceremonial process within the castle, the gallery becomes a kind of private *studiolo* (and not so much a place of passage and connecting corridor, as would correspond to

4 McAllister Johnson, "Neglected Usages," 53–54.

5 McAllister Johnson, "Neglected Usages," 53–54.

6 "[T]he Frenche King [. . .] browght me into his gallerey, keping the key therof Hym self, like as Your Majestie useth, and so I shewed Hym, wherewith he toke plesur" (McAllister Johnson, "Neglected Usages," 53). See Zerner, *L'art de la Renaissance*, 83; Carmelo Occhipinti, "Il 'camerino' e la 'galleria' nella Villa d'Este a Fontainebleau ('Hôtel de Ferrare')," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* 4, no. II (1997): 632.

the usual spatial function of a gallery) in that it directly adjoined the king's bedroom, the *chambre du roi*. The famous *studioli* of the Renaissance in the Northern Italian courts had exactly this function of a carefully selected collection of paintings, whose presentation in the sense of a pronounced act of rulership was – despite our particular case of documentation – not an isolated occurrence, but common practice.[7] Of course, the honorable gesture of a royal private tour did not apply to the minor diplomat, but took place exclusively with regard to a more deserving recipient of the representative message conveyed here eye-catchingly, i.e. it was obviously addressed to his master, the English king.

The gallery in Fontainebleau follows the ancient spatial type of the *ambulatio*, which in Vitruvius' *De Architectura* refers to a peristyle or an elongated ambulatory in the sense of the Greek Stoa.[8] This already outlines the function of the location as a space for aesthetic experience in leisurely and purposeless strolling to and fro, on the one hand, and as a setting for political or philosophical conversation, on the other. In terms of "internal politics," the small elite of court society had access to the gallery and the social play of its interpretation. The sovereign could distinguish himself in the circle of his courtiers as the wittiest interpreter and sign reader of his works of art and at the same time entertain his court society with wit and irony at the highest level.[9] Especially in diplomatic dealings, however, and thus in "foreign policy," Francis I knew how to make use of his gallery and demonstrate that intellectual competition and outdoing were both artistic and political categories for him.

The appropriate attitude of reception in the face of such a pictorial enigma would be – physically speaking – a twofold one: the aforementioned *ambulatio*, i.e. the vagrant walking around, in search of motifs and formal analogies, on the one hand, and the concentrated viewing of individual paintings, sitting on the bench placed opposite the painting (today the situation has changed), on the other. A narrative sequential structure thus interacts with a spatially fixed way of

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7 Andrew Carl Weislogel, in his otherwise very informative work, underestimates the political instrumentalisation of the gallery when he places it exclusively in the *studiolo* and art collecting tradition and assumes that the king devoted his leisure time to "solitary musing over the gallery's mysteries" (Andrew Carl Weislogel, *Rosso Fiorentino, Benvenuto Cellini and Clement Marot. Court Artists and Poets at Francis I's Fontainebleau (1530–45)* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Diss., 2000)), 63. Zerner, *L'art de la Renaissance*, 67, also inaccurately refers to the gallery as a "promenoir privé."

8 Vitr., *De Arch*. 7.5; Wolfram Prinz, *Die Entstehung der Galerie in Frankreich und Italien* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1970), 7; Frank Büttner, *Die Galleria Riccardiana in Florenz* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1972), 129–32.

9 Wolfgang Brassat, *Das Bild als Gesprächsprogramm. Selbstreflexive Malerei und ihr kommunikativer Gebrauch in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 197–202.

viewing. Two people could sit on the benches at a time,[10] and thus the ideal-typical viewing mode of the royal art chamber is predetermined by the limited seating space; the king could lead only one of his high-ranking visitors through the gallery at a time, explaining to him what was on display in an in-depth conversation. The gallery decoration relies on an aesthetics of phenomenologically and also intellectually overwhelming the viewer through iconographic finesse and subtle quotations as well as richness and mixture of materials. The refusal of a thoroughly accessible thematic program, according to my thesis, is programmatic here and is purposefully employed as the main function in the ceremonial use of the gallery by the king.[11]

These interpretations stand in strict opposition to earlier attempts at unequivocal decoding the content of the gallery, in that they emphasise the aspect of the political use of art as the main characteristic of the gallery's decoration as opposed to a purely iconographic interpretation. Short-circuited reductions of formal descriptions and content-based biographical interpretations have so far provided little insight into the functioning of this space in the context of the French king's exercise of power. The assumption of the Panofskys that the king, in private self-absorption, had moments from his biography and specific contents of his family life depicted in antiquarian-iconographic guise misses the actual artistic and political intention of this decorative ensemble. This interpretation was also based on the false assumption that the starting point of a "correct" tour of the gallery complex was on its west side and not, as more recent research has convincingly demonstrated, in the east, starting from the *chambre du roi*.[12]

In 1539, a year before Wallop's visit, an even more illustrious guest had visited Fontainebleau: Emperor Charles V, with whom Francis I and Henry VIII had competed for the imperial dignity in 1519, as is well known. The Roman-German Emperor's journey through France in the winter of 1539/40 was a sensation for the European public; no one had expected that he would ever enter the country

10 William McAllister Johnson, "Once More the Galerie François I^{er} at Fontainebleau," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 103 (1984): 128–29; 137; Elisabeth Ann Loeffler, *The Arts in the Court of Francis I (1515–1547). A Comparative Study of Selected Examples from Poetry, Music and Visual Arts* (Athens, Ohio: Ann Arbor University Diss., 1983), 293.

11 Rebecca Zorach, in her research parallel to mine, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold. Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago U.P., 2005), came to similar conclusions independently of my observations: 38–48, esp. 45: "Obscurity itself could serve a particular purpose, bolstering the king's authority as a controller of meaning"; see also Zerner, *L'art de la Renaissance*, 81; 84–85.

12 Erwin and Dora Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I^{er} at Fontainebleau," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 52 (1958): 113–90.

of his greatest enemy and rival voluntarily and without belligerent intentions.[13] On 25 December, Christmas Day, the French king led the Emperor into the centerpiece of his residence – the gallery. Beforehand, he had made every effort to have its decoration completed by the time of the Emperor's visit. But the recipient, for whom all this had been staged with the utmost effort, did not show the desired reactions; in his comments on the events in France, the Emperor did not mention a word about the decorations of the castle and the temporary festive arrangements, on which the King had spent a great amount of money and effort. The only thing that seems to have impressed him were the hunting grounds of the forest of Fontainebleau with their rich game population. He was obviously overwhelmed by the Grande Galerie and its overpowering aesthetics – as can be concluded *ex silentio* – however he spent more than two hours there alone with the king.

His visit to the French king's favourite residence is staged from the very beginning as a *rite de passage*, as the entrance into a *monde à l'envers*, into a realm of illusions. The *château de plaisance* Fontainebleau is a territory *à part*, subject to its own laws, which is already evident from the fact that the Emperor was received at the fringe of the forest, the actual place of transition between civilization and uncultivated nature, by a crowd of courtiers dressed as satyr-like forest gods. A preliminary drawing by the court artist Francesco Primaticcio for the costumes of this kind of "*ballet rustique*"[14] with fauns and panes has been preserved.[15] This marks the first step into the bosqueresque-antique and thus pagan scenery of a country estate surrounded by hunting grounds; already this satyrs' charade identified Fontainebleau as the abode of wild and untamed antiquity, inhabited by satyrs, nymphs, and other Bacchic creatures. The scene at the rim of the forest, which clearly took its cue from the handing over of the keys of the visited towns in the traditional ruler's *entrée*, but at the same time satirised the normed sequence of every *entrée*, brought a first moment of bewilderment to the Emperor's visit.

The final rite of passage then takes place when the visitor passes through the *Porte dorée*, the castle's representative entrance portal (Figure 3); the picturesque decoration of its portico clearly indicates that the visitor is now leaving the ordi-

13 Robert Jean Knecht, "Charles V's Journey through France (1539–40)," in *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance. Art, Politics and Performance*, ed. James R. Mulryne et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 168–69; Léon Deroy, "Charles-Quint chez François I^{er}," in id., *Les chroniques du château de Fontainebleau* (Paris: P. Roger, 1925); Charles Paillard, "Le voyage de Charles-Quint en France en 1539–1540 d'après les documents originaux," *Revue des questions historiques* 25 (1875).

14 See Louis Dimier, *Le Primatice* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1928), 53.

15 *Primatice. Maître de Fontainebleau*. Exh. cat., ed. Dominique Cordellier (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004), 124–25; Monique Chatenet, *La cour de France au XVI^{e} siècle. Vie sociale et architecture* (Paris: Picard, 2002), 130.

Figure 3: Gilles le Breton, Porte dorée, 1528, Fontainebleau castle (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, fig. 60).

nary classic world and entering a realm of travesty, playful rivalry, and the conversion of all values. The fact that this triumphal arch, through which the Roman-German Emperor entered, was decorated with two frescoes based on drawings by Primaticcio of "Hercules and Omphale," (Figure 4)[16] a topic hardly suitable for the legitimation of imperial power, may be interpreted as a subtle humiliation of the visitor but also as a demonstration of the master of the house's skill at self-

16 Ov., *Fast.* 2.304–58; Raymond Lebègue, "Un thème ovidien traité par le Primatice et par Ronsard," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 55 (1960): 301–06.

mockery.[17] After all, Hercules was the main reference figure in the sovereign iconography of the Roman-German Emperor, whose Empire, in which the sun never sets, had offensively surpassed the Pillars of Hercules. The decoration of the Golden Gate thus represented a particularly pointed case of the iconography of competition cultivated at Fontainebleau. Hercules, who is dressed in women's clothes by Omphale and thereupon mistaken in bed at night by the lecherous Faunus, is a theme that refers to deception through false appearances, to failed efforts at identification, to the belittling of a masculine-dominated claim to power by female means of sensual confusion, to self-rule versus foreign domination, and finally to masquerade and travesty.[18] This *mésaventure* of Hercules could only provoke a Homeric laughter at all mighty men.

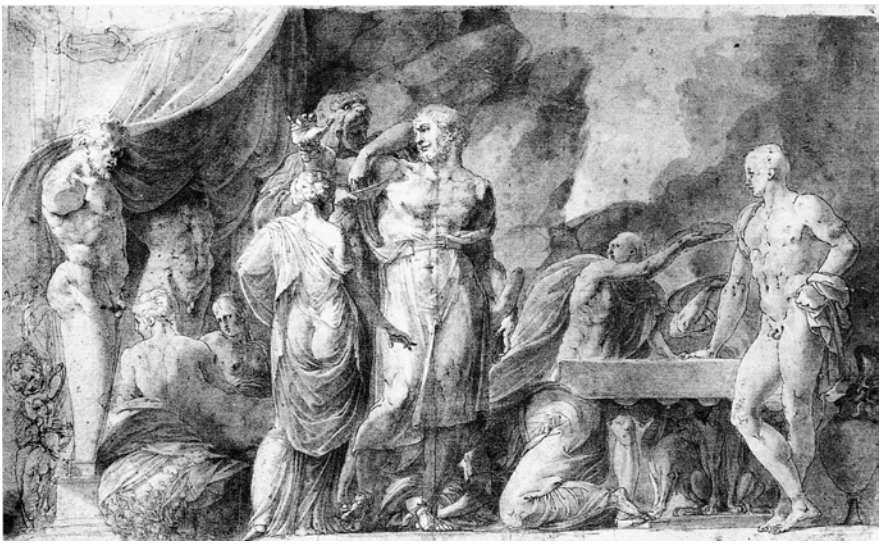

Figure 4: Francesco Primaticcio, Preliminary drawing for "Hercules and Omphale", around 1535, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, fig. 54).

17 Anne-Marie Lecoq, "La symbolique de l'état. Les images de la monarchie des premiers Valois à Louis XIV," in *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora, vol. 1: *La nation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 1244.

18 Sylvie Béguin, "François I[er], Jupiter et quelques belles bellifontaines," in *Royaume de Fémynie. Pouvoirs, contraintes, espaces de liberté des femmes, de la Renaissance à la Fronde. Actes du colloque de Blois 1995*, ed. Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier et al. (Paris: Garnier, 1999), 180: "Quant à Hercule, autre personnification de François I[er], vêtu de la robe d'Omphale à la Porte Dorée, il nous invitait, dès l'entrée du château de Fontainebleau, au déguisement, mais, aussi, à nous méfier des apparences et à aller au delà des faux semblants." See also Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, "Women on Top at Fontainebleau," *Oxford Art Journal* 16 (1993): 34–48.

After passing through the gateway, the visitor enters the *Cour du Donjon* "through night to light." There he faces a motivic repetition of the triumphal arched facade in the Italianate staircase front, which at that time still had a two-flight ascent, and against whose setting the master of the castle confronts him (Figure 5).[19] The Emperor spends the transitional period "between the years," which is also liturgi-

Figure 5: Staircase front, around 1531, Cour du Donjon, Fontainebleau castle (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, fig. 62).

19 Albert Bray, "Le premier grand escalier du palais de Fontainebleau et les anciens escaliers de la cour ovale," *Bulletin monumental* 99 (1940): 193–203; André Chastel, "L'Escalier de la Cour Ovale à Fontainebleau," in *Essays in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower*, ed. Douglas Fraser et al. (London: Phaidon Press, 1967); Chatenet, *La cour de France*, 253: "deux images architecturales destinées à frapper l'esprit du visiteur, à le préparer à la rencontre avec le souverain."

cally indefinite, in the mannerist imaginary universe of Fontainebleau. His rival, the French king, and his representative Jupiter follow him at every turn, as we shall see, and signal supremacy by artistic means. One last time he encounters the father of the gods, who hierarchically surpasses his own Hercules identification, when leaving the castle; above the so-called *Porte royale*, which leads from the *Cour du Donjon* back to the vestibule of the *Porte dorée*, a bust of the king was probably already enthroned at that time between Minerva and Juno as a Jupiter surrogate.[20]

Probably the most important message of the ceremonial use of the gallery lay in the king's exclusive interpretive authority over his works of art. Written sources to support this hypothesis do not exist, so we are relegated to the artworks themselves and their structural and functional logic. Structurally, the *Grande Galerie* follows a strategy of purposefully deployed encryption and hermeticism, which could be used by the sovereign in the act of display as an instrument of domination and demonstration of political superiority and was used as such de facto – anew at the occasion of each viewing.

Let us for a moment experimentally imagine ourselves in the situation of someone who enters the gallery for the first time. Be warned from the very beginning – for the uninitiated, entering this art cosmos represents an extreme experience of crisis, which is at the same time an intensified aesthetic experience: completely unprepared, they are confronted with an accumulation of hermetic signifiers. Following the ceremonial itinerary through the castle, the visitors enter the gallery, as already mentioned, from its east end from the *chambre du roi*. Once the low entrance door, originally integrated unremarkably into the surrounding wooden decoration of the lambriere, has closed behind the visitors, they are confronted with an artistic richness such as hitherto not to be found at any other European court. If they first direct their gaze into the 64-meter depth of this edifice, they see that this sign-covered world of art is a closed microcosm, since the paintings and stucco decorations run around all four walls.

If they then turn their gaze to the right and to the left, they are relieved to discover that the artist has at least placed a hint in the stucco to the right of them for the correct starting point for the interpretive adventure (Figure 6); there, a monumental female figure turns to them and invites them as it were, to visit the gallery with her hand gesture pointing the way. She seems to trample on the "daily busi-

20 Cécile Scailliérez, *François I^er^ et ses artistes dans les collections du Louvre* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992), 52–53; Janet Cox-Rearick, *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Renaissance. La collection de François I^er^* (Antwerp, Paris: Fonds Mercator, Albin Michel, 1995), 19.

ness" of warfare – represented by the stucco relief depicting a battle beneath her – with her right hand pointing to the culturally and artistically dominated counter-world of the royal gallery. Below the main fresco, a small *quadro riportato* – its oversized frame clearly marking it as a fictional painting – shows the viewers one last time where they are and the journey they have already made since entering the castle; the miniature elevation in the cartouche of the majestic *Porte dorée* with the gallery adjoining it to the west is the last orientation landmark slightly above the viewers' eye level and their last contact with the outside world.

Figure 6: Rosso Fiorentino and Collaborators, so-called Venus, Galerie François I^{er}, Fontainebleau castle, around 1534/39 (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, pl. 24).

If they direct their gaze upward to the main fresco – which also appears framed and thus confronts them as if in the presentation of a collection – they are confronted with the first of many ambiguous and polysemic pictorial motifs. The graceful main figure (the very one Wallop had identified as Lucretia) to the left of the intricately reclining boy seems to be the painterly double of the lady in the stucco to the right. Previous interpreters have disagreed as to whether this is Venus punishing Cupid for abandoning Psyche,[21] or Cupid's education,[22] or Cupid

21 Père Pierre Dan, *Fontainebleau, le trésor des merveilles de la maison royale* (Paris: Res universis, 1990 [Reprint of the edition Paris 1642]), 91; Pierre Guilbert, *Description historique du château, bourg et forêt de Fontainebleau* (Marseille: Laffitte Reprints, 1978 [Reprint of the edition Paris 1731]), vol. 1, 92.

22 Kurt Kusenberg, *Le Rosso* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1931), 65.

asleep,[23] – or even Venus abandoned by Mars.[24] The female figure wringing her hands, descending the central steps to the water basin, is also ambiguous; it could be Minerva, who joins and allies with Venus in cultural mission while Cupid sleeps,[25] but it could also represent a nymph, which would thematically "match" the water and the two purple-sculptured tritons on the left of the painting. In a playful way, the fresco at the same time suggests the theme of *arma et litterae;*[26] the flock of cupids on the upper left, no doubt an homage to Raphael's "Galatea,"[27] plays with weapons, while on the lower right, behind a column with a Solomon-twisted shaft, a cupid presents an only slightly open book. The weapons carried through the air refer – just like the two battle reliefs under the monumental antique stucco figures at the side of the fresco – to war and battle themes and thus stand in clear contrast to the other contents of the fresco.

To bring these heterogeneous elements into a meaningful context is not possible for the viewers. Since a sequential-immanent comprehension of what is depicted fails here, they will strive to find clues to a possible interpretation in the surroundings. Obviously, they will first look for comparable and similar elements in order to orientate themselves in the confusing variety. In this effort for clarification the viewer basically has two possibilities; either they follow the decorative units along the north wall where they began their tour, or they turn to the opposite unit of the decoration in order to try their luck there. The elaborate, three-dimensional stucco elements that frame and close the Venus fresco, but above all the "light barrier" of the adjoining window opening (which are no longer in their original state today), suggest that the search for meaning should continue on the opposite south side.

There, the viewers actually find a corresponding formal element (Figure 7); the male figure at the lower edge of the painting with its arm extended parallel to the frame mirrors the arm position of Cupid in the foreground of the Venus fresco – this is a typical example of Rosso's technique of formal transitions with a simultaneous heterogeneity of meanings.[28] The viewers have also encountered the theme of battle

23 Sylvie Béguin and Sylvia Pressouyre, "Documentation, descriptions, interprétations et exégèses," *La Galerie François I^er^ au Château de Fontainebleau. Numéro spéciale de la Revue de l'art* 16–17 (1972): 125; André Chastel, "Le système de la Galerie," *La Galerie François I^er^ au Château de Fontainebleau*, 143–50.

24 Guy de Tervarent, "La pensée du Rosso," in *Les énigmes de l'art*, vol. 4: *L'art savant* (Bruges: De Tempel, [1952]).

25 Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino*, 231.

26 See Claudia Brink, *Arte et marte. Kriegskunst und Kunstliebe im Herrscherbild des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts in Italien* (Munich, Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2000).

27 Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino*, 231.

28 Zerner, *L'art de la Renaissance*, 72: "Le rapport ici est plus thématique que morphologique. On assiste à une sorte de chassé-croisé, de contamination ou de mise en équivalence inattendue

before in the two battle reliefs. These coincidences, however, stimulate a hope for explanation that is not fulfilled. In general, on closer inspection, the differences between the two pictorial units facing each other predominate. Stylistically and with regard to the composition of the painting and the filling of the painted areas, the fresco "The Battle of the Centaurs and Lapiths" clearly contrasts with the "Venus." While the Venus painting and its decorations were characterised by Raphaelesque grace, now – both in the main fresco and in the reclining male figures blowing fanfares in the corner fields of the frame – Michelangelesque furor and Herculean forms prevail. The fanfare-blowing men seem to be direct persiflage of the daytime sculptures from the New Sacristy of S. Lorenzo in Florence: their leg poses in particular came into Rosso's ironizing visor. Thus, the two heroes of contemporary Roman Renaissance art in papal service are brilliantly outdone, with Roman *maniera modernissima* translocated to the French territory in a most possessive gesture.[29]

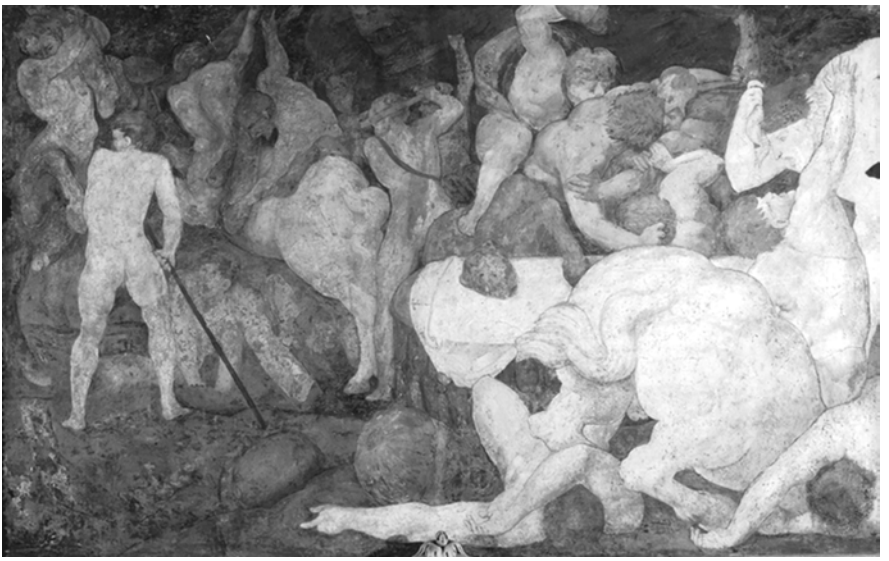

Figure 7: Rosso Fiorentino and Collaborators, so-called Battle of the Centaurs and Lapiths, Galerie François I^{er}, Fontainebleau castle, around 1534/39 (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, pl. 26).

entre l'aspect formel et l'aspect thématique des motifs dont on trouverait bien d'autres exemples."

29 Christine Tauber, "A *paragone* of Styles: The Mannerist Challenge to Raphael and Michelangelo at the Court of Francis I," in *The Translation of Raphael's Roman Style*, ed. Henk T. van Veen (Leuven, Paris, Dudley: Peeters Publishers, 2007).

Such virtuoso transformations, which often go hand in hand with shifts in meaning in an ironizing manner and thus signal intellectual superiority, reveal Rosso's art as an ideal symbiosis of genuine aesthetic freedom as well as the unfolding of artistic autonomy in the tradition of the revaluation of artistic imaginative activity as an innovative force with the political intention of the king. Mannerism as a genuinely modern style perfectly suits Francis' modern notion of politics. In his representation of power, he thus deliberately relies on an art that is autonomous and open to the future and paradoxically promises him the highest legitimacy for all time. The ambiguity of the gallery, with its degree of hermeticism varying from fresco to fresco, is programmatic, denying the viewers a continuous narrative approach to meaning. With each new gaze, they engage in a dynamic process of constant shifting of meaning, enrichment of significance, and constant recontextualization of supposedly already conclusively interpreted elements.

Numerous motifs in the gallery's last three *travées* indicate that Francis I had by no means abandoned his imperial aspirations, despite the disastrous military defeat at Pavia and the unsuccessful competition with Charles V for the title of Holy Roman Emperor in 1519. This was already evident in the telling coffered vaults of Chambord Castle (built 1518/19–1530), in which the omnipresent royal salamander was surmounted by the imperial arched crown. But the rear part of the Fontainebleau Gallery, in particular, offers more references to the era of the Roman Empire, which is equated with its own time in an identificatory way. Imperial Rome is omnipresent here, for example in the depiction of Caritas Romana below the fresco "Cléobis et Biton" or in the Roman architectures in the stucco cartouche next to it – although once again these are not outright quotations but witty variations of antique models; for example, the relief spiral of Trajan's column is shown mirrored in comparison to the actual column (Figure 8). Already stylistically, the gallery decoration has imperial-Roman (and not Roman-Republican) connotations due to Rosso's relief-like style based on sarcophagi, as can be seen in the comparison of the "Battle of the Centaurs" with the relief by Michelangelo (Figure 9). This imperial program culminates in the last fresco of the gallery, the so-called "Ignorance chassée." This also represents an ironic commentary on the futility of the viewers' attempt to discover meaning, and thus a demonstration of his inferiority to the omnipotent lord of the castle, which Charles V must not have failed to notice.

Only at second glance do the viewers recognise that the place central to the interpretation of this fresco is occupied by the small figure facing the brightly lit door in the background (Figure 10). As in two frescoes before, the king appears here in person in a portrait; he enters the Capitoline temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus as *ex utroque* Caesar (with book and sword) and Divus Augustus alike (recognizable from the barely visible inscription on the portal lintel "OSTIUM IOVIS").

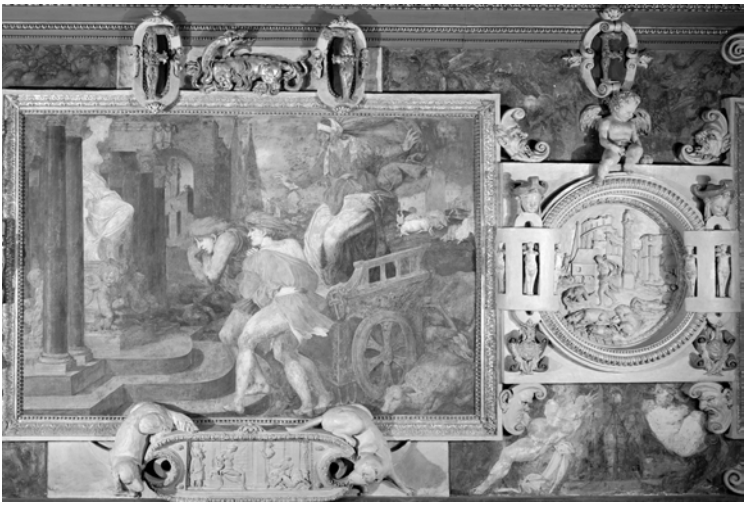

Figure 8: Rosso Fiorentino and Collaborators, so-called Cleobis and Biton, Galerie François I^{er}, Fontainebleau castle, around 1534/39. Beneath the Caritas Romana, on the right Trajan's column with inverted shaft (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, pl. 35).

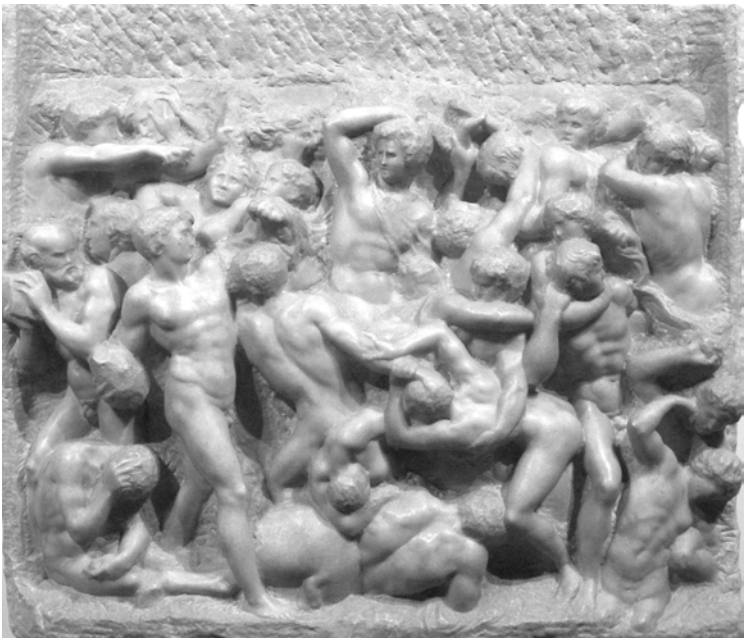

Figure 9: Michelangelo, Battle of the Centaurs, 1492/94, Casa Buonarroti, Florence (Sailko, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7344643).

The book under his arm, the book that seems to have wandered from the Venus fresco all through the gallery in its diagonal to the very end,[30] contains perhaps the solution for the enigmas of the hieroglyphs in the gallery,[31] perhaps also the never written program. But it is closed, for the king as his fictitious author does not need this reading aid himself. The sword, as well, is not drawn to fight man against man, but only symbolises sovereign potency. Francis I does not rely on military strength and the martial arts; rather, he shows himself in the end as the educated ruler, as intellectual and *litteratus*, who drives the ignorants – recognizable by their blindfolds – out of his realm. But at the same time, as the most educated, he keeps an elitist-intellectual and absolute distance from his subjects as well as from the foreign diplomats, a distance that renders him unreachable as a ruler and thaumaturgical interpreter of signs and thus in the highest degree legitimised.

Figure 10: Rosso Fiorentino and Collaborators, so-called Expulsion of Ignorance, Galerie François I^{er}, Fontainebleau castle, around 1534/39 (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, pl. 40).

30 John Shearman, "The Galerie François Premier: A Case in Point," *Miscellanea Musicologica. Studies in Musicology* 11 (1980): 2.

31 See Ulrich Gaier, "Vielversprechende Hieroglyphen. Hermeneutiken der Entschlüsselungsversuche von der Renaissance bis Rosette," in *Ägyptomanie. Europäische Ägyptenimagination von der Antike bis heute*, ed. Wilfried Seipel (Wien, Milan: Skira, 2000).

Only the sovereign, as the "Expulsion of Ignorance," seems to teach the viewer, has access to the *Arcana imperii*, and is thus the Master of the interpretations of the hieroglyphs that symbolise these *Arcana* in enigmatic encryption. He maintains his interpretive sovereignty because he does not share that secret of ruling with anyone and strictly limits elitist access to the hieroglyphs, which give hermetic hints about the foundations of his power without divulging the whole truth. He does not take the blinded ones, who desperately stretch out their hands to him, into the illuminating enlightenment, but demonstratively ends the sightseeing tour by his departure into higher spheres, breaking off the communication one-sidedly and taking leave majestically into the divine sphere. The king alone has the authority of interpretation in his gallery, determining not only the itinerary of the visit, but also the time the visitors are allowed to spend in front of the paintings. Knowledge is power, and explanation of the incomprehensible is a proof of sovereign grace. The Sovereign arbitrarily exposes the levels of meaning and may explain them according to his respective intentions, since they cannot be conclusively interpreted. The decisive factor is not whether the sovereign himself actually understands the encrypted signs or merely presents himself as a perceiver; rather, it is decisive whether he can successfully suggest to those around him that he has insight into all the secrets of his imperial power.

Mannerist art had proceeded even more extensively in this strategy of overdetermination, occasionally allowing itself to merely simulate meaning, to present drolleries as containing meaning. In this way, it unmasked the system of supposedly unambiguous assignment of meaning and replaced it with a more complex system of encryption, ironic volte-face, and virtuoso use of any artistic means imaginable. It was precisely the artificiality of the style patronised by the king that guaranteed that the means of representation could be mastered. On the other hand, this form of virtuosity always included the possibility of doing something completely different. Arbitrariness here becomes an intellectual aristocratic instrument of power. The arbitrary handling of pagan as well as Christian traditions and the dissolution of the aesthetic norm of mimesis, which guaranteed the verifiability of artistic achievement by means of truthful depiction, gives the king the autonomy to arrange his signs in a way that suits his representational purposes. He is the master of the transformational laws in his gallery, and thus he dominates the viewers and delimits for them the scope of their understanding. He has the key power, and he situationally reserves the decision as of what is to be central and what is to be peripheral in this (albeit small and restricted) cosmos of art,[32] which is completely

32 Françoise and Pierre Joukovsky, *A travers la Galerie François I^er^* (Paris: Champion, 1992), 174: "Cet art de l'illusion est essentiellement dynamique: tous ces artifices tendent à repousser l'espace, à aller plus loin, pour métamorphoser en empire une galerie d'un château français."

dominated by him. His interpretative authority and power of command gives him absolute sovereignty – at least over the artistic centerpiece of his kingdom.

The staged control of the keys and the authority of interpretation are flanked by another powerfully played out monopoly of rule: that of reproduction sovereignty over the art commissioned by the king.[33] He not only offers the English diplomat mentioned at the beginning of this article that Henry is welcome to obtain marble from the newly explored French quarries, but also seems willing to have another set of casts of antiques made from the famous molds that his court artist Primaticcio is currently making for him in Rome in the Belvedere Court – the first identically large bronze casts of the Belvedere Antiques, which were then cast in bronze in Fontainebleau in a specially equipped workshop.[34] Wallop obviously took this offer seriously, because in the course of his account he goes so far as to claim that the French king would surely also be happy to have his entire gallery's interior duplicated for the English court: "An in the gallerey of St James the like wold be wel made, for it is bothe highe and large. Yf your pleasure be to have the paterne of this here, I knowe right wel the Frenche King woll gladly geve it me."[35]

What the English ambassador still formulated as a wishful thinking – a reproduction of the entire gallery – actually existed in rudimentary form; six tapestries preserved today in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna show a sequence of the gallery's *travées* with their decorations (Figure 11).[36] So here we have a case

33 For this and the following see Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, chapter 7: "Strategien der Souveränität: Antikenimport und Reproduktionshoheit," 291–338; id., "*Translatio Imperii*? – Primaticcios Abguß des Laokoon in Fontainebleau," in *Laokoon in Literatur und Kunst*, ed. Dorothee Gall et al. (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2008).

34 Sylvia Pressouyre, "Les fontes de Primatice à Fontainebleau," *Bulletin monumental* 127 (1969): 223–39; Bertrand Jestaz, "Les moulages d'antiques fondus en bronze au XVI^{e} siècle," in *Les moulages de sculptures antiques et l'histoire de l'archéologie*, ed. Henri Lavagne et al. (Geneva: Droz, 2000); Regina Seelig-Teuwen, "Large Bronzes in France During the Sixteenth Century," in *Large Bronzes in the Renaissance*, ed. Peta Motture (New Haven, London: Yale U.P., 2003); Suzanne Favier, "Les collections de marbres antiques sous François I^{er}," *Revue du Louvre* 24 (1974): 153–56; Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique. The Lure of Classical Sculpture (1500–1900)* (New Haven, London: Yale U.P., 1981), 1–6; Cox-Rearick, *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Renaissance*, 319–61; *Primatice. Maître de Fontainebleau*, 137–54.

35 McAllister Johnson, "Neglected Usages," 53.

36 Louis Dimier, "La tenture de la Galerie de Fontainebleau à Vienne," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 16 (1927): 166–70; Bertrand Jestaz, "La tenture de la Galerie de Fontainebleau et sa restauration à Vienne à la fin du XVII^{e} siècle," *Revue de l'art* 22 (1973): 50–56; Gerlinde Gruber, "Les tentures à sujets mythologiques de la Grande Galerie de Fontainebleau," *Revue de l'art* 108 (1995): 23–31; Sylvia Pressouyre, "Problèmes de style. Le témoignage des tapisseries," *La Galerie François I^{er} au Château de Fontainebleau. Numéro spéciale de la Revue de l'art* 16–17 (1972): 106–11; Sophie Schneebalg-Perelman, *Les chasses de Maximilien. Les énigmes d'un chef-d'œuvre de la tapisserie* (Brussels: Chabassol, 1982),

in which the French king powerfully exploited his reproductive sovereignty. And who would have been more suitable as the addressee of such a demonstration of art-political power than the Roman-German Emperor? It is highly probable that at least the commission for these materially and artistically extraordinarily valuable tapestries was motivated by Charles V's visit to Fontainebleau in 1539. It was only in this act of reproduction that the elitist access-restricted representative space of the gallery gained political impact beyond Fontainebleau – the same applies, of course, to print reproduction. The choice of the incredibly elaborate and cost-intensive medium of tapestry for the gallery's "second version" also points to the emperor, who was a leading figure in Europe in terms of patronage of the arts, especially in the (conservative) medium of tapestry; all the other European rulers tried to emulate him in this domain. Royal copyright thus became an imperial privilege, used in diplomatic intercourse at the highest level. It serves equally as a demonstration of *largesse* and as proof of superiority; for the dissemination of Fontainebleau's genuine, original, and unique style represents the demonstration of power of a new *Leitkultur* (leading culture) that takes confidently from the "model Italy" what it needs without slavishly following it.

Figure 11: Tapestry "Cleobis and Biton", around 1540–47, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, pl. 47).

117–54; Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino*, 246–49; Wolfgang Brassat, *Tapisserien und Politik. Funktionen, Kontexte und Rezeption eines repräsentativen Mediums* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1992); Andrea Stockhammer, "Cat.nr. 55: 'The Unity of the State'," in *Tapestry in the Renaissance. Art and Magnificence*. Exh. Cat. ed. Thomas P. Campbell (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002); id., "Tapestry Production in France (1520–60)," in *Tapestry in the Renaissance.*

In the years from 1515 to 1525, Francis I had recourse to a genuinely French arsenal of motifs for self-representation, since at that time he still believed that he could maintain the French *Regnum Italiae* in Italy itself. Only after 1525, after his disastrous defeat by the imperial army in the Battle of Pavia, when the "Italian Dream" had failed, did he adopt the strategy of transferring Italy to France, and building his own Italy there – above all in Fontainebleau – whose aspirations, however, went far beyond the mere transfer of culture: the French king wanted to outdo Italy in France through his targeted import of artists and build a *Nuova Roma* that was supposed to eclipse Ancient Rome in virtuosity, sophistication, and modernity. This ambition also included the imperial claim to power, which was not abandoned, but rather proclaimed in an artistically sublimated form.

A particularly demonstrative act of importing *Romanità* is the aforementioned commission to Francesco Primaticcio to cast those Roman antiques that were inextricably associated with the highest papal claim to representation: the statues of the Cortile del Belvedere, whose highly charged semantics of power politics the French king used for his own demonstration of authority. The dictum of Fontainebleau as a new Rome goes back to Giorgio Vasari:

> [. . .] Primaticcio was recalled from Rome. For having embarked with the said marble statues and molds of the antiques, he returned to France, where before all other things he cast, according as they were in the said molds and forms, a great part of those antique statues; which come so well, that they seem to be the antiques themselves, as may be seen in the *Jardin de la Reine* at Fontainebleau, to the greatest satisfaction of the king, who almost transformed the said place into a new Rome.[37]

What is meant in the context of Vasari's *Vita* of Primaticcio is that the casts of the Belvedere antiques created a second Belvedere and consequently a second Rome on French soil. Vasari, as an Italian, however, immediately diminishes this claim to a *"quasi nuova Roma"* by calling it a copy that only "almost" comes close to the original. But with this he misses the specific novelty of this French *Roma renovata* in Fontainebleau, which consisted in the accentuation of the *renovatio* idea by means of reproduction; the integration of these antiques into the iconography of Fontainebleau documented a right to transformation, which at the same time equaled a complete appropriation. It uses the ideological surplus of the papal statue staging, but

37 Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. Paola Barocchi et al., vol. 6 (Florence: Sansoni, 1987), 144: "[. . .] fu richiamato da Roma il Primaticcio. Perche imbarcatosi con i detti marmi e cavi di figure antiche, se ne tornò in Francia, dove innanzi ad ogni altra cosa gettò, secondo che erano in detti cavi e forme, una gran parte di quelle figure antiche; le quali vennono tanto bene, che paiano le stesse antiche, come si può vedere là dove furono poste nel giardino della reina a Fontanableò, con grandissima sodisfazione di quel re, che fece in detto luogo quasi una nuova Roma."

through new contextualization creates something genuinely new, which is something else (and therefore implicitly something always superior to Ancient Rome).

This *translatio artis* of the Belvedere Antiques amounted to a *translatio imperii* to the new Rome of Fontainebleau – especially with the sculpture of Laocoon (Figure 12), which in its new home refers to the autochthonous founding myth of France, which traces itself back to Troy and thus to a time before the founding of Rome. The public display of statue ownership by collectors in the sixteenth century is a proof of power, which in the hardly republican Fontainebleau became a kind of evidence of imperial power. Moreover, the mere material iconography of the bronze has Roman imperial connotations. The reproduction and subsequent disposition of works of art for purposes of power politics in the arrangement and reinterpretation of the casts obviously meant more to the French king than the possession of original antique marble statues. Furthermore, the cast produced in the mode of "technical reproducibility" created a second version, a new original with autonomous artistic pretensions, which was not considered deficient compa-

Figure 12: Francesco Primaticcio, Laocoon, 1543, Galery of Diana, Fontainebleau castle (Tauber, *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis*, 2009, pl. 44).

red to the model, but on the contrary superior. The pope had probably not taken this into consideration when he so generously dispensed his copyright.

A comparable process of appropriation of Roman art into the French context occurred in the *Grande Galerie*, which showed a multitude of transformations of the greatest Roman art models, both ancient imperial Roman and papal. The total appropriation of the art models gives the new owner the right to reproduce them all over again, transforming them and making them subservient to his interpretations. The casts, as mobile cultural objects, are entirely subject to the sovereign's power of disposal; he can transfer them at his will. The new frame of reference of copies – which negates the original context of the reproduced originals – is the collection, whose owner subjects the reproductions to a new order of objects. The king himself is the custodian of his collection, arranging his pieces according to his representative needs and ruling unrestrictedly over his self-created art cosmos as a powerful connoisseur.

However, this form of modern, intellectualised practice of power and government is conceived too exclusively to be successful in terms of power politics. It already structurally anticipates its failure. It is not effective on the mass level and thus cannot be imposed in terms of *Realpolitik*, and it is significant that neither French Mannerism or the so-called Fontainebleau School nor Francis' I specific understanding of sovereignty found a genuine posterity. Developments in both the political and the artistic spheres took a very different trajectory in the centuries to come. Court ceremonial as a means of exercising arcane power, as it blossomed in highly artificial ways at the French court in the first half of the sixteenth century cultivating artificial paradises in which power manifests itself as a ritual and enigma to be deciphered, is now increasingly deprived of its mystery by ceremonial science, and fixed tools for interpretation are canonised. Reversely, this disenchantment and loss of charisma corresponds to a greater communicability and efficacy of ruling power. Symmetry, order, and predictability, coupled with military power, were supposed to make France a world power after the Wars of Religion. The witty use of irony, disruptions, ambiguities, and disturbances of order no longer had a place in this new absolutist regime.

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„da caput a cauda mundi.“ Zur Reziprozität metropolitaner Identität und (post-)imperialer Logik im mittelalterlichen Rom

Abstract: The chapter analyses the reciprocity of the terms imperiality and metropolitanism. To this end, it defines both terms, highlights their meaning in the current research landscape, and explains the value of combining the terms as a research framework. This examination is of a rather general nature and is also meant to make the synthesis of the two terms applicable to further case studies. In the course of this chapter, these rather theoretical considerations are applied to the case study of the medieval commune of Rome. The main focus of the analysis is the political situation of the fourteenth century, in particular the protest movement of urban Roman notary Cola di Rienzo. This movement made intensive use of both metropolitan and imperial resources of communication, which were not only reciprocal but are able to explain both the success and failure of the movement.

„[...] Roma, la quale, come è oggi coda, così già fu capo del mondo.“[1] Hier, am fünften Tage der dritten Novelle seines *Decameron*, einer insgesamt hundert Novellen umfassenden Novellensammlung des italienischen Dichters Giovanni Boccaccio, spricht der Schriftsteller über Rom, die „Ewige Stadt“ am Tiber. Dieses Wahrzeichen städtisch-metropolitaner Größe und imperialer Herrschaft sei heute nur noch der „Schwanz der Welt“, einst aber „Haupt der Welt“ gewesen. In interessanter Weise spielt Boccaccio mit dem römischen Label des *Caput Mundi*, verdreht dieses in das Umgekehrte und wandelt es vom Haupt zum Ende der Welt, kreiert somit ein Bild des städtisch-imperialen Verfalls. Dass dieses Wortspiel so gut funktioniert, liegt an der traditionsreichen Geschichte und dem Selbstverständnis Roms als Zentrum der Welt, als *Caput Mundi* und imperialem Zentralort.[2] Das Wissen um die (einstige) Imperialität und

1 Giovanni Boccaccio, Decameron, Mailand 2003, S. 336.

2 Vgl. zum antiken Zentralortsgedanken Jennifer Finn, The Center of the Earth in Ancient Thought, in: Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History 4/1–2 (2017), S. 177–209 und spezifisch zum antiken Zentralitätskonzept in Bezug auf Rom ebd., S. 188–200.

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metropolitane Zentralortfunktion der Stadt am Tiber ist wesentlicher Bestandteil dieser literarischen Neuakzentuierung.

Diese Beobachtung führt zu einem in der aktuellen geisteswissenschaftlichen Forschung weite Kreise ziehenden Diskurs. Gerade die letzten Jahrzehnte brachten eine rege Debatte über die Nutzung, Definition und analytische Tragweite des Imperialismusbegriffs für verschiedene Forschungskontexte hervor.[3] Die eingangs zitierte Passage aus dem *Decameron* verdeutlicht, dass das Nachdenken über Imperialität kein rein modernes Phänomen ist, sondern auch die Menschen vormoderner Gesellschaften zur Reflektion anregte.[4] In der Forschung gab es, neben zahlreichen Arbeiten zum modernen Imperialismus des 19./20. Jahrhunderts und hier insbesondere dem „Zeitalter des Imperialismus" 1870–1914,[5] vor allem aus dem Bereich der Altertumswissenschaft rege Resonanz zu dem Thema,[6] während das Mittelalter weniger in den Fokus der Analyse geriet.[7]

3 Vgl. hierzu u. a. Michael Gehler, Robert Rollinger, Einleitung. Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte – Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche, in: Michael Gehler/Robert Rollinger (Hrsg.), Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte – Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche. Teil 1: Imperien des Altertums, Mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Imperien, Wiesbaden 2014, S. 1–32, hier S. 1–3; Frank Deppe, David Salomon, Ingar Solty, Imperialismus, Köln 2011, hier S. 6–27 und Paul Burton, Roman Imperialism, Leiden/Boston 2019, hier S. 8–18 und zum „imperial turn" der letzten Jahrzehnte in Forschung und Gesellschaft vgl. Peter Eich, Imperien. Dynamischer Wandel, Temporalität und nachimperiale Ordnungen. Forschungsprogramm des GRK 2571. URL: https://www.grk2571.uni-freiburg.de/forschungsprogramm/forschungsprogramm_grk_2571.pdf (zuletzt abgerufen am 29.5.2024), hier S. 1. Vgl. für einen Forschungsüberblick zudem Hans-Heinrich Nolte, Kurze Geschichte der Imperien, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2017, hier S. 14–41. Natürlich gibt es eine weitaus länger zurückreichende Auseinandersetzung mit dem Phänomen des Imperialismus. Vgl. zu Imperialismustheorien des 20. Jahrhunderts Otto Brunner, Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Band 3. H–Me., Stuttgart 1982, hier S. 216–231.

4 Vgl. Gregor Schöllgen, Friedrich Kiessling, Das Zeitalter des Imperialismus, München 2009[5], hier S. 1 f.

5 Vgl. Eric Hobsbawm, Das imperiale Zeitalter. 1875-1914, Frankfurt a. M. 2008[2] (übers. v. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Engl. Originalausgabe: The Age of Empire 1875-1914, London 1987), hier S. 79–113; Brunner, Grundbegriffe, S. 182 f.; Schöllgen/Kiessling, Zeitalter, S. 1–7; Deppe u. a., Imperialismus, S. 12 und S. 27.

6 Vgl. Thomas Harrison, Einführung. Ein neuer Blick auf alte Reiche, in: Thomas Harrison (Hrsg), Imperien der Antike, Mainz 2010, S. 6–17, hier S. 6–13.

7 Vgl. Thomas Vogtherr, Die europäische Staatenwelt im hohen und späten Mittelalter, Imperium oder konkurrierende Territorialstaaten?, in: Michael Gehler/Robert Rollinger (Hrsg.), Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte – Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche. Teil 1: Imperien des Altertums, Mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Imperien, Wiesbaden 2014, S. 697–710, hier S. 705–708 und Peter Crooks, State of the Union: Perspectives on English imperialism in the late Middle Ages, in: Past and Present. A Journal of Historical Studies 212/1 (2011), S. 3–42, hier S. 3 und S. 9. Vgl. zur Idee einer Probebohrung bezüglich der Nutzung von Imperialismustheorien am Beispiel des mittelalterlich-britischen Königreichs ebd., S. 3–9 und

Boccaccio, der in seinem Text eine spätmittelalterliche Perspektive auf das Thema evident macht,[8] fokussiert den imperialen Verfall, den Verlust von Imperialität als Merkmal der antiken Hauptstadt und Millionenmetropole Rom. Imperialität zeigt sich in dieser Perspektive als Nuance von städtischer Metropolität, was zum Kern dieses Beitrages führt, der die Verbindung von Metropolität und Imperialität am Beispiel des mittelalterlichen Roms in den Blick nimmt.[9] Dabei soll zunächst geklärt werden, welche forschungsanalytischen Zugriffe sich hinter den beiden Begriffen verstecken, welche Forschungsfragen mit ihnen beantwortet werden können, wie sie sich unterscheiden bzw. abgrenzen lassen, aber auch, wo es offensichtliche Überschneidungen gibt. Boccaccios Metapher deutet bereits an, dass für die Zeitgenossen das (Groß-)Städtische in ihrer Wahrnehmung eng mit dem Imperialen verknüpft war. Neben der komparatistischen methodologischen Auseinandersetzung mit den beiden Begriffen, soll in diesem Beitrag daher am Beispiel Roms diskutiert werden, ob und wie sich imperiale und metropolitane Legitimationsmuster in der vormodernen Stadt reziprok bedingten.

Die Stadt Rom scheint dabei in zweierlei Hinsicht ein gewinnbringendes Exemplum zu sein. Zum einen ist sie in einem diachronen Blickwinkel auf das Engste verknüpft mit dem Status als Metropole, ebenso wie mit seiner Funktion im *Imperium Romanum*, dem paradigmatischen Imperium der (europäischen) Vormoderne.[10] Zum anderen war die Imperialität und Metropolität Roms nach der Antike

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auch Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, Zu Imperialismus, Nationalismus und Nationenentstehung im mittelalterlichen England, in: Jörg Albertz (Hrsg.), Was ist das mit Volk und Nation? Nationale Fragen in Europas Geschichte und Gegenwart, Berlin 1992, S. 73–128. Vgl. überblickshaft zu Imperien des Mittelalters Michael Gehler/Robert Rollinger (Hrsg.): Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte – Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche. Teil 1: Imperien des Altertums, Mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Imperien, Wiesbaden 2014, hier v. a.: S. 537–815. Siehe zur definitorisch schwierigen Nutzung der Begriffe in mittelalterlichen Kontexten Christoph Mauntel, Beyond Rome. The polyvalent usage and levels of meaning of *Imperator* and *Imperium* in Medieval Europe, in: Wouter Bracke/Jan Nelis/Jan de Maeyer (Hrsg.), Renovatio, inventio, absentia imperii. From the Roman Empire to Contemporary Imperialism, Brüssel u. a. 2018, S. 69–92, hier S. 69–73 und S. 86 f.

8 Auch wenn in der Forschungslandschaft das Mittelalter bisher wenig unter Gesichtspunkten des Imperialismus untersucht wurde, so ist gerade die Phase des Spätmittelalters und des Übergangs zur Frühen Neuzeit hierfür durchaus ergiebig (vgl. hierzu Crooks, Union, S. 40 f.).

9 Zur Bedeutung von Metropolen für Imperien vgl. u. a. Burton, Imperialism, S. 13 f. und Herfried Münkler, Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten, Berlin 2008², hier S. 50.

10 Vgl. Kai Ruffing, Rom – das paradigmatische Imperium, in: Michael Gehler/Robert Rollinger (Hrsg.), Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte – Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche. Teil 1: Imperien des Altertums, Mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Imperien, Wiesbaden 2014, S. 401–447, hier S. 405–419 und S. 435–437; Wouter Bracke/Jan Nelis/Jan de

weiterhin wirkmächtig für die Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung der Stadt. Sie fungierte als vergangenes Idealbild, welches die Zeitgenossen im postimperialen römischen Mittelalter ebenso anregte wie die Menschen der Frühen Neuzeit oder des modernen Roms.[11] Rom zeigt sich daher als erfolgsversprechendes Untersuchungsobjekt für die Frage nach imperialer Temporalität und der Reziprozität von Imperialität und Metropolität.[12] Der Beitrag setzt sich daher aus zwei Schwerpunkten zusammen. Zunächst sollen die Begriffe Metropolität und Imperialität ausführlich als forschungsanalytische Begriffe definiert und verglichen werden, da die methodologische Verbindung der beiden Zugriffe per se einen Mehrwert darstellt. In einem zweiten Schritt soll am Beispiel des mittelalterlichen Roms die analytische Verbindung der beiden Zugänge exemplarisch angewendet werden.

Maeyer: Empire and Imperialism throughout the centuries. Reflections on a historical *Exemplum*. Introduction, in: Bracke u. a., Renovatio, S. 1–12, hier S. 3; Michael Sommer, Das römische Kaiserreich. 27 v. Chr.–476 n. Chr., in: Thomas Harrison (Hrsg), Imperien der Antike, Mainz 2010, S. 196–225, hier S. 197 und Nolte, Imperien, S. 74–97.

11 Vgl. zur diachronen Wirkmacht und Rezeption des antik-römischen Verständnisses von Imperialität John Richardson, Imperium Romanum: Empire and the Language of Power', in: Journal of Roman Studies 81 (1991), S. 1–9, hier S. 1. Vgl. auch Jochen Johrendt/Romedio Schmitz-Esser (Hrsg.), Rom – Nabel der Welt. Macht, Glaube, Kultur von der Antike bis heute, Darmstadt 2010. Vgl. für die Vorbildhaftigkeit des Imperialen bei den Päpsten der Renaissance Nicoletta Pellegrino, From the Roman Empire to Christian Imperialism: The Work of Flavio Biondo, in: Alison W. Lewin/Duane J. Osheim (Hrsg.), Chronicling History. Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy, Pennsylvania State University 2007, S. 273–298 und im Kontext des Heiligen Römischen Reichs vgl. Mauntel, Rome, S. 69 f.; Nolte, Imperien, S. 165–204 und Bracke/Nelis/Maeyer, Introduction, S. 3 f. Vgl. zur wichtigen Funktion der römisch-imperialen Antike in der faschistischen Propaganda Julian Zimmermann, Die Antike zwischen Rom und Bozen. Antikenrezeption im italienischen Faschismus und deren Rolle für Herrschaftslegitimation, Italianisierungspolitik und Heroisierungsstrategien. Eine vergleichende Analyse, in: Stefan Tilg/Anna Novokhatko, Antikes Heldentum in der Moderne: Konzepte, Praktiken, Medien (= Pontes IX), Freiburg 2019, S. 77–99, hier v. a. S. 77–85 und Ruffing, Rom, S. 432 f. sowie Martin Baumeister, Eine Hauptstadt für ein Imperium. Rom unter dem Faschismus, in: Johrendt/Schmitz-Esser, Rom, S. 173–189. Vgl. allg. zur Nachwirkung antiker Imperien in der Moderne Harrison, Einführung, S. 13; Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 17–21 und S. 25.

12 Alleine der Beiname „die Ewige Stadt" zeigt bereits an, dass das Moment der Temporalität, der langen Dauer eigener imperialer und metropolitaner Größe, für das städtische Selbstverständnis von zentraler Bedeutung ist.

Analytischer Zugriff – Metropolität und Imperialität im Vergleich

Zunächst gilt es definitorisch zu klären, was die Begriffe Imperium, Imperialität oder Imperialismus unterscheidet und wie sich diese zum Terminus Metropolität verhalten.[13] Gerade die „imperiale Begriffs-Trias“ muss zunächst auf die jeweils konkrete Forschungsfrage zugeschnitten werden,[14] um dann in einem zweiten Schritt den Vergleich zur Metropolität bewerkstelligen zu können. Der Begriff Imperium scheint dabei noch am schnellsten geklärt.[15] Ursprünglich bezeichnete er in der römischen Antike eine Form der Amtsgewalt eines Amtsträgers der Römischen Republik[16] und wandelte sich dann im Laufe der Kaiserzeit zunehmend zum Synonym für ein häufig zentral gesteuertes Großreich.[17]

Komplexer wird die Definition beim Blick auf den Terminus Imperialismus, bei dem die Forschungslandschaft um eine einheitliche Definition ringt.[18] Grundsätzlich bezeichnet er den Prozess und die Methoden, die genutzt werden, um ein Imperium zu etablieren.[19] Je konkreter die Definition jedoch sein soll, desto unterschiedlicher fallen diese aus. Interdisziplinäre Imperialismustheorien fokussieren häufig ein ökonomisches Feld, verbinden daher gerade den Imperialismus der Moderne mit dem Kapitalismus,[20] somit mit finanzieller Expansion und der Durchsetzung spezifischer

13 Vgl. zu diesen Fragen auch die Einleitung dieses Sammelbandes.

14 Vgl. hierzu Deppe u. a., Imperialismus, S. 12–15. In der älteren Forschung, gerade zum Mittelalter, mangelt es an einer solchen konkreten Definition (vgl. z. B. Jäschke, Imperialismus), weswegen die Ergebnisse recht vage bleiben und eher in Kategorien wie „Nationalismus“ verharren, auch wenn nach Imperialismus gesucht wird. Vgl. beispielhaft zur schwierigen Konkretisierung des Begriffs im Kontext mittelalterlicher Quellen Mauntel, Rome, S. 86 f.

15 Vgl. zu verschiedenen definitorischen Auslegungen des Begriffs Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 5–8 und Nolte, Imperien, S. 41 f.

16 Vgl. Richardson, Imperium, S. 2–4; Ruffing, Rom, S. 404–408.; Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 4 und Harrison, Einführung, S. 14.

17 Vgl. Bracke/Nelis/Maeyer, Introduction, S. 3; Richardson, Imperium, S. 5–9; Ruffing, Rom, S. 405 f. Vgl. zu dem häufig angeführten Aspekt der Größe bzw. Ausdehnung Harrison, Einführung, S. 13 f. und Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 3. Natürlich lässt sich auch ein Großreich von einem Imperium definitorisch unterscheiden (vgl. u. a. Münkler, Imperien, S. 16–21).

18 Vgl. Deppe u. a., Imperialismus, S. 12; Schöllgen/Kiessling, Zeitalter, S. 1 und Harrison, Einführung, S. 14. Dies gilt umso mehr in einem diachronen Blick auf das Thema (vgl. Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 3, S. 13–16 und S. 23 f. und 26 f.).

19 Vgl. Münkler, Imperien, S. 20 f.; Michael W. Doyle, Empires, Ithaca (NY) 1986, hier S. 45; Burton, Imperialism, S. 17.

20 Vgl. Hobsbawm, Zeitalter, S. 19–23 und S. 79; Schöllgen/Kiessling, Zeitalter, S. 2; Münkler, Imperien, S. 35–41; Brunner, Grundbegriffe, S. 181 f.; Deppe u. a., Imperialismus, S. 13–15 und S. 21–24.

ökonomisch-politischer Interessen.[21] Wird Imperialismus hingegen aus einem politikwissenschaftlichen oder soziologischen Ansatz betrachtet, dann rücken Perspektiven auf die Akkumulation von Macht in den Mittelpunkt.[22] Dies ist natürlich – gerade in der Perspektive auf Kolonialismus als Nuance des Imperialismus[23] – nicht gänzlich von ökonomischen Überlegungen zu trennen, da Macht oft mit finanzieller Potenz einhergeht. Der Fokus der Fragestellung ist aber mit dem Interesse an Macht, Handlungsfähigkeit und Einfluss durchaus anders akzentuiert, auch wenn beide Perspektiven ähnliche Phänomene beschreiben.[24] Gemein ist den Ansätzen zumeist das Element des Expansiven, der Entscheidungsmacht und der Ausbreitung sowie Beherrschung von Raum und/oder Kapital.[25]

Versucht man nun die Kennzeichen, die ein Großreich analytisch zu einem Imperium machen, zu bündeln, so richtet sich der Blick auf den Begriff der Imperialität. Dieser Terminus kann als Kriterienbündel bezeichnet werden, der in der Analyse als Untersuchungsraster dienen kann. Teil dieses Bündels ist in vielen Ansätzen die Frage nach Zentrum und Peripherie und einer aus dem imperialen Zentrum heraus gesteuerten Politik des imperialen Herrschaftsbereichs.[26] Diese Zentralität bündelt sich in einem Ort, der imperialen Metropole. Folgerichtig zeigt sich beim Blick auf imperiale Hauptstädte, dass sich deren Funktion im imperialen Kontext häufig auf die Stadtentwicklung und städtische Selbstwahrnehmung auswirkt. Diese Reziprozität hat, so die später am Beispiel des mittelalterlichen Roms zu verifizierende Hypothese, Auswirkung auf das Gemeinwesen, auf ihre politische Verfasstheit und innerstädtische Aushandlungsprozesse.

Diese Beobachtungen leiten direkt über zum Begriff der Metropolität.[27] Mit diesem Begriff analysiert die Forschung nicht einfach große Städte, sondern legt

21 Vgl. Burton, Imperialism, S. 10 f.

22 Vgl. Burton, Imperialism, S. 11–13. Vgl. zudem für einer frühe, durch die Nachkriegszeit des Zweiten Weltkrieges geprägte, eher psychologischen Imperialismus-Deutung Joseph Schumpeter, Imperialism and social classes. Die sozialen Klassen im ethnisch homogenen Milieu, New York 1951.

23 Vgl. Deppe u. a., Imperialismus, S. 12. Vgl. zu Kolonialismus und Imperialismus Hobsbawm, Zeitalter, S. 79–83 und Schöllgen/Kiessling, Zeitalter, S. 160–175.

24 Vgl. Münkler, Imperien, S. 54.

25 Vgl. Schöllgen/Kiessling, Zeitalter, S. 1; Brunner, Grundbegriffe, S. 182 f.; Münkler, Imperien, S. 35 f. und Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 11.

26 Vgl. Doyle, Empires, S. 12; Münkler, Imperien, S. 21, S. 39 und S. 45–49; Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 3 und S. 22; Burton, Imperialism, S. 17 f.

27 Vgl. zur Erforschung vormoderner Metropolität das Forschungskonzept des DFG-GRKs 2337 „Metropolität in der Vormoderne“ (Universität Regensburg; URL: https://www.uni-regensburg.de/philosophie-kunst-geschichte-gesellschaft/metropolitaet-vormoderne/startseite/forschungskonzept/index.html) (zuletzt abgerufen am 29.5.2024).

ebenfalls ein Kriterienbündel vor, mit dem sich Metropolität, also eine wahrgenommene oder behauptete Besonderheit eines Gemeinwesens, analysieren lässt. Auffallend oft spielt dabei die Bedeutung der Stadt in einem imperialen Kontext eine wesentliche Rolle. Es zeigt sich somit eine Reziprozität von Imperialität und Metropolität. Eine Übersicht über einschlägige Kriterien findet sich in der folgenden Tabelle:[28]

Metropolität	**Imperialität**
Kapital in konzentrierter Form	**Expansionsdrang** (Macht-Einflussbereich oder ökonomischer Einflussbereich) und **Raumbeherrschung** (kapitalistische Ökonomie **<- >** (Gewalt-)Politik)
Bevölkerungsdichte	**Zentralität** (Armee, Religion, Kultur, Steuern etc.)
Dichte symbolischer Ressourcen	Dynastie, Adel oder andere Form der **politischen Elite**
Strahlkraft und **Reichweite** (politisch, kulturell, gesellschaftlich)	Zentrum/**Metropolen-Peripherie-Gefälle**
Bedeutungsvielfalt / Akkumulation von Spezifika	**Weiche / fluide Grenzen**
Ansehen / Bedeutung in Longue durée - > *Temporalität*	**Dauerhaftigkeit** / Verstetigung („augusteische Schwelle“)[29] - > *Temporalität* (Imperialität als Teil post-imperialer Räume)
Zentralortfunktion / politisch-ökonomische **Vorrangstellung und Vorbildhaftigkeit**	**Integration** von Gebieten in den imperialen Herrschaftsbereich (politische Strukturen und Institutionen sowie Kommunikationsstrukturen)
Rang der Kultstätten / Urbanität und Stadtbild	

28 Vgl. u. a. zu den genannten Kriterien: Nolte, Imperien, S. 41–43; Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien; Deppe u. a., Imperialismus, S. 21–27; Münkler, Imperien; Burton, Imperialism, passim und v. a. S. 17 f.; Crooks, Union, S. 8–39; Eich, Imperien, S. 1–5; Heinz Reif, Metropolen. Geschichte, Begriffe, Methoden, in: CMS Working Paper Series 1 (2006), S. 2–21, hier S. 2–3 und Jörg Oberste, Einführung, in: Jörg Oberste (Hrsg.), Metropolität in der Vormoderne. Konstruktionen urbaner Zentralität im Wandel, Regensburg 2012, S. 7–9, hier S. 7–8 und Jörg Oberste, Europäische Metropolen – eine lange Geschichte, in: Blick in die Wissenschaft. Forschungsmagazin der Universität Regensburg 40 (2019), S. 3–7.

29 Vgl. zu Begriff der „augusteischen Schwelle“ als Kennzeichen der Konsolidierung imperialer Herrschaft u. a. Münkler, Imperien, S. 80 f. und S. 105–127 und Vogtherr, Staatenwelt, S. 698 f.

Für die nachfolgenden Ausführungen ist wichtig, dass keines der genannten Merkmale als zwingend erforderlich zu verstehen ist, noch muss ein Mindestmaß an Kriterien vorliegen, um von Metropolität oder Imperialität zu sprechen. Vielmehr sollen sie als Kriterienauswahl dazu befähigen, konkrete historische Zusammenhänge oder Quellen nach deren Bedeutung für die Analyse vormoderner Imperialität und Metropolität zu befragen.

Wie dies zu verstehen ist, kann am Begriff der Metropolität verdeutlicht werden. Der Terminus dient vorrangig als *framing* für einen forschungsanalytischen Zugriff; er ist als diskursiv zu verstehen, nicht als beschreibend. Metropolität ist sozial konstruiert, daher eine Bedeutungszuschreibung, die durch Zeitgenossen wahrnehmbar und durch die Forschung analysierbar ist.[30] Sie ist ein Anspruchsbegriff und für die Forschung ein heuristisches Instrument der Analyse vormodern-urbaner Gemeinschaften. Die tabellarisch gelisteten Termini sind Teil des Werkzeugkoffers der Erforschung von Metropolität, was ebenso für den Begriff der Imperialität gilt. Auch er kann als soziales Konstrukt, als Selbstzuschreibung[31] oder auch Fremdwahrnehmung in vormodernen Gesellschaften analysiert werden. Ein Blick auf die Tabelle offenbart gleich mehrere interessante Kriterienüberschneidungen, beispielsweise der Bedeutung von (zentriertem) Kapital und Expansion; dem Anspruch auf hierarchisch verstandene Vorbildhaftigkeit und Machtausübung im überregionalen Raum und – für die hier vorgelegte Analyse von besonderer Relevanz –: der zeitlichen Konstruktion von Imperialität und Metropolität als Ressource der Selbstwahrnehmung und Anspruchsbehauptung, also ihrer Temporalität.[32]

30 Metropolität zeigt sich somit als Begriff der Selbstzuschreibung und Artikulation des eigenen Anspruchs. Vgl. für einen Überblick zur Erforschung mittelalterlicher Metropolität Oberste, Metropolen; Julian Zimmermann, Roma Caput mundi? – Metropolitane Identität als politisches Argument bei Cola di Rienzo oder wie eine politische Bewegung über textile Inschriften kommuniziert, in: Tanja Kohwagner-Nikolai/Bernd Päffgen/ Christine Steininger, Über Stoff und Stein: Knotenpunkte von Textilkunst und Epigraphik. Beiträge zur 15. internationalen Fachtagung für mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Epigraphik vom 12. bis 14. Februar 2020 in München, Wiesbaden 2021, S. 255–270, hier S. 257 f. und vgl. das Forschungskonzept des DFG-GRKs 2337 „Metropolität in der Vormoderne“ (Universität Regensburg; URL: https://www.uni-regensburg.de/philosophie-kunst-geschichte-gesellschaft/metropolitaet-vormoderne/startseite/forschungskonzept/index.html) (zuletzt abgerufen am 29.5.2024). Vgl. zu Ansätzen der Metropolenforschung im Allgemeinen Reif, Metropolen, S. 2–3 und Oberste, Einführung 7–8. Vgl. auch zum vergleichbaren Konzept der imperialen Selbstzuschreibung Nolte, Imperien, S. 41 f.

31 Vgl. zu Formen imperialer Selbstzuschreibung Brunner, Grundbegriffe, S. 197–206.

32 Vgl. zur Bedeutung von Temporalität für die Analyse von Imperialität (Eich, Imperien, S. 2–5) ebenso wie für metropolitane Anspruchsbehauptungen (Reif, Metropolen, S. 4 und Oberste, Metropolen, S. 5).

Fallanalyse – Die Ewige Stadt im Mittelalter

Dass die Suche nach imperial-metropolitanen Wechselwirkungen die „Ewige Stadt“ fokussiert, vermag nicht zu überraschen. Rom stand und steht *par excellence* für epochenübergreifende („ewige“) imperiale Ansprüche. Die Stadt war lange Zeit Hauptstadt des antiken *Imperium Romanum,*[33] Sitz des globale Ansprüche formulierenden mittelalterlichen Papsttums und stets konkreter Bezugspunkt vormoderner imperialer Geltungsansprüche.[34] Die Stadt zeigt sich in all diesen Facetten als Metropole, als Stadt von herausgehobener Bedeutung für ein Reich, welches von ebensolch einer herausgehobenen (imperialen) Bedeutung, Größe und Vergangenheit ist.[35]

Doch der bei Boccaccio entlehnte Titel dieses Beitrags legt schon nahe, dass das mittelalterliche Rom eine Besonderheit bereithält. Diesem imperialen Idealbild stand nämlich eine mittelalterliche Gestalt und Bedeutung der Stadt Rom entgegen, die wenig metropolitan und imperial erschien. Vom Haupt der Welt sei Rom zum Schwanz der Welt verkommen (*da caput a cauda mundi),* wie es Boccaccio in seinem *Decameron* verballhornend beschreibt. Tatsächlich versprühte das hoch- und insbesondere spätmittelalterliche Rom, abseits der prunkvollen Bauten der römischen Kirche, wenig metropolitanen und imperialen Glanz. Im Tiberknie, auf dem antiken Marsfeld, ballte sich der Großteil der für die Gesamtgrundfläche

33 Nicht unterschlagen werden darf an dieser Stelle, dass schon in spätantiker Zeit mit Mailand, Ravenna oder auch Konstantinopel andere Städte ebenfalls als Haupt- bzw. Residenzorte des antiken *Imperium Romanum* fungierten, Rom also nicht durchweg und kontinuierlich den Rang der Residenz- und Hauptstadt des Imperiums für sich beanspruchen konnte. Trotzdem ist die Stadt als der ursprüngliche und dauerhafteste sowie für das Imperium namensgebende Zentralort der römischen Antike ganz wesentlich mit dieser imperialen Zentralortfunktion verbunden. Vgl. für einen Überblick über aktuelle Imperialismus-Forschungstendenzen zum antiken Rom Burton, Imperialism, S. 8–10 und allg. zum antiken Rom im Kontext von Imperialismusforschung ebd., passim und insb. S. 18–38 sowie zur Zentralortfunktion Roms Finn, Center, S. 188–200.

34 Vgl. hierzu sowie zur *translatio imperii* Johannes Fried, Imperium Romanum. Das Römische Reich und der mittelalterliche Reichsgedanke, Millennium 3 (2006), S. 1–42; Stefan Schiema, Der Heilige Stuhl und die Päpste, in: Michael Gehler/Robert Rollinger (Hrsg.), Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte – Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche. Teil 1: Imperien des Altertums, Mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Imperien, Wiesbaden 2014, S. 725–760, hier S. 726 und S. 740–746; Vogtherr, Staatenwelt, S. 700–705 und S. 708; Ruffing, Rom, S. 401 und Nolte, Imperien, S. 168. Vgl. zur Funktion der Stadt im Krönungszeremoniell der Kaiser ebd. und Bracke/Nelis/Maeyer, Introduction, S. 3; Mauntel, Rome, S. 69 f. sowie Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, L’altra Roma. Una storia dei romani all’epoca dei communi (secoli XII–XIV), Turin 2011, hier S. 417. Vgl. für eine (spät-)mittelalterliche Perspektive auf die Imperialität der Stadt Rom und der Päpste Pellegrino, Empire, S. 275 f. und S. 280–284.

35 Vgl. Ruffing, Rom, S. 401–403 und Zimmermann, Antike, S. 78–85.

Roms recht kleinen Bevölkerungszahl (im sogenannten *abitato*). Dort wurde antiker Überrest oft in mittelalterliche Repräsentation- und Fortifikationsarchitektur überführt, während andere Teile des antiken Siedlungsgebiets (dem *disabitato*), beispielsweise im ehemaligen Machtzentrum zwischen Palatin und Kapitol, unbewohnt und übersät von verfallenen Überresten antiker Architektur und Monumentalbauten waren.[36] Dieser omnipräsente Überrest erzählte zwar rege von der einstigen Größe der Hauptstadt eines Imperiums, die aber nur noch als weit entfernte, glorreiche Vergangenheit wahrgenommen wurde. Die marginalisierte postimperiale Stadt im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter war eine Kleinstadt auf der Fläche einer antiken Millionen-Metropole,[37] die nur noch wenig mit der Metropole der Antike gemein hatte.[38]

Zugleich stand mit dem Papsttum weiterhin ein Aushängeschild imperialer Macht vor Ort parat,[39] ebenso zeugten antike Monumentalbauten noch immer von der Größe eines einstigen Imperiums und seiner Kapitale. Deutlich zeigt sich an dieser Ambivalenz die große Möglichkeit für die hier verfolgte Fragestellung. An einem räumlich begrenztem Untersuchungsobjekt lässt sich im diachronen Vergleich nach imperialen Transformationen und ihrer Temporalität fragen. Erfahrungen imperialer Zeitlichkeit speisen sich oft durch den Abgleich von Früherem und Aktuellem sowie dem nicht mehr Vorhandenem, aus dem sich dann neu entwickelte Zukunftsvorstellungen ableiten lassen.[40] Die imperialen Transformationen Roms können daher zum Verständnis imperialer Dynamiken beitragen,[41] ebenso wie zur Funktion imperialer und metropolitaner Logik als politische Ressource im

36 Vgl. zur Transformation antiker Architektur im römischen Mittelalter u. a. Torgil Magnuson, The Urban Transformation of Medieval Rome, 312-1420, Stockholm 2004, hier S. 64 f.

37 Vgl. zur städtebaulichen Entwicklung Roms im Verlauf des Mittelalters u. a. die immer noch maßgebliche Arbeit von Richard Krautheimer, Rom. Schicksal einer Stadt. 312-1308. München 1996[2] sowie die neuere und aktuelle Forschungsergebnisse berücksichtigende Arbeit von Hendrik W. Dey, The Making of Medieval Rome: A New Profile of the City, 400–1420, Cambridge (UK) u. a. 2021.

38 Vgl. zum Begriff des „post-imperialen Raumes" im Kontext der Postkolonialismus-Forschung Eich, Imperien, S. 1 f.

39 Vgl. zur Frage von städtisch-imperialer Strahlkraft im Kontext der päpstlichen Repräsentation und Machtauslegung Pellegrino, Empire, S. 275–284.

40 Vgl. methodologisch zur Relationierung von anwesenden und abwesenden Zeiten (*Chronoferenz*) Achim Landwehr, Die anwesende Abwesenheit der Vergangenheit: Essay zur Geschichtstheorie, Frankfurt am Main 2016, hier S. 150 und vgl. hierzu auch (mit stärkerer Fokussierung auf Imperien) Eich, Imperien, S. 5 und Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 11 f.

41 Vgl. für das zugrundeliegenden Forschungskonzept Eich, Imperien, S. 2. Gerade epochenübergreifende und interdisziplinärer Ansätze, wie auch in diesem Beitrag verfolgt, eignen sich besonders, um imperiale Temporalität zu analysieren, also in seiner Zeitlichkeit erfahrbaren Wandel von Imperien und nachimperialen Ordnungen zu betrachten (vgl. ebd.).

Mittelalter.[42] Wie wirkmächtig diese Ambivalenz für die Entwicklung Roms im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter war, zeigt der Blick auf die 1144 einsetzende kommunale Epoche der Stadt in besonders eindrücklicher Weise. Die neue kommunale Regierung griff insbesondere auf die Reminiszenzen an die antike Vergangenheit der Stadt zurück, um ihre neue politische Autorität zu legitimieren. Das Bild Roms als Metropole und Kapitale eines Imperiums,[43] die Betonung der städtischen *Renovatio Senatus* und die Nutzung antiker Hoheitszeichen wie des Siegels SPQR gehörten zu den symbolischen Ressourcen der jungen kommunalen Bewegung.[44]

Der Rückbezug auf das *Imperium Romanum* als Legitimationsressource ist selbstverständlich keine Seltenheit. Und doch lohnt der Blick auf Rom in besonderer Weise: Hier tritt einem keine sekundäre Aneignung des „Mythos Rom“ für eigene Zwecke entgegen, sondern die Nutzung der eigenen, schon im Weichbild der

42 Die gilt auch deswegen, da die meisten Forschungsarbeiten zu Imperialismus vorrangig die Entstehung von Imperien betrachten (vgl. Burton, Imperialism, S. 17 und Münkler, Imperien, S. 49 f.), ggf. auch den Moment ihres Zerfalls (Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 14 f.). Hier soll hingegen bewusst das „post-imperiale Nachspiel“ in den Blick genommen werden.

43 V. a. belegt durch die Neu-Prägung von römischen Denaren am Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts, die den Schriftzug ROMA CAPVT MVNDI als Teil der Münzlegende auf dem Revers prägten (vgl. hierzu Mariele Valci, „Coinage in the Rome Commune (1143-1398). An Overview of the Denari Provisini Preserved in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana“, in: Historia Mundi 7 (2018), S. 38–53, hier S. 40 und Hans Martin Schaller, Herrschaftszeichen der römischen Kommune, in: Bernhard Schimmelpfennig/Ludwig Schmugge (Hrsg.), Rom im Hohen Mittelalter. Studien zu den Romvorstellungen und zur Rompolitik vom 10. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert, Sigmaringen 1992, S. 79–85, hier S. 79 und S. 84). Vgl. zur (imperialen) Dauer als Legitimationsressource um Umbrüche abzufangen Eich, Imperien, S. 4.

44 Beispielsweise ist die neue Regierung als „Senat und Volk von Rom“ (SPQR) präsent in einem Inschriftentext, der betont, dass diese die durch ihr Alter marode seiende Stadtmauer wiederhergestellt hätte. Vgl. Vincenzo Forcella, Iscrizioni delle chiese e d’altri edificii di Roma dal secolo XV ai giorni nostri, Bd. XIII., Rom 1879, S. 25, Nr. 1. „R(egio) S(anct) A(n)g(e)l(i) / + Anno MCLVII incarn(a)t(ionis) / D(omi)ni n(ost)ri IHV (IESU) XPI (Christi) S.P.Q.R. hec menia / vetustate dilapsa restaura/vit. Senatores Sasso, Ioh(anne)s de Al / berico, Roieri Buccacane, Pinzo, / Filippo, Ioh(anne)s de Parenzo, Petrus / D(eu)stesalvi, Cencio de Ansoino, / Rainaldo Romano, / Nicola Mannetto.“ Übersetzung (nach Katharina Bolle, Die Kommune Rom und ihre Inschriften. Ein Blick aus althistorischer Perspektive, in: Katharina Bolle, Marc Von der Höh, Nikolas Jaspert (Hrsg.), Inschriftenkulturen im kommunalen Italien. Traditionen, Brüche, Neuanfänge, Berlin / Boston 2019, S. 225–266, hier S. 230): „Regio Sant’Angelo, im Jahre unseres Herrn Jesus Christus 1157. Der Senat und das Volk von Rom haben diese aufgrund ihres Alters in Verfall geratenen Stadtmauer wiederhergestellt. Die Senatoren Sasso, Iohannes de Alberico, Roieri Buccane, Pinzo, Filippo, Iohannes de Parenzo, Petrus Diotosalvi, Cencio d’Ansoino, Rainaldo Romano und Nicola Mannetto.“ Vgl. auch grundsätzlich zu dieser kommunalen Inschrift ebd., S. 230–233 und Maire Vigueur, Roma, S. 415.

Stadt omnipräsenten städtischen Vergangenheit und Identität.[45] Nirgendwo sonst offenbart sich dieser Rückbezug auf das antik-imperiale Rom in der alltäglichen Politik als eine solch wirkmächtige Ressource wie in Rom selbst. Zugleich gehört dieser Rückbezug zur Inszenierung von Metropolität, zum Verweis auf die lange Dauer, der Erinnerung an historische Bedeutsamkeit und Narrative der eigenen Erfolgsgeschichte, die mit aktuellen Geltungsansprüchen verknüpft wurden. Dieser Verweis auf die Metropolität der Stadt ist ein häufig in der Forschung herausgestelltes Spezifikum der Kommune Rom und nicht losgelöst von der antiken Bedeutung der Stadt als imperiales Zentrum zu betrachten. Denn auch Fragen nach der Imperialität eines Gemeinwesens tangieren Formen der Selbstzuschreibung eigener dauerhafter imperialer Herrschaft.[46]

Die Wirkmacht des Rückgriffs auf metropolitan-imperiale Ressourcen auf innerstädtische Aushandlungsprozesse zeigt sich im Kontext der Kommune Rom gerade im 14. Jahrhundert wie in einem Brennglas. Reichhaltig ist diese Perspektive zum einen wegen der im römisch-kommunalen Vergleich besseren Quellenlage, zum anderen wegen der besonderen Konstellation einer durch die städtische Mittelschicht getragenen Erhebung gegen den Stadtadel in der Mitte des Jahrhunderts bei gleichzeitiger Absenz des eigentlichen päpstlichen Stadtherrn, der im fernen französischen Avignon residierte. Clemens V. hinterließ zwar zu Beginn des Trecento nicht *de iure*, sehr wohl aber *de facto* ein Machtvakuum in der Ewigen Stadt, das wesentlich für die Entwicklungen im Rom des 14. Jahrhunderts war. Insbesondere eine Protestbewegung der 1340er-Jahre, die in dem Notar Cola

45 Vgl. zur Wirkmacht der auf die antike Größe bezogenen städtischen Identität für politische Kommunikation im römischen Mittelalter u. a. Julian Zimmermann, Vom ‚Datensatz' zum ‚Wissen'. Inschriftliches Informationsangebot und dessen Verarbeitung am Beispiel der Lex de Imperio Vespasiani im spätmittelalterlichen Rom, in: Eric Burkart/Vincenz Schwab (Hrsg.), Informationsverarbeitung in der Stadt des 12.–16. Jahrhundert. Beiträge des interdisziplinären (Post-)Doc-Workshop des Trierer Zentrums für Mediävistik im November 2018 (=Mittelalter. Interdisziplinäre Forschung und Rezeptionsgeschichte, Beihefte 2), DOI: 10.26012/mittlelalter-23151, S. 1–20, hier S. 18–20 und (v. a. mit Blick auf das Trecento) Anna Modigliani, Cerimonie e organizzazione del consenso ai tempi di Cola di Rienzo nella Cronica dell'Anonimo romano, in: Anna Modigliani (Hrsg.), Patrimonium in festa. Cortei, tornei, artifici e feste alla fine del Medioevo (secoli XV–XVI). Orte 2000, S. 97–118, hier S. 98–100. Vgl. grundlegend zum Ansatz der imperialen Weitergabe und Traditionsstiftung (Kontinuitätsbehauptungen) Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 3–5 und S. 13 und Eich, Imperien, S. 5 und s. auch ebd.: „Um neue imperiale Ordnungen entwickeln zu können, musste die Vorstellung einer quasi überzeitlichen Kontinuität des Imperialen als universellem Ordnungsrahmen aufrechterhalten werden [...]." Gerade am Beispiel Roms im Mittelalter zeigt sich dies überdeutlich.

46 Vgl. Eich, Imperien, S. 5. Es handelt sich somit um eine (s. ebd.) „[...] renovatio einer wie präzise auch immer erinnerten oder ‚erfundenen' Vergangenheit [..]." Vgl. zum Konzept auch Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 11–13 und S. 22–26 und Nolte, Imperien, S. 199.

di Rienzo ihren Kristallisationsunkt fand, ist ohne diese besondere Gemengelage kaum denkbar.

Diese Bewegung lässt sich zum leichteren Verständnis in vier Phasen darstellen, die auch für die Analyse imperialer und metropolitaner Logik als Ressourcen ihrer politischen Legitimitätsbehauptung dienlich sind.

Phasen der Protestbewegung um Cola di Rienzo:

1. 1342–1345: Die „avignonesische Strategie“ – Umwälzung von oben
2. 1345 – Mai 1347: Bewegungsmobilisierung
3. Mai 1347 – Sommer 1347: Bewegungskonsolidierung
4. Sommer – Herbst 1347: Bewegungsdemobilisierung und Zerfall

Die erste Phase stellte dabei einen letztendlich gescheiterten Versuch dar, ab 1342 beim frisch gewählten Papst Clemens VI. (1342–1352) für eine Umwälzung der politischen Machtverhältnisse in Rom vorzusprechen. Der Papst sollte in seiner Funktion als Stadtherr die mächtigsten Adligen der Stadt, die sogenannten Barone, in ihrer Macht beschneiden und die kommunalen Ämter neu und im Sinne der breiteren Mittelschicht ordnen. Auch wenn dieser Versuch scheiterte, auch weil der römische Adel noch immer zu eng mit der Kurie in Frankreich verbunden war, so war dieses erste Scheitern die Basis für die zweite Phase der Bewegung.[47]

Ab dem Jahr 1345 versuchte die Gruppierung um den Notar di Rienzo nicht im Sinne einer Umstrukturierung von oben (wie in Phase 1) das Problem anzugehen, sondern selbst im Stadtraum gegen die adlige Anarchie zu mobilisieren. In dieser Phase der Mobilisierung (Phase 2) bediente sich die Bewegung an öffentlichkeitswirksamen, die breitere Masse der Bevölkerung ansprechenden Medien: Inschriften, Text-Bild-Visualisierungen an Gebäuden, Prozessionen und Inszenierungen wurden genutzt, der urbane Raum Roms und somit der Alltag der potenziellen Bewegungsanhänger zur bewusst bespielten Bühne, um der adligen Vorherrschaft Einhalt zu gebieten. Inhaltlich wollte man insbesondere mit zwei Themenkomplexen eine breite Basis mobilisieren. Zum einen waren das die alltäglichen, untragbaren Zustände in Rom, zum anderen der Rückbezug auf das vergangene Idealbild, auf die metropolitane Identität der Stadt, die sich auch aus ihrer Imperialität speiste.[48]

47 Vgl. hierzu (mit weiterer Literatur) Veit Groß/Julian Zimmermann, Eine »revolutionäre Bewegung« im Trecento? Die Tragweite zweier Anachronismen für die Interpretation des Römischen Tribuns Cola di Rienzo (1313–1354), in: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 59 (2019), S. 61–98, hier S. 74–80 und Zimmermann, Roma, S. 257 f.

48 Vgl. zur Bedeutung der eigenen Geschichtlichkeit in Imperien zur Anspruchssicherung nach außen, v. a. aber auch der Integration nach innen Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 9 f.

Besonders deutlich wird diese Stoßrichtung gleich bei dem ersten größeren Kommunikationsakt im römischen Stadtraum. 1345 nutzte die Bewegung die Wand des Senatorenpalastes auf dem Kapitol, um dort eine großangelegte Text-Bild-Visualisierung anzubringen, die uns detailreich durch einen anonymen zeitgenössischen Gewährsmann, den *Anonimo Romano*, in seiner Chronik geschildert wird.[49] Zu sehen war die in schwarz gekleidete Personifikation der Roma, dargestellt als verlassene Metropole Rom, auf einem in Seenot geratenem Schiff in stürmischer See. Die kurz vor dem Untergang stehende Roma verdankt ihre Notlage den anarchischen politischen Gegebenheiten der Stadt, den Baronen und weiteren Personenkreisen, die vom Rand her das Meer mit Hörnern aufpeitschen. Dies wurde nicht nur visuell dargestellt, sondern auch epigrafisch in dem Text-Bild Arrangement beschrieben. Umgeben ist die Roma von weiteren Personifikationen auf Inseln oder untergegangenen Schiffen, die ganz bewusst mit metropolitanen und imperialen Bezügen arbeiten, um den verheerenden „Ist-Zustand" den vergangenen „Ideal-Zustand" gegenüberzustellen.[50] Unter der Roma sah der Betrachter die vier bereits untergegangen Metropolen Jerusalem, Babylon, Karthago, Troja. Rom wurde dezidiert in eine Reihe mit bedeutenden Städten der Geschichte gestellt, was nicht nur als Verweis auf die eigene Geschichtlichkeit funktionierte, sondern ebenso als dezidierter Vergleich mit anderen bedeutenden metropolitanen Städten. Dieser Vergleich diente der Herausstellung eigener Besonderheit und Strahlkraft, der Selbstvergewisserung als Metropole, ebenso aber auch als Warnung des eigenen drohenden Untergangs – bespielt wird also das Narrativ des drohenden metropolitanen Verlustes einstiger urbaner Bedeutung.[51] Dass diese Bedeutung Roms auch auf ihrer Imperialität, ihrer Zentralortfunktion in dem großen Imperium der europäisch-mittelalterlichen Vorstellungswelt fußt, machte dem *Anonimo Romano* folgend eine Inschrift mehr als deutlich. Diese legt den untergangenen Metropolen den Ausspruch in den Mund: *Sopra onne signoria fosti in aitura / Ora aspettamo qui la toa rottura* (Über jede Herrschaft warst du erhaben / nun warten wir hier auf deinen Untergang).[52] Roms Metropolität zeigt

49 Vgl. Anonimo Romano, Cronica, hrsg. v. Giuseppe Porta, Mailand 1981, hier S. 106–108. Vgl. zu dieser Beschreibung im Kontext der Bewegungsmobilisierung Zimmermann, Roma, S. 259–265 (mit weiteren Literaturhinweisen) sowie zur Chronik des Anonimo Romano, zu seiner Person und dem spezifischen Erkenntniswert der Schilderungen ebd. und Groß/Zimmermann, Bewegung, S. 68–71 sowie v. a. die noch immer grundlegende Monografie von Gustav Seibt, Anonimo Romano. Geschichtsschreibung in Rom an der Schwelle zur Renaissance, Stuttgart 1992.

50 Vgl. für eine ausführliche Beschreibung und Analyse Carmela Crescenti, Cola di Rienzo. Simboli e allegorie, Parma 2003, hier S. 33–59 und Zimmermann, Roma, S. 259–265. Siehe für eine grafische Darstellung der nur schriftlich überlieferten Visualisierung ebd., S. 261.

51 Vgl. zum wirkmächtigen Verlust-Narrativ bei der Bewegungsrepräsentation um Cola di Rienzo Zimmermann, Roma, S. 262.

52 Anonimo Romano, Cronica, S. 106. Eigene Übersetzung des Autors.

sich als verbunden mit ihrer Imperialität, beides bedingt sich reziprok. Ziel der Bewegung war es, die beiden Stränge bewusst mit dem Narrativ des Bedeutungsverlustes zu verknüpfen und somit die zu mobilisierenden potenziellen Trägerschichten zu emotionalisieren. Mit dem Bild des drohenden Niedergangs einstiger imperialer Bedeutung sollte das Ziel propagiert werden, durch eine Umkehr der aktuellen politischen Verhältnisse an der einstigen Erfolgsgeschichte des eigenen Gemeinwesens anzuknüpfen.

In die gleiche Kerbe schlägt in dem beschriebenem Text-Bild-Arrangement die Abbildung der auf einer Insel vor dem Sturm geretteten Kardinaltugenden. Diese hätten, so die begleitende Inschrift, die Roma einst begleitet, sie nun aber auf dem stürmischen Meer verlassen (*D'onne virtute fosti accompagnata / Ora per mare vai abannonata*).[53] Zusätzlich dazu sah der mittelalterliche Betrachter, so der *Anonimo Romano*, auf einer weiteren Insel die Personifikation der Italia abgebildet. Gerade bei ihr macht die wiedergegebene Inschrift mehr als evident, dass der sehnsüchtige Blick auf die metropolitane Vergangenheit der eigenen Stadt insbesondere auch die Sehnsucht nach imperialer Bedeutung widerspiegelte. Dort stand geschrieben: *Tollesti la balìa ad onne terra/ e sola me tenesti per sorella* (Die Herrschaft nahmst du weg allen Ländern / nur mich allein behieltst du als Schwester).[54] Der römische Anspruch auf eine Führungsrolle im mittelalterlichen Italien sollte durch die hier propagierte Verbindung von Roma und Italia betont werden. Die Imperialität der Metropole und ihre Funktion im antiken *Imperium Romanum* waren die gezielt betonten Merkmale. Die einstige Machtausübung über einen weiten imperialen Raum (*Tollesti la balìa ad onne terra*) steht als Idealbild vergangener Größe in der Visualisierung im Fokus und wird mit der propagierten Gefahr einer zeitgenössischen Marginalisierung kontrastiert, die sich im Bilde der die Roma nicht mehr begleitenden Kardinaltugenden (*D'onne virtute fosti accompagnata / Ora per mare vai abannonata*) wiederfindet. Deutlich zeigt sich, wie die Reziprozität von Metropolität und Imperialität nicht nur durch die Zeitgenossen wahrgenommen, sondern vielmehr bewusst in das Feld geführt wurde, um eine breite Basis für das eigene Vorhaben zu mobilisieren. Einstige Strahlkraft, Reichweite, imperiale Zentralortfunktion, politisch-ökonomische Vorrangstellung und urbane Vorbildhaftigkeit standen exemplarisch für ein römisch-hierarchisches Selbstverständnis im Raum und im metropolitanen Vergleich. All dies diente der politischen Repräsentation des kommunizierenden Akteurs und seiner politischen Ziele.[55]

53 Anonimo Romano, Cronica, S. 107. Eigene Übersetzung des Autors.

54 Anonimo Romano, Cronica, S. 107. Eigene Übersetzung des Autors.

55 Der Vergleich mit anderen Städten ist typisch für Diskurse städtischer Metropolität, ebenso für Imperialität und den Vergleich von Imperien mit anderen zeitgleichen oder v. a. vergangenen Imperien (vgl. Gehler/Rollinger, Imperien, S. 10).

Wie wirkmächtig das Spiel mit der imperialen Vergangenheit der Metropole Rom für die politische Repräsentation war, verdeutlicht ein weiteres Beispiel. Die berühmte Inszenierung der *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani* im *San Giovanni in Laterano* durch die Bewegung ein Jahr später, im Jahr 1346, macht die Nutzung imperialer Ressourcen nochmals evident.[56] Die vermutlich im Zuge von Renovierungsarbeiten an der Lateransbasilika wiederendeckte antike Inschriftentafel aus dem Vierkaiserjahr 69 n. Chr. wurde durch die Bewegung um Cola di Rienzo intensiv in die eigene Mobilisierungskampagne eingebaut. In einer großangelegten Zeremonie verlas der spätere Tribun Cola di Rienzo den Inhalt der Inschrift, übersetzte diesen in das *Volgare* und interpretierte den Inhalt zugleich im Sinne der Bewegungskampagne. Explizit hob er dabei die Besonderheit des Artefakts und seine Bedeutung im einstigen imperialen Kontext hervor.[57] Mit dem Artefakt wurden somit bewusst Bezüge zwischen anwesenden und abwesenden Zeiten relationiert.[58] Die bronzene Inschriftentafel wurde als verdinglichtes Zeugnis für die Beweisführung genutzt, welche Autorität die Stadt und die Bürger Roms einst besessen hatten und an die es nun zusammen mit der Bewegung wieder anzuknüpfen galt. Die Inschriftentafel wurde als Indiz der Herrschaftsrechte des *populus romanus* in das Feld geführt, die letztendlich die Wahl des Kaisers durch die Römer nach sich ziehen sollte. Die betonte Imperialität und die sich darin äußernden imperialen Ansprüche der Bewegung dienten ebenso der Mobilisierung von Anhängern wie die Visualisierung im Jahre 1345 auf dem Kapitol. Zugleich verwies diese Nutzung metropolitaner und imperialer Ressourcen politischer Kommunikation auf die Sollbruchstelle der Bewegung voraus, die sich in diesen hochtrabenden Ansprüchen verfangen sollte.

Diese Mobilisierungsphase der Bewegung sollte sich als erfolgreich erweisen und gipfelte im Mai 1347 in der Übernahme der Regierungsmacht und dem kurzzeitigen Verdrängen der Barone aus ihren Machtpositionen.[59] Daher schließt sich eine dritte Phase vom Mai bis August 1347 an, die als Phase der Konsolidierung bezeichnet werden kann. Hier wurden politische Programme entworfen, Ämter neu be-

56 Vgl. zur Inszenierung der *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani* 1346 Julian Zimmermann, Saxa loquuntur. Objekte der vormodernen Stadt zum Sprechen bringen? Methodologische Überlegungen und Exempla aus dem mittelalterlichen Rom, in: Babett Edelmann-Singer/Susanne Ehrich (Hrsg.), Sprechende Objekte. Materielle Kultur und Stadt zwischen Antike und Früher Neuzeit (=Forum Mittelalter-Studien. Band 17), Regensburg 2021, S. 195–211 und Zimmermann, Datensatz (beides mit weiteren Literaturhinweisen) sowie auch den gerade für rechtshistorische Fragen zentralen Beitrag von Tilmann Struve, Cola di Rienzo. Ein Traum von der Erneuerung Roms und die antike lex regia, in: Tilman Struve (Hrsg.), Staat und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter, Berlin 2004, S. 204–229.

57 Vgl. Zimmermann, Saxa, S. 201–203 und v. a. S. 208 f. und Zimmermann, Datensatz, S. 17.

58 Vgl. hierzu methodologisch Landwehr 2016, S. 150.

59 Vgl. hierzu überblickshaft und mit weiterer Literatur Groß/Zimmermann, Bewegung, S. 80–86.

setzt und die eigene Macht durch Inszenierungen und Prozessionen artikuliert. Die Inszenierungen muten dabei schrill und immer ausufernder an, jedoch schweigen die Quellen über eine derartige zeitgenössische Wahrnehmung.[60] Dies entsprach durchaus den typischen Dynamiken vormoderner Protestbewegungen, bei denen durch die Forschung grundsätzlich eine fortlaufende Mobilisierung der Trägergruppen als notwendiges Kriterium herausgestellt wurde, ebenso wie die innovative Kombination vorhandener Ressourcen der Legitimität.[61]

Mit Blick auf die Sommermonate 1347 zeigt sich, dass sich die Nutzung von metropolitaner und imperialer Logik wechselseitig beeinflusste.[62] Zumindest am Beispiel des mittelalterlichen Roms lässt sich daher die in diesem Beitrag verfolgte These einer reziproken Beeinflussung metropolitaner und imperialer Logik nachweisen. Offensichtlich wird dies insbesondere beim Blick auf die Sommermonate der analysierten Protestbewegung, die von ausbleibendem Erfolg des Protestes gekennzeichnet waren.[63] Daher begann die Basis der Bewegung merklich zu bröckeln und die Bewegung steuerte mit effekthascherischen Inszenierungen entgegnen, die insbesondere auf die Größe und Bedeutung der Metropole rekurrierten.[64] Spätestens ab diesen Ereignissen im Spätsommer und Herbst 1347 lässt sich Phase 4, die Phase der Demobilisierung, beschreiben.[65] Die Bewegung, die eingangs noch von den bespielten Themen der Mobilisierung, also der Metropolität und Imperialität Roms, profitiert hatte, war nun gefangen in der eigenen Argumentation. Die reziproke Logik von metropolitaner Identität und imperialen Ansprüchen sorgte für eine sukzessive Entfernung von realpolitisch tatsächlich durchführbaren Veränderungen, hin zu verzweifelten und sich gegenseitig hochschaukelnden Versuchen der Mobilisierung unter Verweis auf die metropolitane und imperiale Vergangen-

60 Vgl. für einen konzisen Überblick über die weiteren Geschehnisse des Jahres 1347 in Rom, gedeutet als Teil einer vormodernen Protestbewegung, Groß/Zimmermann, Bewegung, S. 86–98.

61 Vgl. Donatella Della Porta/Mario Diani, Social Movements. An Introduction, Oxford 2009, S. 15 und John H. Arnold, Religion and Popular Rebellion. From the Capuciati to Niklashausen, in: Cultural & Social History 6 (2009), S. 149–169.

62 Imperien sind als Gebilde, so Münkler, Imperien, S. 16–19, fluide, haben weiche Grenzen und sind dynamischer als statische Staatengebilde. Dies macht den Rekurs auf Imperialität als Ressource eigener Politik und Mobilisierung leichter zu adaptieren und auf die spezifischen Ziele anzupassen.

63 Vgl. zu dieser Phase der Demobilisierung Groß/Zimmermann, Bewegung, S. 95–97. Vgl. zur auch für Imperien typischen Notwendigkeit dauerhaften Erfolges zur inneren Konsolidierung Schöllgen/Kiessling, Zeitalter, S. 49 und Münkler, Imperien, S. 59–67. Dies lässt sich hier auch bei der Verwendung imperialer Ressourcen beobachten, die als Element der Mobilisierung nur im Moment des Erfolges funktionieren.

64 Vgl. Groß/Zimmermann, Bewegung, S. 93–95.

65 Groß/Zimmermann, Bewegung, S. 95–97.

heit der Stadt, die der post-imperialen Marginalisierung des eigenen Gemeinwesens entgegengestellt wurde.[66] Eine Entwicklung, die in der Forschung häufig zu dem Urteil des utopischen, fantastischen und die Bodenhaftung verlierenden Tribunen Cola di Rienzo führte, die aber vielmehr einer nachvollziehbaren Logik der fortschreitenden Mobilisierung folgt,[67] bei der gerade die bespielten Themen die Bewegung in eine Spirale metropolitan-imperialer Ansprüche trieb. Auch hier zeigt sich nochmals der Mehrwert des in diesem Beitrag diskutierten methodischen Zugangs: Durch den vergleichenden methodischen Zugriff, der sowohl nach Formen der Metropolität wie auch Imperialität fragt, fügt sich die historische Ereigniskette zu einem schlüssigen Bild zusammen. Die bewusst inszenierten metropolitanen und imperialen Ansprüche Roms und ihrer Bürgerschaft erklären in ihrer Reziprozität ebenso den kommunikativen Erfolg wie auch den Misserfolg der Bewegung. Beides wird erst in der Gesamtschau, die beide Begriffe in ihrer Wechselseitigkeit berücksichtigt, vollumfänglich und plausibel nachvollziehbar. Nicht nur der in diesem Beitrag vorgenommene methodologische Abgleich von Imperialität und Metropolität erscheint daher vielversprechend, sondern das Fallbeispiel Roms im Spätmittelalter offenbart auch die gewinnbringende Erklärungskraft dieses Ansatzes für die Erforschung politischer Kommunikationsprozesse im vormodernen Stadtraum.

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66 Der Verweis auf die eigene Imperialität kann nicht nur als wirtschaftliches oder politisches Phänomen, sondern auch als kulturelle Vorrangstellung aufgefasst werden (vgl. Hobsbawm, Zeitalter, S. 102–106). Auch diese Beobachtung vermag die große Wirkmacht als Ressource politischer Legitimation im römischen Mittelalter erklären.
67 Vgl. Groß/Zimmermann, Bewegung, S. 97 f.

Martin Baumeister, Eine Hauptstadt für ein Imperium. Rom unter dem Faschismus, in: Jochen Johrendt/Romedio Schmitz-Esser (Hrsg.), Rom – Nabel der Welt. Macht, Glaube, Kultur von der Antike bis heute, Darmstadt 2010, S. 173–189.

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Rhiannon Garth Jones

Building a Language of Power: the Early Abbasid Caliphs and Rum

Abstract: The Abbasid caliphal cities and monumental building projects in the period 754–861 CE operated as a language of power, articulating their relationship to the past as well as communicating with the rival imperial power in Constantinople. However, the more prominent focus on their Persian audience and transformation, the limitations of the material remains, and the generally overlooked relationship between the building projects themselves and the literary reception means this language of power and its multiple audiences have been misunderstood.

This chapter explores the literary legacy to better 'read' the Abbasid imperial building projects within the Western Asian tradition. It employs a different periodisation and spatialisation to focus on the early Abbasid relationship with Rum, their imperial rivals in Constantinople and the other of the "two eyes" of late antiquity. This new reading demonstrates how the early Abbasid caliphs exploited the imperial building traditions of Western Asia, claiming the triple inheritance of Arabia, Rome, and Persia, to project a universal claim to power.

> I still hear that kings / Build according to their rank
> And I know that the wisdom of men / Is destroyed by their ruins
> For Rome has that which their ancestors built / And the Persians inherited the monumental traces of their noblemen
> When we see the constructions of the Imam / We see the Caliphate in its abode
> We already believed in the honour of [the Caliphate] / And you reinforced the honour of its leader
> You built, vindicating the Muslims / To their apostates and unbelievers,
> Creations that Persia has not seen, / Or Rome, in the course of their lives![1]
>
> – Ali ibn al-Jahm (804–63 CE)

The Abbasid caliphal cities and monumental building projects in the period 754–861 CE operated as a language of power, articulating their relationship to the

1 Translation based on Dr Matthew Saba's work, with my own amendments, in Matthew D. Saba, *Impermanent Monuments, Lasting Legacies: The Dār al-Khilāfa of Samarra and Palace Building in Early Abbasid Iraq* (Munich: Reichert Verlag, 2022). A full text can be found in Ali Ibn al-Jahm, *Diwan*, ed. Khalil Marum (Damascus: Al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmi al-ʿArabi, 1949), 29.

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past as well as communicating with the rival imperial power in Constantinople.[2] However, the more prominent focus on their Persian audience and transformation, the limitations of the material remains, and the generally overlooked relationship between the building projects themselves and the literary reception means this language of power and its multiple audiences have been misunderstood. In this chapter, I explore the literary legacy to better "read" the Abbasid imperial building projects within the western Asian tradition. I focus on the early Abbasid relationship with *Rum*, their imperial rivals in Constantinople, rather than the Persian elites that the early Abbasid caliphs are usually understood to be communicating with.[3] By employing a different periodisation and spatialisation to focus on the other of the "two eyes"[4] of late antiquity and its ongoing relationship with the Abbasid Caliphate, I demonstrate how the early Abbasid caliphs exploited the imperial building traditions of Western Asia, claiming the triple inheritance of Rome, Persia, and Arabia and projecting a universal claim to power.[5]

Monumental Language and Linguistic Monuments

The caliphs built new palaces and cities on a vast scale between 754–862 CE and archaeological sites like Samarra offer a wealth of insight into urbanism in this period. However, as Matthew Saba has argued, it is likely they considered their buildings as impermanent monuments to their wealth and power, with the legacy being

2 I use the Gregorian calendar here to better support the continuities highlighted in my periodisation and spatialisation; the time range here corresponds to 136–248 AH.

3 See, for example, Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (Thames and Hudson, 1971); Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco Arabic Translation Movement In Baghdad And Early 'Abbāsid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th Centuries)* (Routledge, 1998); Garth Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton University Press, 2014).

4 Khosrow II in a letter to the Roman emperor Maurice, in Theophylact Simocatta 4.11.2–3, trans. Whitby. Cited and explored by Matthew P. Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth: Art and Ritual of Kingship between Rome and Sasanian Iran* (California: University of California Press, 2009), 1.

5 For a comparative discussion of imperial universality, see Michal Biran, Yuri Pines and Jörg Rüpke, "Empires and Their Space," in *The Limits of Universal Rule. Eurasian Empires Compared*, ed. Biran et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 1–48. For a discussion on early Muslim understandings of power, see Aziz al-Azhmeh, *Muslim Kingship. Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Polities* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997).

trusted instead to their reception and literature.[6] It is clear from a number of contemporary and preceding literary sources that the Abbasids understood both that buildings could be used to communicate power but also the limitations of this language.[7] This perception is demonstrated in the poem cited at the beginning of this chapter and in other sources such as the "litterateur" al-Jahiz (d. 868 CE):

> Because of this, books are more effective than buildings of stones and walls of earth. It is in the nature of kings to efface the traces of those who came before them and to thus kill the memory of their enemies. For this reason, they have razed most cities and fortresses to the ground. [Kings] were like this in the days of the Persians and the Jahiliyya, they are like this in the days of Islam.[8]

This observation from al-Jahiz shows that both the building and destruction of architecture was understood as a political statement of power and that this potential for political destruction meant that "books are more effective than buildings." Indeed, both Mohammed Hamdouni Alami's work on al-Jahiz's *Kitab al-Hayawan* and Saba's research on the Dar al-Khalifa at Samarra have demonstrated that there was a long-standing Arab belief in the value of literary sources as a crucial and reliable legacy for building projects by the time the early Abbasid caliphs began their urban building projects.[9] In fact, while the early Muslim rulers clearly wanted to compete with the Romans and Persians in building, they also maintained their traditional focus on poetry. Again, al-Jahiz provides a contemporary source:

> During the Jahiliyya, the Arabs sought means to memorialize themselves. They relied upon metered poetry and rhymed speech to do so, and that was their registry (diwan) [. . .] The Persians, on the other hand, went about commemorating their great deeds with buildings [. . .] The Arabs wished to compete with the Persians in building while being peerless in poetry, so they built [many famous cities and monuments].[10]

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6 Saba, *Impermanent Monuments*, 17. Cf Aloïs Regel's ideas of "permanent monuments" in Aloïs Riegl, *Moderne Denkmalkultus: sein Wesen und seine Entstehung* (Wien: K. K. Zentral-Kommission für Kunst und Historische Denkmale, 1903). Translation first published as Aloïs Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin," trans. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, in *Oppositions*, n. 25 (Fall 1982), 21–51.

7 Mohammed Hamdouni Alami, *Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition: Aesthetics, Politics and Desire in Early Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

8 Al-Jahiz, *Kitab al.Hayawan*, ed. *Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn* (Cairo: Muṣtafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1965–1969), 1:72. Translation by Dr Matthew Saba.

9 Mohammed Hamdouni Alami, *Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition*; Saba, *Impermanent Monuments.*

10 Translated in Mohammed Hamdouni Alami, *Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition,* 37. For a fuller discussion of al-Jahiz' theory of *al-bayan* and architecture, see Chapter 2 of this same text; for a linguistic analysis of early Islamic architecture, see Chapter 3.

Fascinatingly, a number of scholars have highlighted the use of *diwan* here to refer to the corpus of poetry that memorialises achievements, a word which can also be translated as "archive."[11] The idea of the poetry serving as a record is also expressed by ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadani, a late ninth-century Persian historian and geographer, who stated, "when al-Mutasim, al-Wathiq, and al-Mutawakkil built a palace or other building, they used to order the poets to compose a verse about it."[12] Saba summarises, "the Samarra palace poems were the only truly lasting representations that the caliphs could produce of these buildings [. . .] For the generations that followed until the birth of archaeological excavation, they were the only medium through which one could know the palaces."[13] The praise poems, then, were intended to be part of the monumental legacy of caliphal building projects, perhaps even the main legacy. Moreover, the fact that they were so frequently sponsored by patrons at the court tells us about the image that the individual caliphs were trying to project. The caliphs were the "authors" of the buildings and the courtly praise poems were part of their message dissemination.[14]

Understanding and using the literary sources as part of the intended legacy of the early Abbasid caliphal building projects in this way sheds light on their messages.[15] The political statements they communicated were conveyed both metaphorically and literally, and to a multitude of audiences: a combination that reflected the building traditions of western Asia in antiquity and the Arab understanding of the limitations of that tradition.

Considerations of Time and Space

This connection to the wider building traditions of western Asia in antiquity is lost in the traditional periodisation and spatialisation, which tends to focus on the Persian heritage of the Abbasids and the development of "classical Islam" in this period. Early Islamic culture, religion, and politics are increasingly seen as emerging from and indeed part of late antiquity and, in recent years, scholarship has moved on from the paradigm of derivative "copying" to emphasise the agency, creativity, selec-

11 Saba, *Impermanent Monuments*, 85.

12 Translated in Alastair Northedge, *The Historical Topography of Samarra* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2005), 275. This sentiment also appears in Yaqut in Mujam al-Buldān, 3:18.

13 Saba, *Impermanent Monuments*, 85.

14 Mohammed Hamdouni Alami, *Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition*, 12.

15 The understanding of the literary sources as an intended legacy of the built monuments and the connected understanding of the fragility of those monuments as a record of power underpins the choice not to illustrate this contribution with images.

tivity, and skill involved in adapting, for example, art, architecture and literature to create new expressions of communal identity and power.[16] Elsewhere, the vast spread of cross-cultural contacts and subsequent interconnected nature of elite culture and visual language in antiquity across Eurasia is increasingly understood, as is the way items and motifs from other cultural spheres could be used or rejected in what Katharina Meinecke calls, "the construction and consolidation of royal and elite identities of sovereigns and dynasties."[17] Diplomacy and trade connected the Mediterranean, the Arabian Peninsula, the Indian Ocean, and the South China Sea. Neither the great empires nor the minorities ruled by them were isolated and their cultures were not monolithic. Across time and space, imperial cultures developed in contact and conversation with others, reflecting differing micro- and macro-contexts.[18]

The territories, populations, and urban centres the Abbasid empire claimed throughout this period or within living memory (stretching from today's Morocco in the west, all the way east to modern-day Pakistan, and south across the entire Arabian Peninsula) had developed over a millennium or more, to varying degrees, in contact with each other and shared aspects of visual and ritualistic languages of imperial power.[19] An understanding of cultural influence that separates Roman, Persian, and Arab influence into discrete categories has limited utility for understanding either the Umayyad or Abbasid powers that followed and united many of those territories.[20] An ambassador from Constantinople, a member of the Khurasani elite, or a leader from the Qays or Yaman confederations might all understand the same monumental building as an expression of power while interpreting it differently, for varying reasons, because of their shared understanding of the late antique visual koiné and the regional contexts.[21]

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16 See, for instance, Aziz al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allah and His People*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Robert Hoyland, "Early Islam as a Late Antique Religion" in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 1053–77; Nadia Ali and Rachel Wood, "The Emergence of Islamic Arts," in *Imagining the Divine: Art and the Rise of World Religions*, ed. Elsner, Lenk et al. (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2017), 135–59.

17 Katharina Meinecke, "Circulating images: Late Antiquity's cross-cultural visual koine," in *A Globalised Visual Culture? Towards a Geography of Late Antique Art*, ed. Fabio Guidetti and Katharina Meinecke (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2020), 321–39, 335.

18 Matthew P. Canepa, "Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction among the Ancient and Early Medieval Mediterranean, Near East and Asia," *Ars Orientalis* 38 (2010): 9.

19 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth, 224;* Meinecke, "Circulating Images," 335.

20 Of course, these categories were not discrete entities; I refer to them as such in terms of how the poetry and histories of the time personify them.

21 For further discussion of this broader phenomenon, see Thomas Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

Often, however, "early Islam" is taken to end with the Umayyads in 750 CE. The end point for late antiquity famously varies greatly, often by centuries or more, but it is not usually applied to the Abbasids.[22] The second dynasty to rule the Islamicate world are, instead, studied in a different periodisation and spatialisation – with or without the Umayyads but separate from late antiquity as the "classical" form of Islam. This separation has many reasons. The increasingly prominent role of Persian elites in Abbasid court and government, the move of the Abbasid capital city from Syria to Iraq, and the gradual shift in the cultural and scholarly so-called centre of the Islamicate world to Persian cities like Balkh, Bukhara, and Merv as the ninth century progressed and Abbasid military power declined has, among other reasons, led to a focus on Persia, both in terms of time and space. The use of "Byzantium" in scholarship when referring to the empire based in Constantinople has also created an artificial break with late antiquity that impacts studies on the early Abbasid period, a topic to which I shall return.[23]

Perhaps the most important element, however, was the Abbasids' own implementation of the concept of *dawla*, a term that developed over time to mean "revolution" or "dramatically changed times" but which Jacob Lassner defines in this context as "a historical process that had come full circle," to separate themselves from the Umayyads.[24] The first century or more of Abbasid rule would later be characterised as a "Golden Age" of wealth, power, and intellectual accomplishments during which the so-called "classical" form of Islam was developed. In the formative years of the Abbasid regime, however, as Lassner has noted, it was the Islamic past and not "visions of a radically new future that shaped the political outlook."[25] Their revolution against the Umayyads had promised to represent the Islamic community on a much wider basis than the narrow, "Arab aristocracy"[26] of their predecessors and the early steps of the new governing dynasty to balance competing interests and regions suggested an intention to live up to that promise, with a focus on an empire wide understanding of Islam.

Both periodisation and spatialisation are necessary constructions to analyse the past and their construction, of course, depends on the focus of the scholars in

22 There are some exceptions, of course; see, for example, Thomas Bauer, *Warum es kein islamisches Mittelalter gab: Das Erbe der Antike und der Orient* (Munich: Verlag C.H.Beck, 2018).

23 See Anthony Kaldellis, *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019), for more detail.

24 For a detailed discussion, see Jacob Lassner, "The 'Abbasid Dawla: an Essay on the Concept of Revolution in Early Islam," in *Shi'ism*, ed. Ethan Kohlberg (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003), 309–32, 320.

25 Lassner, "The 'Abbasid Dawla," 320.

26 Jacob Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages: Text and Studies* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 122.

question.[27] In his chapter, shifting the periodisation and spatialisation to focus on the long tradition of imperial building in western Asia and Abbasid relationship with *Rum* adds to our understanding of their language of power.

Imperial Building Traditions of Western Asia

In his discussion of Iron Age city building in Western Asia, from Babylonia to Anatolia and Iran, Ömür Harmanşah demonstrates that, "building cities was envisioned as a social event that then became part and parcel of the politics of kingship and the shaping of social memory at the time."[28] From the Assyrians to the Achaemenids, he combines ancient texts with archaeological excavations and surveys to trace a tradition where building cities was understood as "a source of political discourse."[29] He situates his study within the wider practice of foundation cities in the ancient world, referencing Phoenician and Greek colonies and Akhenaten's city at Tell el-Amarn, as well as Alexander the Great's new cities and military settlements and the Augustan foundations in Rome's provinces.[30] I argue that this discourse continued in the early Abbasid understanding, framed firstly as a discourse between Rome and Persia, and then maintained by the Umayyads with a focus on the role of Solomon as an example of Muslim kingship.[31] This understanding and the focus on their relationship with Rome contextualises their building practices in the period 754–862 CE.

27 Particularly relevant to my own research are: Thomas Bauer, *Warum es kein islamisches Mittelalter gab;* Fred Donner, "Periodization as a Tool of the Historian with Special Reference to Islamic History," *Der Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East* 91, no. 1 (2014): 20–36; Garth Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Jurgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). My categorisation reflects Thomas Bauer's "*Islamic Late Antiquity*" and the continuity he insists on between that and the preceding "*Romano-Graeco-Iranian Antiquity*" (103). However, I close my periodisation in 862 CE, when the caliphs stopped sponsoring and constructing new cities and building projects on a massive scale.

28 Ömür Harmanşah, *Cities and the Shaping of Memory in the Ancient Near East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2.

29 Harmanşah, *Cities and the Shaping of Memory*, 1.

30 Harmanşah, *Cities and the Shaping of Memory*, 6.

31 Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "Solomon and Mythic Kingship in the Arab-Islamic Tradition: Qaṣīdah, Qurʾān and Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ", *Journal of Arabic Literature* 48, no. 1 (2017): 1–37, 4, https://doi.org/10.1163/1570064x-12341340.

Matthew P. Canepa's analysis of the cross-cultural interaction between the later Roman and Sasanian empires concludes that, "Rome and Sasanian Iran's fraught relationship as brothers and enemies was the crucible that forged the late antique Mediterranean, Europe, and western Asia. The end result of their coexistence was not just an exchange of cultural material, but a truly global, cross-cultural, and extrareligious language of debate and legitimacy [. . .] The meeting and melding of Roman and Sasanian practices of kingship shaped the expression of power in the Mediterranean, Near East, Central and South Asia, and China from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century."[32] This language of legitimacy and practice of kingship was a significant part of the world in which the early Abbasids ruled and it was necessary for them to engage with and manipulate them to assert their own imperial authority and identity.

The poem cited in the introduction to this chapter, composed by Ali ibn al-Jahm, expresses this understanding clearly; buildings are the language of kings and the Abbasid caliphs' building projects exceed those of Rome and Persia and stand as proof of the superiority of Islam. The Samarran *qasida*, or praise poetry, are, by their nature, intended to represent the caliphs and their achievements positively. The poets were at the mercy of their patrons, the caliphs – indeed, this particular Ali ibn al-Jahm poem was written while the poet was imprisoned by al-Mutawakkil in an effort to earn the poet's freedom.[33] As representations of the wider reception of the caliphal building projects, then, they are problematic. However, as "a way to shape knowledge about the past"[34] and a reflection of caliphal intentions, the poems can be understood as an extension of the lives of these buildings and a more permanent legacy.

Another poem, by the famous al-Buhturi, reflects the same context and rivalry:[35]

> It belittles the aspirations of other kings
> and diminishes the buildings of Kisra, in his age, and of Caesar

Here, "Kisra" stands in for the Sasanian dynasty and "Caesar" reflects the ongoing Roman dynasty. This poem is one of the most famous of the Samarran *qasida* and we can assume that its success indicates that the idea of the palace diminishing the buildings of the other two empires met with the approval of al-Mutawakkil.

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32 Canepa, *Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction*s, 224–25.

33 Isfahani, Afghani 9:114, cited in Saba, *Impermanent Monuments*, 87.

34 Saba, *Impermanent Monuments*, 87.

35 Buḥturī, al-Walīd ibn ʿUbayd. *Dīwān al-Buḥturī*, ed. Ḥasan Kāmil al-Ṣayrafī (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1962). Translation Dr. Julie Scott-Meisami, in Julie Scott Meisami, "The Palace-Complex as Emblem: Some Samarran Qasidas," in *A Medieval Islamic City Reconsidered. An Interdisciplinary Approach to Samarra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001), 75.

The other iconic "builder king" that both poems repeatedly reference is Solomon, perhaps the most iconic in Muslim tradition.[36] It has been argued that a Solomonic geography existed across Bilad al-Sham and Iran, including Persepolis.[37] Most importantly, he was inarguably associated with building spectacular palaces and power in the Quran. Al-Buhturi makes the connection at least twice:

> Atop a court paved with glass
> strange of composition and paving
> If its beauty was known to the djinn of Solomon
> Then they would kneel down and prostrate themselves[38]

He also suggests that the magical djinn of Solomon would be impressed by al-Mutawakkil's accomplishments. This was clearly a popular theme, for Ali ibn al-Jahm also suggests the djinn would acknowledge the importance and accomplishments of the Banu Hashim, the family of the Prophet from which the Abbasids descended and claimed their right to the caliphate:

> If Solomon had been brought
> by his djinn, some tales about it,
> He would have known surely that the Hashemites
> surpass him through their eminent majesty
> The earth remains built and inhabited
> through your life, the best of builders[39]

This extract from Ali ibn al-Jahm is towards the end of the poem cited earlier, which also repeatedly references Rome and Persia. The claim that Solomon's djinn would be impressed and that al-Mutawakkil is "the best of builders" is part of the rhetorical conclusion of the poem and suggests that, as important as it is to outstrip the achievements of the Persian and Roman empires, the legacy and superiority as a builder over Solomon, one of the ideal rulers of Islamic tradition,[40] was more significant.

There is an additional element to the role of Solomon in the Abbasid building tradition as they understood it. As Antoine Borrut has shown, traditions about Solomon were significant across the time and space of Romano-Graeco-Iranian

36 Michelina De Cesare, "Manazil Sulayman: Solomonic Memory and the Islamic Empire in the Early Abbasid Period," in *Before Archaeology: The Meaning of the Past in the Islamic Pre-Modern Thought (and After)*, ed. L. Capezzone (OCAVOA 1, 2020), 31–60, 31.

37 Antoine Borrut, "La Syrie de Salomon: L'appropriation Du Mythe Salomonien Dans Les Sources Arabes," *Pallas*, no. 63 (2003): 107–20, 107.

38 Translation based on Dr Matthew Saba's, with my own amendations.

39 Translation based on Dr Julie Scott-Meisami's, with my own amendations.

40 Stetkevych, *Solomon and Mythic Kingship*, 25.

late antiquity and Constantinople was no exception to this trend.[41] Claims about the appropriation of and/or surpassing of Solomon's Temple were common in sixth century Constantinople, particularly with reference to Hagia Sophia and Hagios Polyeuktos.[42] A number of textual sources from the early Abbasid period contextualise the background to the building of the Dome of the Rock (691–692 CE) by the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik in terms of the relationship with Constantinople. In particular, per Milka Levy-Rubin, in al-Tabari (writing in late ninth and early tenth century Baghdad), "the villain is clearly defined: it is the Roman Empire and its people, and specifically Constantinople, rather than just the Christians."[43] She frames the construction of this monumental building on the site of Solomon's Temple as both a rival to the Kaaba (controlled at that time by the rebel Abdallah b. al-Zubayr) and Hagia Sophia, against the backdrop of military engagements between the Umayyads and Constantinople. Al-Malik, she argues, "chose to build this stunning monument in the tradition of the classical Roman–Byzantine *commemoratoria*, and to embellish it with the finest mosaics in the best style of Byzantine artistic tradition [in order to obtain superiority over Constantinople]."[44] In other words, the Dome of the Rock was partly constructed to project Umayyad power at a time of dynastic difficulty and a key audience for that projection of power was Constantinople.

The Need to Project Power

As with the Umayyad construction of the Dome of the Rock, the need to project power is also apparent when we consider the circumstances in which both Baghdad and Samarra were founded by Abbasid caliphs. In 762 CE, when al-Mansur, the second Abbasid caliph – and, arguably, the "real" founder of the dynasty[45] – chose a site on the Tigris river, around 30 kilometres north of the former Sasanian capital of Ctesiphon for the city he would call "Madinat al-Salam" or "the city of Peace," the position of his dynasty was not obviously secure. He had suc-

41 Borrut, *La Syrie de Salomon*.

42 Milka Levy-Rubin, "Why was the Dome of the Rock built? A new perspective on a long-discussed question." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 80, no. 3 (2017): 441–64. doi:10.1017/S0041977X17000908, 451–3.

43 Levy-Rubin, *Why was the Dome of the Rock built?*, 459.

44 Levy-Rubin, *Why was the Dome of the Rock built?*, 463.

45 Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsid Society, 2nd-4th/8th-10th Centuries* (London: Psychology Press, 1998), 29.

ceeded his brother in 754 CE, only four years after the Abbasid Revolution had overthrown the Umayyad dynasty.[46] He had immediately faced threats to his position, from his uncle, from his main general, from the heirs of Ali, from competing factions throughout society, and from the last of the Umayyad dynasty that the Abbasid Revolution had overthrown. He also had to deliver on the promise of the Abbasid revolution and a broader Muslim identity to justify his new dynasty.[47] In hindsight, we can see that he dealt with each new challenge ruthlessly and effectively, and the number of his achievements at the time of his death in 775 CE when he handed over to his son makes for impressive reading.

At the time, however, the situation must have felt much more precarious. In the first eight years of his rule, al-Mansur's capital city had moved around as he dealt with different military rebellions and individual threats. The commissioning of Baghdad can be seen as a statement of al-Mansur's power and authority – that he could now devote time and finances to building a new capital city.[48] It went hand-in-hand with his new designation of a successor, his son, in a gesture that was intended to suppress or reconcile various other contenders, respectively.[49]

The Abbasid capital of Samarra, meanwhile, was founded in 836 CE at a time when huge financial resources were available to the caliphs and a military restructuring seemed like it might have solved the competing military factions of Arab and Persian troops.[50] However, the pro-Alid rebel Idrisid dynasty had ruled most of present-day Morocco and parts of present-day western Algeria from 788 CE and the Aghlabid emirs had established a de facto independent emirate in Tunisia since 801 CE.[51] A serious civil war, in part driven by the competing interests of those troops, had raged from 811 to 819 CE and caused significant damage to the territorial integrity of Abbasid rule as well as allowing the Tahirid dynasty to grow increasingly powerful as governors in Khorasan.[52] The Umayyad Emirate of Córdoba in al-Andalus was flourishing and the Roman empire in Constantinople had been through a transition over the previous decades and, with some caveats,

46 Hugh Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate, A Political History* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 1981), 110.

47 Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad,* 122.

48 Hugh Kennedy, trans., *The History of al-Ṭabari vol. XXIX: Al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī A.D. 763–786/A.H. 146–169* (New York: Suny Press, 1990), 21.

49 Kennedy, *al-Ṭabari vol. XXIX*, 224–25.

50 C.E. Bosworth, trans., *The History of al-Ṭabarī vol XXXIII: Storm and Stress along the Northern Frontiers of the ʿAbbasid Caliphate: The Caliphate of al-Muʿtaṣim A.D. 833–842/A.H. 218–227* (New York: Suny Press, 1991), xv.

51 Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (Routledge, 2023), 140.

52 Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 142.

appeared to be emerging strongly. Finally, a major religious rift in 833 CE between the caliph al-Mamun and the Islamic ulama had created an ongoing crisis that saw the religious authority of the caliphs decline.[53]

This tension between the universalist, messianic proclamations of the caliphs in this period and the frequently precarious reality of their political and military positions created a situation where they were looking back as well as forwards, to the west and south as well as the east, and when there was a need to assert the Abbasid's regime power in every possible way to a wide array of audiences. Both cities can be understood as projections of power and legitimacy, claiming the inheritance of a Western Asian model that included Rome, Persia, and Arabia.

The Round City: a Discourse with Whom?

The different audiences of Rome, Persia, and Arabia can be seen more clearly if we return to the founding of Baghdad in 762 CE by caliph al-Mansur. We have a number of accounts about the city's founding, construction, and immediate reception that reflect the potential audience, with perhaps the two most interesting appearing in the *Tarikh* of al-Tabari (d. 923 CE) and the *Tarikh* of Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 1071 CE). Both al-Tabari and al-Baghdadi (the later based on the former) record an account where al-Mansur discusses with his Persian adviser, Khalid ibn Barmak, whether or not to use materials from nearby Ctesiphon in the new city of Baghdad and how that will be interpreted by Muslim inhabitants of the city. Khalid gives his opinion twice, which is different the second time. Both times, his advice is rejected by the caliph.[54] Both accounts then discuss a visit of an ambassador from Constantinople who is asked for his opinion on the new city. Again, the caliph verbally rejects this advice, however, when the ambassador has left, he gives instructions to act upon the advice and make changes.[55] There are varying interpretations of these related accounts, their veracity, and the important nuances.[56] It is clear, however, that al-Mansur was later understood to have been conscious of the audience for his new city and that he understood its potential communicative role. Both citizens and visitors generally were expected to "read" and recognize the city's material allusions and reference points, as we can see in

53 Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 147.

54 For a full account, see Kennedy, *al-Ṭabari vol. XXIX*, 4–5; Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad*, 46.

55 Kennedy, *al-Ṭabari vol. XXIX*, 7–8; Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad*, 58.

56 For a full discussion, see Alexandre M. Roberts, "Al-Manṣūr and the Critical Ambassador," in *Bulletin d'études orientales*, T. 60 (2011): 145–60.

the discussion between al-Mansur and Khalid ibn Barmak. However, the Roman and Persian audiences are personified in the written accounts in the figures of the ambassador and Khalid ibn Barmak himself.

We can perhaps see the expectation of an audience "reading" the city most clearly in the gates. The Round City had four monumental gateways: the Damascus Gate, the Khorasan Gate, the Basra Gate, and the Kufa Gate. Each gateway was made up of two separate gates: one on the outer ring and one that admitted entrance into the city. Al-Baghdadi tells us that,

> The second gate was the gate of the city and was protected by the large wall which we have described. The main gate gave access to a vaulted passage, constructed of burnt brick cemented by gypsum, which was twenty cubits long and twelve cubits wide [. . .] Above the vaulted passage of each gate was an audience room with a staircase against the wall by which means one ascended it. Crowning this audience room was a great dome which reached a height of fifty cubits.[57]

Four individual iron gates associated with King Solomon were used in these gateways, with a fifth used in the entrance to the palace. The exterior of the iron gate at the Khorasan entrance was likely associated with Rome[58] while the exterior iron gate used in the Kufa entrance was originally used by a well-liked former governor of Iraq. The gate of the Damascus complex, however, was made locally and, "lacking the legendary credentials of the others, it was considered the weakest of the lot."[59] These were hugely significant structures, imposing and expressive: "In the medieval Near East, the transfer of gates from one city to another may have had a certain practical significance, but it was also a symbolic act expressive of authority."[60] The gates of the Round City connected the caliph with Solomon and with different corners of his empire, in a language that was understood by his citizens. The caliph al-Mutasim, who moved the imperial capital to Samarra in 836 CE, also took a set of monumental iron gates identified with spoils from the Roman city of Amorion, and installed them in a palace at Samarra in 838 CE.[61]

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57 Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad*, 54.

58 Kennedy, *al-Ṭabari vol. XXIX*, 5; Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad*, 54. The gate is described as *fir'awn*, which directly translates as "Pharoah" but often has a looser meaning of "oppressor," presumably based on the Qur'anic stories of the prophet Musa, the most frequently mentioned individual in the Qur'an. For more discussion, see Charles Wendell, "Baghdad: Imago Mundi, and Other Foundation-Lore," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2, no. 2 (1971): 99–128, 166.

59 Jacob Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 181.

60 Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule*, 181.

61 M. Meinecke, "al-Raḳḳa," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition, Volume VIII,* ed. C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, and G. Lecomte (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 410–14, 412.

The Abbasids and their Rivalry with *Rum*

As Canepa has demonstrated, the late Roman and Sasanian empires had interacted for centuries and developed a visual diplomatic language.[62] That language was itself part of a broader late antique visual koiné that connected territories between Lombardy and Yaman, the Nile valley and Transoxiana.[63] This visual language of late antiquity and early Islam is increasingly understood but the way the literary sources can illuminate it further remains understudied. The longstanding insistence on referring to the empire based in Constantinople as "the Byzantine Empire" and translating it as such obscures both the self-claimed identity and history of that empire[64] and its relationship with the early Abbasids. The people living and ruling in Constantinople conceived of themselves as Roman, their language as Roman, and their history as Roman.[65] Likewise, the Abbasids conceived of them as Roman and referred to them, thus, as *Rum* or Rome, as did the other sources in Western Asia at this time. For the Abbasids, Rome was a contemporary imperial rival, based in Constantinople.

In Nadia al-Cheikh's excellent compilation of Arabic sources on Byzantium, she suggests that Arab writers generally, "viewed the history of the Byzantines as an extension of the histories of ancient Greece and the Roman empire. This led Arab authors to mingle and confuse the names by which they referred to the Byzantines: the term *Rum* was used to refer interchangeably the Romans, the Byzantines, and the Christian Melkites [. . .] On occasion, *al-Rum* was used to refer to the ancient Greeks, although the predominant term in that context was *al-Yunaniyyun/Yūnānh*."[66]

It is my suggestion that, rather than "confusing" the names, they had a different understanding than we do and were able to deploy nuances within it and adapt the category according to their needs. In fact, they were able to separate Greek, Roman, and Christian as categories when it suited their purposes, for example, in this ninth century letter from al-Jahiz:

> The Rum are not scholars: they are craftspeople who took to writing because of their geographical proximity to the land of the ancient Greeks (Yunan). The Rum subsequently attributed to themselves some of the books of the ancient Greeks (Yunan). Since the Rum could not change the names of the most famous Greek (Yunan) authors, they ended by claiming

62 Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 224.
63 Meinecke, "*Circulating Images*," 335.
64 Kaldellis, *Romanland*, 11–17.
65 Kaldellis, *Romanland*, 36.
66 Nadia al-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 22.

> that the Greeks (Yunan) are actually a tribe of the Rum . . . Kitab al-Mantiq and Kitab al-Kawn wa al-Fasad were written by Aristotle, who was neither ~~Byzantine~~ Rum nor Christian; the Almagest was written by Ptolemy, and he was neither ~~Byzantine~~ Rum nor Christian; [. . .] In reality, the Christians and the ~~Byzantine~~ Rum have neither science, nor expository literature, nor vision, and their names should be erased from the registers of the philosophers and the sages.[67]

Rum could be a catch-all term to describe a Christian and geopolitical Other based in Constantinople, recognising a continuity between Greece and Rome, or it could be limited to deny the legitimacy of the Christian empire based in Constantinople and the connection between them and the Ancient Greeks, whose knowledge was currently being claimed for the Abbasids as part of the Translation Movement in Baghdad.[68]

When Ali ibn-Jahm refers to Rome and Persia as reference points for imperial building achievements, he subtly implies a distinction between the present day-Romans and the buildings of their ancestors, while also claiming that the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil (to whom the poem was recited), has outstripped their greatest building accomplishments. In doing so, he not only positions the Abbasids within the long tradition of imperial building in western Asia but also presents a contemporary triumph over their imperial and military rival in Constantinople.

Conclusion

As the literary sources make clear, Rome was a key audience for the Abbasids in their imperial building projects. The imperial capitals of Baghdad and Samarra were intended as statements of power, prestige, and vast resources but both cities were founded at a time of fragility and instability and their success was far from assured. The building projects of this period are often seen through the lens of the "Golden Age" of Islam, a classical period distinct from late antiquity and the preceding Umayyad dynasty that looks forward to the so-called "Persian revival." However, the courtly poetry of the period clearly looks back, placing them squarely within the imperial building traditions of antiquity in Western Asia. Understanding the literary sources as an intended legacy of the building projects, a linguistic monument to those achievements, allows us to better "read" the building projects as a

67 Cheikh, *Byzantium*, 104. Edits and formatting my own, to emphasise the amended translation and results.

68 For a fuller discussion of the Translation Movement and its significance, see Gutas, *Arabic Thought.*

language of power. In particular, it allows us to see the Abbasid caliphs asserting their relationship with the past and making claims to the heritage of Rome as well as Persia and Arabia. In doing so, they projected a universal claim to power, one that excluded their imperial rival in Constantinople.

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Peter S. Makhlouf

Die Eroberung Alexandrias als Leitmotiv der Weimarer Republik

Abstract: In the German-speaking world of the interwar years, polemicists of every stripe – classicists, theologians, cultural critics – returned time and again to the topos of the "conquest of Alexandria" by Greece and Rome. Fixated above all on the Battle of Actium of 31 B.C., these thinkers construed this moment as a decisive turning point in the history of what they termed the "Occident" – itself a fiction generated by the reliance on the "conquest of Alexandria" topos. Weimar debates around political theology declared a epochal choice between "Orient oder Rom," a scarecely concealed form of fearmongering over the "Judeo-Bolshevik" threat of "Rom oder Moskau," retrojected as the modern coeval of Eastern Mediterranean threats to the Graeco-Roman world. As the essay goes on to show, attention to the place of (Alexandrian) Judaism in the ancient world – another theme of Weimar scholarship – contravenes such strictly antinomian views of history and refutes any Alexandrian vs. Graeco-Roman oppositions through an awareness of the syncretism of the Mediterranean world.

Orient oder Rom – Rom oder Moskau

Innerhalb der weitreichenden Politisierung der Altertumswissenschaft des späten 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts nimmt die Forschung über die Interaktion zwischen der griechisch-römischen Welt und den Zivilisationen des Alten Orients einen besonderen Platz ein. Jahrhunderte zurückreichende Prozesse der europäischen Selbstgestaltung, die Konstruktion von räumlichen und zeitlichen Typologien, die bei der Interpretation der antiken Geschichte und Kultur zum Einsatz kommen, waren für eine Generation europäischer, insbesondere deutscher Altertumswissenschaftler in den Jahren vor und nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg entscheidend.[1] Die politische Kraft solcher Analogien, deren jeweilige Implikationen sich in jedem Kontext radikal unterscheiden, ist keineswegs selbstverständlich.[2]

1 J.G. Manning (Hrsg.), Writing History in Time of War: Michael Rostovtzeff, Elias Bickermann and the "Hellenization of Asia" (Stuttgart 2015). Siehe auch: Pierre Briant, Alexandre et l'hellénisation de l'Asia, in: Studi Ellenistici 16 (2005), S. 10–69.

2 Luciano Canfora, Politische Philologie: Altertumswissenschaften und moderne Staatsideologien, übersetzt von Volker Breidecker/Ulrich Hausmann/Barbara Hufer, Stuttgart 1995.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111229591-005

Dennoch hielt Eduard Meyer, einer der größten Historiker des späten 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts, die zeitgenössische Relevanz seines 1924 gehaltenen Vortrags *Blüte und Niedergang des Hellenismus in Asien* für unmittelbar offensichtlich.[3] Wie er in seinem Vorwort bemerkte: „Die Analogien mit der gegenwärtigen Weltlage werden sich dem Leser überall aufdrängen, auch ohne daß er ausdrücklich darauf hingewiesen wird. Berlin, den 18. November 1924“ (*B*, S. 1). Meyer zeichnet ein ergreifendes Bild der Erfolge und Fallstricke der Eroberung weiter Teile Asiens durch Alexander den Großen. Der Großteil seines Textes befasste sich mit dem Einstrom der „orientalischen Barbarei“ in die griechisch-römische Welt – wie er den Einfluss intellektueller und spiritueller Strömungen wie Dualismus, Magie, Mystik, Astrologie und kultisch-religiöse Praktiken bezeichnete. Die sakralisierte Monarchie – „Die Erhebung des Königs zum Gott“ (*B*, S. 45) – erwies sich als einziges Mittel, um den „Aufständen“ zu widerstehen, deren Antrieb jene populären orientalischen Strömungen waren. Das „Festhalten am Reich“ sorgte dafür, dass „alle diese Krisen erfolgreich überstanden wurden“ (*B*, S. 47), mit Ausnahme der Aufstände der Juden „ununterbrochen in allen Städten“ (*B*, S. 42). Die Widerständigkeit der antiken Juden wird zu einem wiederkehrenden Topos in Meyers Darstellung. Laut Meyer führt der „Vorstoß des Orients gegen die Welt der hellenistisch-römischen Kultur“ (*B*, S. 74) zum Untergang erst der griechischen und dann der römischen Welt.

Meyers Kodierung des Volksaufstandes als orientalisch-jüdisches Ressentiment gegen das Imperium fungiert in vielerlei Hinsicht als eine Wiederbelebung des berühmten nietzscheanischen Ausspruches „‚Rom gegen Judäa, Judäa gegen Rom‘: – es gab bisher kein größeres Ereignis als diesen Kampf, diese Fragestellung, diesen todfeindlichen Widerspruch“, den Nietzsche mit dem Kampf zwischen Aristokratie und Proletariat assoziierte.[4] Dieser scheinbar „ewige“ Gegensatz wurde von Meyer historisiert und konkretisiert, indem er die Wende von der hellenistischen zur römischen Welt mit dem Ende des 19. Jh. in Verbindung brachte, als „die Herrschaft der europäischen Völker und ihrer Kultur über alle fünf Weltteile als das Endergebnis der geschichtlichen Entwicklung erschien“ (*B*, S. 60). Entsprechend dem von Meyer dargelegten historischen Paradigma (Triumph des Hellenismus = Zeitalter

3 Eduard Meyer, Blüte und Niedergang des Hellenismus in Asien, Berlin 1924, Abkürzung *B*, S. #; Zu Meyer: Karl Christ, Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff: Leben und Werk führender Althistoriker der Neuzeit. Darmstadt 1972, S. 286–333; Arnaldo Momigliano, Introduction to a Discussion of Eduard Meyer, in: Glen W. Bowersock/T.J. Cornell, A.D. Momigliano: Studies on Modern Scholarship, Berkeley 1994, S. 209–222; William M. Calder III/Alexander Demandt (Hrsg.), Eduard Meyer: Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers, Leiden 1990.

4 Vgl. Richard Faber, ‚Rom gegen Judäa, Judäa gegen Rom‘. Eine Kritik des schwarzen Nietzscheanismus, in: Hubert Cancik/Uwe Puschner, Antisemitismus, Paganismus, Völkische Religion, München 2004, S. 105–120.

des europäischen Kolonialismus) fand der Niedergang der hellenistischen Welt sein Pendant im Unbehagen über die Auflösung der Kolonialmächte und den durch den Ersten Weltkrieg verstärkten Drang zu nationaler Selbstbestimmung.

Aber das Ziel unserer Untersuchung ist es nicht, den richtigen Vergleichspunkt zu finden, sondern diesen Identifikationszwang überhaupt zu hinterfragen. Dieser Aufsatz gilt als ein nur allzu kleiner Beitrag zur Frage: Wie und warum hat eine gewisse kulturpolitische Strömung in Zwischenkriegsdeutschland sich stetig auf strenge Dichotomien und Parallelen aus der römischen Geschichte bezogen, besonders auf die Opposition „Alexandria (oder schlichtweg: Orient) vs. Rom"? Und sind die Pole dieser Dichotomien, die diese Denker ermitteln, eigentlich so entgegengesetzt wie sie behaupten? Diese Konstruktionen von Antinomien und Kontinuitäten erweisen sich als moderne Instanzen der langen Geschichte politischer *translationes*, die solch eine maßgebliche Rolle in der Geschichte der Figurenlehre des westlichen *imperiums* gespielt haben (wie besonders am Ende dieses Aufsatzes aufgezeigt wird).[5]

Kein Denker hat so entscheidend den Weimarer Typologiezwang etabliert wie Oswald Spengler in seinem *Untergang des Abendlandes*.[6] Es verwundert nicht, dass Meyer den nahöstlichen Widerstand gegen die griechisch-römische Herrschaft innerhalb eines Spengler'schen Paradigmas konstruiert angesichts der engen Beziehung, die sich zu diesem Zeitpunkt zwischen den beiden Männern entwickelt hatte.[7] Im folgenden Jahr 1925 hielt Meyer einen Vortrag mit dem Titel *Spenglers Untergang des Abendlandes*, in dem er feststellte:

> das innere Wesen, die Seele dieser Kultur [d.h. der antiken Welt –PM], wandelt sich stetig bis ihre innere Kraft erlischt, sie verflacht und in Erschöpfung erstarrt und abstirbt. Dieses Schauspiel erleben wir [d.h. die europäische Kultur] gegenwärtig [...] [Spenglers] vernich-

5 Dieser Aufsatz erzählt also ein kurzes Kapitel in der langen Geschichte deutscher nationaler Subjektbildung als „Westler" gegenüber einem slawischen Osten, die von der Zwischenkriegszeit über die Zeit des Kalten Krieges bis hin zur gegenwärtigen selbstsüchtigen antirussischen Hysterie in Deutschland reicht. Vgl. Thomas Müller, Imaginierter Westen: Das Konzept des »deutschen Westraums« im völkischen Diskurs zwizchen politischer Romantik und Nationalsozialismus, Bielefeld 2009; Jörn Happel, Asian Horsemen, Bolshevik Monsters. Europe's Primal Fear of the East, in: Georges Tamer/Andrew Mein/Lutz Greisiger, Gog und Magog. Contributions toward a World History of an Apocalyptic Motif, Berlin 2024, S. 715–741.

6 Siehe Sebastian Fink/Robert Rollinger, Einleitung, in: Sebastian Fink/Robert Rollinger, Oswald Spenglers Kulturmorphologie – eine multiperspektivische Annäherung, Wiesbaden 2018, S. 1–10, hier S. 1–7.

7 Vgl. Alexander Demandt, Eduard Meyer und Oswald Spengler: Lässt sich Geschichte voraussagen?, in: William M. Calder III/Alexander Demandt (Hrsg.), Eduard Meyer: Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers, Leiden/Köln, 1990, S. 159–181.

> tendes Urteil teile ich durchaus und ich sehe vielleicht trüber in die Zukunft unseres Volkes als er.[8]

Auf Spenglers *Untergang des Abendlandes* ließ sich letztlich die Analogie zurückverfolgen, dass die historische Epoche, „gleichzeitig" zur euro-amerikanischen Welt nach dem Weltkrieg war, „dem Übergang vom hellenistischen zum römischen Zeitalter" entspreche.[9] Die Schlacht von Aktium, hatte Spengler behauptet, könne als entscheidender Moment in der Geschichte des Westens gelten, der der gegenwärtigen Situation Deutschlands am nächsten ähnele. Solche Deutungen waren Teil der diskursiven Konstruktion der Weimarer Zeit als Krisenzeit, was es wiederum ermöglichte, dass diese Untergangspropheten die entsprechende Krisisreaktion vorgeben konnten, z.B. indem sie eine neue „Eroberung Alexandrias" verlangen.[10] Allerlei Homologien Spengler'scher Art boten sich an, „[a]lle diese Parallele aber sind nebensächlich, peripher und existenziell unverbindlich" – so Carl Schmitt – im Vergleich zu der „Zeit der römischen Bürgerkriege und des Cäsarismus [...] [und dem] Zeitalter der Schlacht bei Aktium."[11] „Das unendlich exemplarische Actium, das ewige Ereignis" hat Foucault es bezeichnet und war dabei trotz einer radikal anderen politischen Haltung nicht frei von seiner eigenen Auferlegung teleologischer historischer Typologien.[12]

Hinter den Bemerkungen über den politisch-theologischen Widerstand der orientalisch-jüdischen Massen verbarg sich die Angstmache vor der Bedrohung des orientalisch-jüdischen Bolschewismus – die „zeitgenössischen Analogien", die Meyer in seinem Vorwort zwar angedeutet, aber nicht explizit benannt hat. Diskussionen über das antike Ultimatum „Orient oder Rom" erwiesen sich in der Zwischenkriegszeit als Diskussionen über die zeitgenössische Wahl „Rom oder Moskau".[13] Die „andrängende Flut des orientalischen Wesens", die nach den Worten des Archäologen

8 Eduard Meyer, Spenglers Untergang des Abendlandes, Berlin 1925, S. 9.

9 Oswald Spengler, Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte, München 1923, S. 36

10 Vgl. Moritz Föllmer/Rüdiger Graf (Hrsg.), Die 'Krise' der Weimarer Republik: Zur Kritik eines Deutungsmusters, Frankfurt 2005.

11 Carl Schmitt, Donoso Cortés in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation. Vier Aufsätze, 2. Auflage, Berlin 2009, S. 93–94.

12 Michel Foucault, Theatrum Philosophicum, in: Critique 282 (1970), S. 885–908.

13 Gerd Koenen, Der Russland-Komplex: die Deutschen und der Osten, 1900-1945, München 2005, S. 7. Andere Parallele in Richard Faber, Abendland: Ein politischer Kampfbegriff. Berlin/Vienna 2002, S. 30–32. Zur Rolle der Angst um Kommunismus im Herbeiführen des Zweiten Weltkriegs vgl. Jonathan Haslem, The Spectre of War: International Communism and the Origins of World War II, Princeton 2021.

Walther Kolbe an „Roms Wende“ drohte,[14] fand ihren Widerhall in der berühmten, die deutschen Kriegshandlungen entschuldigenden „Professorendenkschrift“ von 1915, weil sie vor allem „unser inneres, geistiges und sittliches Leben, Deutschlands und Europas Kultur verteidigen [müssten] gegen die Barbarenflut aus dem Osten“, womit natürlich Russland gemeint war, „zweifellos die größte Bedrohung für die Zukunft Deutschlands und Europas“.[15] Als Rektor der Universität Berlin 1919/1920 erlaubte Meyer selbst – der Überzeugung gemäß, dass „der Bolschewismus als die schrecklichste Gefahr“ drohe – den Studenten, offen für den Kapp-Putsch zu demonstrieren, weil er glaubte, dass nur diese politische Bewegung die nötige Entschlossenheit besäße, den Aufstieg des Bolschewismus in Deutschland aufzuhalten (die moderne Version des von Meyer erwähnten antiken „Festhaltens am Reich“).[16] Diese Erfahrungen färbten zweifellos (oder umgekehrt) sein äußerst einflussreiches Buch *Caesars Monarchie und das Principat des Pompejus* aus dem Jahr 1919, das er mit ausdrücklichen Parallelen zwischen dem Schicksal Roms im 1. Jh. v. Chr. und Deutschlands im 20. Jh. im Hinterkopf geschrieben hatte, sehr zur Freude des abgesetzten Wilhelm, der Meyer sein Exemplar des Buches mit Marginalien aus dem Exil schickte. „Bolschewisten“ und „Spartakisten“, schrieb Wilhelm, neben Meyers Erwähnung der verärgerten Massen, die sich an der Catalinarischen Verschwörung beteiligten.[17]

Während das Diktum „Rom oder Moskau“ auf Alfons Paquets Essay „Rhein und Donau“ von 1923 zurückgeht und dann von der konservativen Weimarer Kulturkritik von Ernst Robert Curtius (und später Thomas Mann) popularisiert wurde, hatte das Diktum „Orient oder Rom“ eine ganz andere und tatsächlich längere Genealogie. Es war ein Produkt des habsburgischen Fin de Siècle, das seinen Ursprung in kunsthistorischen Debatten fand, vor allem in Josef Strzygowskis *Orient oder Rom* von 1901, das im selben Jahr wie *Die spätrömische Kunstindustrie* seines Kon-

14 Walther Kolbe, Von der Republik der Monarchie, in: Otto Immisch et al. (Hrsg.), Aus Roms Zeitwende: Von Wesen und Wirken des Augusteischen Geistes [=Das Erbe der Alten Heft XX], Leipzig 1931, S. 37–66.

15 „Kriegszieldenkschrift von 1347 Intellektuellen an den Reichskanzler Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg vom 8. Juli 1915 (sogenannte Professorendenkschrift)“, in: Wolfgang Schumann *et al.* (Hrsg.), Weltherrschaft im Visier: Dokumente zu den Europa- und Weltherrschaftsplänen des deutschen Imperialismus von der Jahrhundertwende bis Mai 1945 (Berlin 1975), S. 119–124, hier: S. 119 und S. 121.

16 Michael Grüttner (Hrsg.), Geschichte der Universität Unter den Linden. Volume 2: Die Berliner Universität zwischen den Weltkriegen 1918–1945, Berlin 2012, S. 7.

17 Eduard Meyer, Caesars Monarchie und das Principat des Pompejus. Innere Geschichte Roms von 66 bis 44 v.Chr., Stuttgart/Berlin 1919; Zu Wilhelms Reaktion: Bern Sösemann, „„Der kühnste Entschluss führt am sichersten zum Siel“. Eduard Meyer und die Politik“, S. 446–483, hier: S. 473–475, in Calder III/Demandt (Hrsg.), Eduard Meyer.

kurrenten Alois Riegl erschien.[18] In ihren zutiefst von einem deklassierenden Gestus geprägten Werken versuchten Strzygowksi und Riegl, die wegen der hellenistischen und römischen Herrschaft über den Mittelmeerraum enstandenen Kontakte zwischen den verschiedenen Kulturen des Mittelmeerraums und des Alten Orients aufzuarbeiten.[19] Wie Suzanne Marchand ausführlich untersuchte,[20] führten eine Reihe von Faktoren zu einem großen Antrieb für wissenschaftliche Entdeckungen, für eine „syncretistic, rather than historicist, interpretation of the past".[21] Zu diesen Faktoren zählten: 1) das Fin-de-Siècle-Bewusstsein für die Fragilität eines imperialen Weltbildes, 2) das damit einhergehende Bewusstsein anderer innerhalb Europas präsenten Kulturen, 3) die Diskurse über römische Dekadenz und „barbarische" – germanische und orientalische – Vitalität und 4) die durch imperiale Expansion ermöglichte Verbreitung des Wissens über Kulturen jenseits der griechisch-römischen, die durch Forschungsreisen, den Erwerb von Manuskripten und das Sammeln von Artefakten hervorgerufen wurde. Trotz seines Rufs als völkisch-politischer Brandstifter besaß Strzygowski einen unbestritten katholischen Blick für nicht-römische, nicht-griechische Einflüsse in der Kunstgeschichte. Während Theodor Haecker, der die deutsche Nation rückblickend mit Rom identifizierte, in seinem *Virgil, Vater des Abendlandes*, über den „Stuhl Karls des Großen [...] aufgerichtet aus Marmorplatten, die aus der Stadt Rom nach Aachen gebracht worden waren [...] [und] auf deutschem Boden steht" schwärmte, demontierte Strzygowski solche Fantasien in seiner *Hellenistische und koptische Kunst in Alexandria* (1902), indem er zeigte, wie tiefgehend die Elfenbeinreliefs des Aachener Doms den alexandrinischen Elfenbeinschnitzereien verpflichtet waren. Es war Alexandria und nicht Rom, mit dem Strzygowski den großen karolingischen Stolz der deutschen Nationaldenkmäler verband; die kulturelle Bedeutung der „Rom-Analogie" wurde radikal relativiert und verdrängt.

Die Rom-Deutschland-Analogie hing von zwei gedanklichen Voraussetzungen ab: erstens, von einer Projektion des Orients als das Ganz-Andere und zweitens von einer expliziten Vermeidung der schon seit einem halben Jahrhundert gültigen Analogie der modernen europäischen Kultur mit der spätrömischen Welt

18 Siehe Ivan Foletti/Francesco Lovino (Hrsg.), Orient Oder Rom?: History and Reception of a Historiographical Myth (1901-1970), Roma 2018.

19 Vgl.: Jaś Elsner, The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901, in: Art History 25/3 (2002), S. 358–379; Matthew Rampley, The Vienna School of Art History: Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847-1918, University Park, PA 2013.

20 Suzanne Marchand, The Rhetoric of Artifacts and the Decline of Classical Humanism: The Case of Josef Strzygowski, in: History and Theory 33/4 (1994), S. 106–130, weiterentwickelt in Suzanne Marchand, Appreciating the Art of Others – Josef Strzygowski and the Austrian Origins of Non-Western Art History, in: Piotro Otto Scholz/Magdalena Anna Długosz (Hrsg.), Von Biala nach Wien: Josef Strzygowski und die Kunstwissenschaften, Vienna 2015, S. 257–282.

21 Marchand, The Rhetoric of Artifacts, S. 115.

(und nicht mit Roms Wende zum Imperium) aufgrund der für beide „dekadente" Epochen charakteristischen kulturellen Hybridität und stilistischen Pluralität.[22] Der konservative Kulturpessimismus war ein letzter, verzweifelte Versuch, klare Abgrenzungen festzulegen, jedoch ist die entscheidende Lektion folgende: Dieser Versuch entsprang nicht einem engstirnigen kulturellen Reduktionismus an sich, sondern vielmehr einer Erkenntnis der kulturellen Vielfalt der antiken und modernen Imperien (und der sich daraus ergebenden Ängste).

Visionen des *monstrums* I: Aby Warburg

Sowohl Meyer als auch Spengler charakterisierten die antike Begegnung zwischen Ost und West im Plenum als ein Aufeinanderprallen der rationalen, politischen und ästhetischen Mäßigung der griechisch-römischen Welt mit den kultischen Praktiken der „magischen" Kulturen,[23] welches man in dem Satz zusammenfassen könnte: „Athen wird eben immer wieder neu aus Alexandrien zurückerobert werden."[24] Dieser berühmte Ausspruch des Kulturwissenschaftlers Aby Warburg aus dem Jahr 1920 begründete die Dichotomie, die Warburgs Studien zur Geschichte der Astrologie strukturieren sollten. Laut Warburg wurde die Aneignung und Rationalisierung der orientalischen (d.h. babylonischen und ägyptischen) Astrologie durch das klassische Griechenland in der römischen Welt weiterentwickelt, bevor sie in der orientalischen Welt der Spätantike, im arabischen und lateinischen Mittelalter verloren ging, bis sie schließlich von den Humanisten der Renaissance wiederentdeckt und zurückerobert wurde. Orientalische und abendländische Astrologie dienen hier als Metonyme, die zwei Extreme von Warburgs Theorie der Nachahmung bilden. Warburg zufolge betrachtete die griechisch-römische Antike die Figuren, die den Himmel bevölkern, lediglich als Heuristik, als eine Art, den Himmel abzubilden oder ihm eine räumliche Ordnung zu geben. Die sogenannte „alexandri-

22 Vgl. z.B. Margaret Olin, Alois Riegl: The Late Roman Empire in the Late Hapsburg Empire, in: Austrian Studies 5 (1994), S. 107–120; Jaś Elsner, The Viennese Invention of Late Antiquity: Between Politics and Religion in the Forms of Late Roman Art, in: Jaś Elsner, Empires of Faith in Late Antiquity: Histories of Art and Religion from India to Ireland, Cambridge 2020, S. 110–227; Stefan Rebenich, Late Antiquity in Modern Eyes, in: Philip Rousseau (Hrsg.), A Companion to Late Antiquity, London 2009, S. 77–92.

23 Vgl. Domenico Conte, Oswald Spengler und die magische Kultur, in: Edoardo Massimilla/Giovanni Morrone, Deutschland und der Orient: Philologie, Philosophie, historische Kulturwissenschaften. Hildesheim 2021, S. 357–372; Francesco Gagliardi, La luce e la caverna cosmica: Spengler, Meyer e la Kultur magico-araba, Perugia 2022.

24 Aby Warburg, Heidnisch-antike Weissagung in Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten, in: Aby Warburg, Gesammelte Schriften, hrsg. von Ulrich Pfisterer et al., Bd. I. 2, Berlin 1998, S. 487–558.

nische“ Astrologie hingegen nahm diese Figuren wörtlich und unterwarf den Menschen dem kosmischen Griff des astralen Schicksals.

Die wohl wichtigste Zusammenfassung von Warburgs lebenslanger Beschäftigung mit der Geschichte der Astrologie findet sich in seinem 1925 gehaltenen Vortrag zum Gedenken an Franz Boll.[25] Warburgs Schriften über Astrologie waren ohne Bolls Studie und Edition der Fragmente der *Sphaera barbarica* – einer Liste von Sternbildern, in der man eine umfangreichere, farbenfrohere Reihe von Paranatellonta[26] findet als in der *Sphaera graecanica* – nicht zu denken. Die *Sphaera barbarica*, die Warburg als „das große, verlorene hellenistische Handbuch der angewandten Kosmologie“ bezeichnete, soll von Teukros von Babylon (Babylon ist ein Gau in Ägypten) verfasst worden sein.[27] Warburgs Vortrag zum Gedenken an Boll war dem Studium der okzidentalischen Rettung der Astrologie gewidmet, die Warburg als „das Ergebnis eines (ästhetisch vielleicht nicht so faszinierenden, aber menschlich umso fesselnderen) Versuchs [bezeichnete], den modernen Menschen aus dem Bann der magisch-hellenistischen Praxis zu befreien“[28] und klare, von den ikonografischen Verunreinigungen der *Sphaera barbarica* unbefleckte Darstellungen der Sternbilder zurückzugewinnen. Warburg beschrieb diesen Kampf mit einer noch eindringlicheren, noch chauvinistischeren Version seines Athen-Alexandrien-Diktums:

> […] die mathematische Wissenschaft Griechenlands, die im Verlauf der Renaissance in ihren Urformen wieder hergestellt wird, verleiht jedoch selbst dem europäischen Menschen die Waffe, um die aus Griechenland, aber aus dem asiatischen Griechenland gekommenen Sterndämonen zu bekämpfen. Das griechische Athen will eben immer wieder von neuem aus dem arabisierenden Alexandrien erobert sein.[29]

Warburg veranschaulichte dieses Pauschalurteil am Beispiel einer einzigen Figur: Perseus und seine mythische Tötung der Medusa und die Befreiung Andromedas von dem Seeungeheuer Cetus.[30] In der griechischen Astrologie bilden diese fünf Fi-

25 Aby Warburg, Die Einwirkung der Sphaera Barbarica auf die kosmischen Orientierungsversuche des Abendlandes, in: Davide Stimilli/Claudia Wedepohl (Hrsg.), »Per monstra ad sphaeram« Sternglaube und Bilddeutung: Vortrag in Gedenken an Franz Boll und andere Schriften 1923-1925, München und Hamburg 2008, S. 63–128.

26 Buchstäblich übersetzt „daneben aufgehende“ bezeichnen Paranatellonta „Sterne oder Sternbilder die zugleich mit bestimmten Graden oder Dekanen (10°-Abschnitten) der Ekliptik (un-) sichtbar werden.“ Vgl. Paranatellonta, Der neue Pauly online, ad loc, n.d..

27 Warburg, Die Einwirkung der Sphaera Barbarica, S. 70–71.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*

30 Vgl. Wolfgang Hübner, Das Sternbild Perseus: Teukros und die Rezeption antiker Astrologie in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts bei Franz Boll und Aby M. Warburg, Wiesbaden 2022.

guren (Andromeda, ihre zwei Eltern, Cetus und Perseus) das einzige Beispiel eines kohärenten Himmelsmythos. Warburg zeigte, wie der Verlust der antiken griechischen Darstellung an den Orient auch ein konzeptioneller Verlust ist, denn die verzerrte ikonografische Darstellung führe zu einem Zusammenbruch des „Denkraums".[31] Die Araber, wie auch die Völker des Alten Orients vor ihnen, hätten eine endgültige Entsprechung zwischen Stern und Schicksal behauptet: Wer z.B. unter Perseus geboren worden sei, sei dazu bestimmt gewesen, Krieger zu werden. Erst mit Peruzzis Fresko von Perseus' Ermordung der Medusa in der Villa Farnesina – so Warburg – sei die wahre Darstellung wiedergefunden worden.

In der Vorlesung betrieb Warburg eine ganz eigene Mythopoiesis, indem er Perseus' Sieg über Medusa und Cetus zu einem Mythos der Rettung der griechisch-römischen Astrologie aus den Fängen eines vage weiblichen, monströsen Wesens, das mit dem Osten assoziiert wird, rekonstruierte.[32] Warburg verwandelte Perseus so in eine Metafigur für die Heilsgeschichte des westlichen Menschen aus dem (arabisierenden) Alexandria *und* in eine Metafigur für sich selbst. Sein Vortrag von 1925 war in vielerlei Hinsicht ein verschlüsselter Bericht über seine eigene Eroberung von, nicht aus, Alexandria, über seinen mehrjährigen Klinikaufenthalt in Kreuzlingen unter den Augen Ludwig Binswangers.[33] Am 23. April 1924 schrieb Warburg an Wilamowitz, der zu einem Vortrag in der kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg eingeladen war, da er noch nicht aus der Heilanstalt entlassen war und deshalb nicht teilnehmen konnte:

> Wenn Sie über Zeus sprechen, hochverehrter Herr Professor, will ich mir denken, dass Sie dabei auf dem Altar der Minerva Memor einen Ölzweig niederlegen, dass Sie einen Perseus entsenden, der den Gefesselten von Kreuzlingen befreit, damit er zuhause der Minerva Medica ein Dankopfer bringen darf.[34]

Warburg selbst war in dieser Analogie zu Andromeda geworden, der Gefesselten im Inneren von Kreuzlingen, die auf ihre Befreiung von Perseus wartet. Doch was war dann das Ungeheuer, das Warburg zu verschlingen drohte? Welche Rolle spielte Alexandria in dieser Konstruktion von klassischen Metafiguren?

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31 Zum Begriff: Martin Treml/Sabine Flach/Pablo Schneider (Hrsg.), Warburgs Denkraum: Formen, Motive, Materialen, München 2014.

32 Vgl. Christopher S. Wood, A History of Art History, Princeton 2019, S. 289: „The 'Orient' figures for Warburg only as a mystifying threat to Mediterranean reason, a passive source of fascination, coded as female. The non-Western here is the image of a hidden weakness within the West."

33 Chantal Marazia/Davide Stimilli (Hrsg.), Ludwig Binswanger, Aby Warburg: die unendliche Heilung: Aby Warburgs Krankengeschichte, Zürich/Berlin 2007.

34 Warburg, Per monstra ad sphaeram, S. 56.

Abb. 1: Max Adolph Warburg, *Der Mensch zwischen Dämonenfurcht und wissenschaftlicher Betrachtung* (1929), wiederabgedruckt von Uwe Fleckner, Robert Galitz, Claudia Naber, and Herwart Nöldeke (Hrsg.), *Aby M. Warburg: Bildersammlung zur Geschichte von Sternglaube und Sternkunde im Hamburger Planetarium* (Hamburg: Dölling and Galitz, 2000), S. 400.

In den Jahren nach seiner Entlassung aus Kreuzlingen begann Warburg gemeinsam mit Saxl und Bing die Arbeit an einer Ausstellung *Zur Geschichte von Sternglaube und Sternkunde* im Hamburger Planetarium. Als Eröffnungsbilder der Ausstellung fertigte Warburgs Sohn Max zwei von astrologischen Themen inspirierte Gemälde an (Abb. 1).[35] Das rechte Gemälde orientierte sich an einer eher androgynen Figur (mit weiblichem Gesicht und Haarschnitt, aber männlichen Geschlechtsteilen) unten links, die entsetzt kauert. Es scheint sich um eine verdeckte Warburg-qua-Andromeda zu handeln, die auf einer scheinbaren Klippe ausgesetzt ist und auf der einen Seite von Saturn bedroht wird, während ihr auf der anderen Seite der Heilstab von Merkur angeboten wird (von dem Warburg an Wilamowitz geschrieben hat). Die Figur auf der rechten Seite ist eindeutig als Saturn zu identifizieren, doch in den astrologischen Handschriften, die wir besitzen, trägt Saturn fast immer ein bärtiges Gesicht. Der Saturn hier hingegen trägt deutlich asiatische Züge. Und obwohl die Sichel eine Konstante der Saturn-Ikonografie ist, fällt es äußerst schwer, die Sichel und den Stern hier nicht als Embleme eines östlichen Bolschewismus zu lesen, der Warburg bedroht (Embleme, die leicht mit dem Stern und dem Halbmond des islamischen „arabisierenden Alexandria“ gleichzusetzen sind).

Am 10. August 1921 hielt Warburg, wie so oft während seiner Zeit in der Klinik, einen seiner stammelnden Monologe, den Binswanger aufschrieb und in

35 Uwe Flecker *et al.* (Hrsg.), Aby M. Warburg: Bildersammlung zur Geschichte von Sternglaube und Sternkunde im Hamburger Planetarium, Hamburg 2000, S. 401.

seine Notizen zu Warburgs Krankenakte aufnahm: "Darf ich dir all mein Leid klagen, denk mal klein Falterchen, am 18. November 1918 hatte ich so Angst um meine Familie, da habe ich meinen Revolver genommen und wollte meine Familie und mich töten. Weißt du, weil der Bolschewismus kam."[36] Daraufhin kamen Warburgs Bruder und Carl Petersen (der damalige Bürgermeister von Hamburg) ins Haus, entwaffneten ihn und brachten ihn in die Klinik. Warburg gehört zu einer Reihe von deutschen Intellektuellen des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts, die das Gespenst des Kommunismus als Angriff Alexandrias, der hellenisierten orientalischen Rassen, darstellten. „Solche Fanatiker", schrieb Warburg in den folgenden Jahren über die Bolschewiken in Reaktion auf den Bericht eines Bekannten, der Russland besucht hatte, „Klingt nach Chiliasmus".[37] Zu einem anderen Zeitpunkt behauptete Warburg, dass es die Antisemiten waren, die ihn hetzten. Mit anderen Worten: Mal war er der verfolgte Jude, mal war er der gegen die (östlichen, jüdischen) Bolschewiken bewaffnete Verfolger.

Darüber hinaus muss die Bedrohung durch Saturn auf dem Gemälde im Lichte der seit der Antike bestehenden Assoziation von Saturn und den Juden verstanden werden,[38] was die Notwendigkeit betont, Warburgs Krankheit als Symptom einer ungelösten Beziehung zum Judentum zu deuten (ein in der Literatur über ihn nur spärlich diskutiertes Problem[39]). Denn während Warburg einige der aufschlussreichsten Arbeiten über den aufkommenden Antisemitismus im Europa der 1920er- und 1930er-Jahre verfasste, verlief seine konfliktreiche jüdische Identität auf einer deutlich anderen Achse als seine Selbstdarstellung als Träger der griechisch-römischen Rationalität.[40] Dieser Zwiespalt kam am deutlichsten zum Ausdruck in seiner Opposition zu Alexandria, einem der historischen Zentren des jüdischen Geisteslebens in der antiken Welt und ein Refugium des jüdischen Synkretismus,

36 Marazzia/Stimilli, Aby Warburg, die unendliche Heilung, S. 49.

37 Aby Warburg in: Karen Michels/Charlotte Schoell-Glass (Hrsg.), Tagebuch der Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg, Berlin 2001, S. 505.

38 Eric Zafran, Saturn and the Jews, in: Journal of the Warburg und Courtauld Institutes 42 (1979), S. 16–27; zu dieser Geschichte bishin zum Warburg-Kreis vgl. Moshe Idel, Saturn's Jews: On the Witches' Sabbat and Sabbateanism, London 2011.

39 Vgl. Emily Levine, Aby Warburg and Weimar Jewish Culture: Navigating Normative Narratives, Counternarratives, and Historical Context, in: Steven Aschheim/Vivian Liska (Hrsg.), The German-Jewish Experience Revisited, Boston 2015, S. 117–134.

40 Dieser Aufsatz bildet ein Pendant zu einem zweiten Aufsatz von mir über Warburg, den Faschismus und das Judentum; siehe Peter S. Makhlouf, Kaisermystik: Aby Warburg and the Development of a Political Theurgy, in: Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics 81–82 (im Erscheinen), und weiter: Charlotte Schoell-Glass, Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus: Tagebuch der Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg, Berlin 2001.

den Warburg ausdrücklich seinem athenischen Ideal gegenüberstellte,[41] sowie in der Tatsache, dass Warburg von Athen und Alexandria statt Athen und Jerusalem sprach, obwohl die Opposition in deutlichem Anklang an Tertullians berühmte Opposition („*quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis*?“) formuliert wurde.[42] Jerusalem blieb ein gespenstisches Drittes, gleichzeitig eigen und fremd.[43] Warburgs identitäre Dissonanz war eine verkürzte Form unlösbarer politischer Aporien, und so griff er auf eine zugleich persönliche sowie politische Form einer „tropological refiguration“[44] zurück, mit der er den inneren Bruch des europäischen Bürgerkriegs durch eine orientalistische Externalisierung bewältigte, in der Hoffnung, dass die Ambivalenzen seines Judentums dadurch ausgetrieben würden.[45] Dabei verleugnete er, dass die sogenannte orientalische kultische Barbarei, die den Westen überfiel, der Faschismus – Europas eigene Schöpfung – war, der aus den Kolonien auf den Kontinent gewandert war, und dass der Kommunismus keineswegs ein Europa fremdes Gebilde war, sondern vielmehr eine politische Bewegung, die in Deutschland nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg rasch an Stärke gewann, nicht zuletzt in Warburgs eigener Stadt Hamburg.[46]

Diese Geste der Abstützung einer innereuropäischen politischen Krise durch Externalisierung lehnte sich an eine ähnliche römische Geste an. Warburg formulierte seine Vorstellung von diesem Kampf zusammenfassend in Formulierungen wie *per monstra ad sphaeram* oder *per monstra ad astra*, seiner Version der berühmten (wenn auch in der klassischen Welt nicht belegten) Phrase *per aspera ad astra*.[47] Aber wer sind diese *monstra* in Warburgs Formulierung? Warburg macht in seinem Vortrag u.a. deutlich, dass die Renaissance-“Rückeroberung“ der genuinen Perseus-Figur durch das Renaissance-Interesse an Manilius’ *Astronomica* – ein astrologisches Handbuch aus dem ersten Jahrhundert n. Ch. – ermöglicht wurde, durch die „für die obere Sphäre das Reich der idealen Humanität erobert wurde“.[48]

41 Zum jüdischen Leben in Alexandria vgl. Erich S. Gruen, Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans, Cambridge, MA 2002, S. 54–83.

42 Tert., *De praescr. haeret.* 7.9.

43 Vgl. Yaacov Shavit, Athens in Jerusalem: Classical Antiquity and Hellenism in the Making of the Modern Secular Jew, übers. von Chaya Noor/Niki Werner, London/Portland, OR 1997.

44 Zum Begriff: Michèle Lowrie/ Barbara Vinken, Civil War and the Collapse of the Social Bond: The Roman Tradition at the Heart of the Modern. Cambridge, UK 2023.

45 Zu den zwei Weltkriegen als europäischer Bürgerkrieg vgl. Enzo Traverso, A ferro e fuoco: la guerra civile europea, 1914-1945, Bologna 2007; Wolfgang Martynkewicz, Salon Deutschland: Geist und Macht 1900-1945, Berlin 2009, S. 224.

46 Angelika Voss *et al.* (Hrsg.), Vom Hamburger Aufstand zur politischen Isolierung: Kommunistische Politik 1923-1933 in Hamburg und im Deutschen Reich, Hamburg 1983.

47 Warburg, Die Einwirkung der Sphaera barbarica, S. 89.

48 Ebd. 87.

Buch V der *Astronomica* enthält ein ausführliches Epyllion, das den Mythos von Perseus' heldenhaftem Befreiungsakt nacherzählt (und neben Ovid zu den wichtigsten antiken Quellen für den Perseus-Mythos zählt).[49] Dort bezeichnet Manilius sowohl Medusa als auch Cetus als *monstra*: Perseus wird beschrieben als „zurückkehrend von seinem Sieg über die monströse Gorgone" [*Gorgeonei victorem Persea monstri* [...] *redeuntem*] (V. 567) und „Perseus, Sieger über die abscheuliche Medusa, das Schwert in der Hand" [*victor et invisae Perseus cum falce Medusae*] (V. 22). Im Epyllion wird das Meer oft metonymisch mit dem Ungeheuer gleichgesetzt (vgl. z.B. V. 575).[50] Perseus, „Sieger über das Meer" [*ponti victor*] (V. 32), ist natürlich tatsächlich der Sieger über die Ungeheuer, aber die Metonymie dient hier dem strukturellen Ziel der sich gegenseitig verstärkenden Erzählungen: Der mythologische Kampf (Perseus contra *monstra*) ist auch ein Kampf der Elemente (Höhe, Luft, Licht über Tiefe, Wasser, Dunkelheit).[51] Im Verlauf der *Astronomica* wird Perseus durch die Bezeichnung *ponti victor* mit einem anderen Bezwinger des Meeres in Verbindung gebracht: mit keinem anderen als Augustus, genauer gesagt mit Augustus in der Schlacht von Actium:[52]

> Necdum finis erat: restabant Actia bella
> Dotali commissa acie, repetitaque rerum
> Alea et in ponto quaesitus rector Olympi,
> Femineum sortita iugum cum Roma pependit
> Atque ipsa Isiaco certarunt fulmina sistro.
>
> [Der Krieg bei Actium stand noch bevor, geführt von einem Heer, das als Mitgift verpfändet wurde, als das Schicksal der Welt erneut auf dem Spiel stand und der Herrscher des Himmels auf dem Meer bestimmt wurde; das schicksal Roms, das von einem weiblichen Joch bedroht wurde, hing in der Schwebe, und der Donnerkeil stieß mit dem Sistrum der Isis zusammen.][53]

Die Dichotomien bestehen fort und wuchern: Meer/Himmel, Tiefen/Höhen, Materie/Luft, weiblich/männlich, Kleopatra/Augustus, Cetus/Perseus, Orient/Occident. Die typologische Darstellung des Manilius lässt sich auf die berühmteste Darstellung von Actium in der klassischen Literatur zurückfolgen: die Ekphrasis auf

49 Wolfgang Hübner, Manilius, Astronomica Buch V. I: Einführung, Text und Übersetzung. II: Kommentar, Berlin 2010. Zitate des Textes sowie Übersetzungen sind der Ausgabe Hübners entnommen.

50 Vgl. Hübner, Manilius, Kommentar zu V. 543 AD loc.

51 Ebd. V. 592 AD loc.

52 Zu diesem Punkt vgl. Wolfgang Hübner, Cum fera ductorem rapuit Germania Varum. De clade Variana et Victoria Actiaca apud Manilium poetam, in: Jan-Wilhelm Beck (Hrsg.), Ad fines imperii Romani Anno bismillesimo cladis Varianae, Leuven 2011, S. 61–74.

53 *Astronomica* V. 914–918.

dem Schild des Aeneas in *Aeneis* VIII, die zum Beispiel in Manilius' *sistro ... Isiaco* widerhallt, ein Teilzitat von Vergils *regina in mediis patrio vocat agmina sistro* (VIII. 696). In der *Aeneis* gilt die Darstellung der Schlacht von Aktium als die Szene, in der wir die am stärksten ausgrenzenden ethnischen Ansprüche in der Darstellung des Römers in einem Gedicht finden, das ansonsten in seinen ethnischen Konstruktionen tendenziös und provisorisch ist.

Wolfgang Hübner geht sogar so weit, dass er vorschlägt, dass die in Teukros' *Sphaera barbarica* erhaltenen und im Rom des 1. Jh. v. Chr. zirkulierenden fremden Konstellationen dazu beitragen könnten, Vergils Darstellung von Actium als Zusammenstoß zwischen Darstellungen der Sternbilder zu erhellen – Sternbilder, die Warburg (nach seiner Lektüre von Bolls Teukros-Ausgabe in *Sphaera*) wahrscheinlich vor Augen hatte, als er mit Formulierungen der *monstra* experimentierte.[54] Augustus, flankiert „cum ... magnis dis" („mit den großen Göttern" VIII. 679), der katasterisierte Caesar, und Apollo (synechdochisch: apollinisches Maß, Licht, Klarheit) zusammen mit Neptun, Venus und Minerva (VIII. 699), würden auf der einen Seite die *Sphaera graecanica* repräsentieren, die *Sphaera barbarica* wiederum von Antonius repräsentiert, mit „monströsen Götter jeder Form und bellendem Anubis" [„omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis"], Letzterer, eine fremde zweiteilige Monstrosität, (synechdochisch: Exzess, Unordnung, eine Überschreitung der Grenzen zwischen Tier, Mensch, Göttlichkeit), alle Araber (kommen sie „aus dem arabisierenden Alexandria?") und Ägypten und Indien (angeblich die Ursprungsländer der *Sphaera barbarica*).[55]

Warburg strukturiert seine Gegenüberstellung zweier astrologischer Darstellungsformen – alexandrinisch und griechisch-römisch – entlang einer Assoziationskette, die ethnische Oppositionen in ansonsten theoretische Unterscheidungen einbezieht. Im Extremfall unterscheidet sich Warburgs ausschließende Zuschreibung orientalischer Barbarei auf der Basis fremder Repräsentationen kaum von der Art chauvinistischer Schwärmereien, die Theodor Haecker 1931 in seiner eigenen Darstellung von Actium als Schlacht „zwischen dem Geist des Westens und seiner Idee der Ordnung und des Lichtes und des Maßes und des Vertrauens, und dem des Ostens mit seiner Maßlosigkeit und Verzweiflung, Chaos und Grauen" liefert. In ihren Extremen konvergieren die Darstellungen von Haecker und Warburg in der Ablehnung der bloßen Existenz der Alterität. Ihre strikt binäre Logik blendet offensichtliche Dissymmetrien aus, wie etwa die Tatsache, dass Antonius selbst mit dem Beinamen *victor* – jener typisch manilischen Bezeichnung für Augustus-

54 Hübner, *Das Sternbild Perseus*, 41–42.

55 Zum Kampf zwischen Orient und Okzident auf dem Schild vgl. Philip Hardie, Virgil's "Aeneid": Cosmos and Imperium, Oxford 1986, S. 97–109; David Quint, Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton, Princeton, 1993, S. 21–49.

Perseus – versehen ist, genauer gesagt, *victor ab Aurorae populis et litore rubro* (VIII. 686). Antonius ist zugleich Sieger über und aus den Völkern der Morgenröte und des rötlichen Meeres, wobei sein Status als Sieger sowohl als Bestätigung seiner Romanitas gegenüber dem Osten als auch als seine Angleichung an den Osten plastisch lesbar ist.[56]

Vielleicht entpuppt sich Warburgs Versuch, die griechisch-römische und die alexandrinische Welt gegeneinander auszuspielen, nirgendwo deutlicher als gescheitert denn im Perseus-Mythos selbst, dessen vielschichtige Ursprünge, Verbreitung und nachfolgende Aneignung(en) vom engen Austausch zwischen den Zivilisationen des Mittelmeers und des Alten Orients zeugen. Angesichts der stets präsenten Assoziation der Perser mit ihrem angeblich gleichnamigen Helden und seiner letztlich ägyptischen Wurzeln (durch das Haus der Argiver, von dem Perseus letztlich abstammt[57]) wurde Perseus zu einem Paradebeispiel für die Art von kulturübergreifenden Verhandlungen und Synthesen, die sich aus den Wanderungen des Mythos durch Athen, Rom, Alexandria und schließlich die palästinensische Küste ergaben.[58] Einem recht langen und etablierten Zweig der Perseus-Tradition zufolge rettete Perseus Andromeda aus dem Hafen von Jaffa (Joppa), eine Variante der Erzählung, die von den Juden der Antike übernommen und verbreitet wurde, die sich durch solche Überarbeitungen an eine so illustre Geschichte mythischer Vorläufer anhängen konnten – das „jüdische Alexandria“ wetteifert mit Athen-Rom *auf griechisch-römischem Gebiet*. Auch der genau umgekehrte Fall ist bezeugt. Denn im Apollotempel auf dem Palatin, der von Octavian als Dank für den Sieg bei Actium verpfändet wurde, bilden einzige Reliefs den Sieg des Perseus über die Gorgone in einer typologischen Variation ab, die auf den Sieg des Augustus über Kleopatra verweist. Die Darstellungen sind jedoch einer nach Actium aufblühenden und in gewissenen Objekten erkennbaren römischen Formensprache geschuldet, die sich stark auf ägyptische Dekorationsmotive stützt (ornamentale Lotusblüten, Isis zwischen Akanthus) und Teil einer umfassenderen Aneignung und Assimilierung der ägyptischen materiellen Kultur in Rom ist – Perseus/Augustus triumphiert über Alexandria *auf ägyptischem Gebiet.*[59]

56 Vgl. William Fitzgerald, Variety: The Life of a Roman Concept, Chicago 2016, S. 73–83.

57 Ov., *Met.* I, 583–750.

58 Vgl. Erich Gruens Formulierung „Perseus as Multiculturalist“, in Erich S. Gruen, Rethinking the Other in Antiquity, Princeton 2010, S. 253. Zum Perseus-Mythos: Daniel Ogden, Perseus, London/New York 2008.

59 Zum Tempel: Diana Kleiner, Cleopatra and Rome, Cambridge, MA 2005, S. 175–176; Zur Verstrickung zwischen den materiellen Kulturen Roms und Ägyptens, Caroline Vout, Embracing Egypt, in: Catharine Edwards/Greg Woolf (Hrsg.), Rome the Cosmopolis, Cambridge 2003, S. 177–202.

Weder ikonografisch, stilistisch noch mythografisch können daher Warburgs Unterscheidungen als stichhaltig angesehen werden, auch wenn klar ist, dass sein Bedürfnis, starre Typologien zu schaffen, als Reaktion auf zeitgenössische Entwicklungen in Politik, Kultur und Wissenschaft zu verstehen ist.[60] Wie mit den anderen Beispielen könnte das Bewusstsein kultureller Vielfältigkeit (am besten anhand Bolls und Warburgs Schriften zur Astrologie veranschaulicht) in Form von Gespenstern und fremden Schrecken ausgedrückt werden, wie sie in der Gestalt der Medusa zu finden sind. Denn die Projektion einer mönstrosen Präsenz gehörte zum innersten Kern der Weimarer Vorstellungswelt – wie der des römischen Imperiums davor.[61]

(Re)Visionen des *monstrum* II: Peterson und Momigliano

In explizitem Bezug auf den Holocaust konnte Jacob Taubes 1948 feststellen, dass „Apokalyptik und Antike auf einander widersprechenden Axiomen [gründen]", und zwar in einer Formulierung, die heute in vielerlei Hinsicht kanonisch geworden ist.[62] Taubes' Behauptung wurde im Geiste des Widerstands formuliert, einer Nachkriegszeitwiederbelebung der Geschichte des jüdischen Widerstands gegen *imperium*. Doch Taubes' Formulierung blieb in der Tat eine einfache Umkehrung von Nietzsches „Rom gegen Judäa". Die klaren Abgrenzungslinien blieben bestehen, auch wenn Taubes' politische Reklamation die polemische Ladung von einem Pol zum anderen verschob. Zur Veranschaulichung seiner vermeintlich epochalen Gleichung hatte Nietzsche die eschatologische Gattung schlechthin – die Apokalypse – herausgegriffen und behauptet, dass der Gegensatz zwischen Rom und Judäa nirgends so prominent verankert sei wie in *Der Offenbarung Johannes* (zu dem Taubes ein wichtiges Kapitel seines Buches gewidmet hat).

Die Offenbarung war Gegenstand einer Vorlesungsreihe an der Universität Heidelberg, die zwischen dem 2. und 10. August 1934 gehalten wurden, an der Schwelle zwischen der untergegangenen Weimarer Republik und dem sich beschleunigenden Naziterror. Der Vortragende war Erik Peterson, einer der bedeutendsten Theo-

60 Vgl. David Freedberg, 'Pathos a Oraibi: Ciò che Warburg non vide', in: Claudia Cieri Via/Petro Montani (Hrsg.), Lo Sguardo di Giano, Aby Warburg fra tempo e memoria, Turin 2004, S. 569–611.
61 Zum Bild des Schlangenweibes in der Weimarer Republik: Furio Jesi, *Germania segreta.* (Mailand: Silva, 1967); Klaus Theweleit, Männerphantasien, 2 Bd., Frankfurt a.M. 1977; im römischen Reich: Carlin Barton, The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster, Princeton 1993; Daniel Ogden, Drakōn: Dragon Myth and Serpent Cult in the Greek and Roman Worlds, Oxford 2013, bes. S. 116–147.
62 Jacob Taubes, Abendländische Eschatologie, Berlin 1947.

logen des 20. Jahrhunderts, der bereits 1926/1927 und 1929 zu diesem Thema referiert hatte. Das Manuskript seiner Vorlesung von 1934 unterscheidet sich von den vorhergegangenen jedoch in zwei wesentlichen Punkten: erstens durch eine Einleitung über den römischen Kaiserkult („Der Kaiserkult: Zur Einführung in die Offenbarung des Johannes“) und zweitens durch einen kurzen, einen Satz umfassenden Kommentar, der seiner Erklärung von Offenbarung 2,13 hinzugefügt wurde:[63]

> Οἶδα ποῦ κατοικεῖς, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ Σατανᾶ, καὶ κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομά μου, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀντιπᾶς ὁ μάρτυς μου ὁ πιστός μου, ὃς ἀπεκτάνθη παρ’ ὑμῖν, ὅπου ὁ Σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ.
>
> Ich weiß, wo du wohnst. Dort, wo der Thron des Satan steht. Doch du hältst an meinem Namen fest und hast nicht meinen Glauben verleugnet, auch nicht in den Tagen des Antipas, der mein treuer Zeuge war und getötet wurde unter euch, wo der Satan seine Wohnung hat.

Peterson kommentiert (Ergänzung mit Vertikalen markiert):

> In Pergamon steht der Thron des Satan, wird zuerst gesagt, und dann heißt es, dass der Satan dort seine Wohnung habe. Nun erinnere man sich, dass der Altar als Götterthron gilt. Dann ist es doch sehr wahrscheinlich, dass wir an den riesigen Altar von Pergamon zu denken haben. Es wird der große Altar des Zeus Soter sein, den Attalos zur Erinnerung an einen Sieg über die Gallier errichten ließ. Der Altar überragte die ganze Stadt, so dass es wohl begreiflich ist, warum Johannes gerade diesen θρόνος (thron) des Satan Pergamon hervorhob. | Im übrigen ist ja bekannt, dass dieser Altar heute in Berlin ist.|[64]

Peterson bezieht sich damit auf die Ausgrabung, Überführung und Ausstellung des Pergamonaltars durch das Deutsche Reich Ende des 19. und Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts. Aber 1934 war die Bedeutung klar: Der Thron Satans ruht nun im imperialen Zentrum des Nazi-Reiches, und, wie Petersons Freund Yves Congar OP, der die Vorlesung im Saal verfolgte, sich später erinnerte, „ein kräftiger, einstimmiger Applaus zeigte, dass jeder verstanden hat“. Die Bühne war also für eine apokalyptische Geste der Taubes’schen Art gut vorbereitet: Der Nationalsozialismus sei der neue römische Kaiserkult gewesen, der eine Verfolgung durchführt, wie sie einst gegen die jüdisch-christlichen Gemeinschaften des Nahen Ostens ausgeübt wurde. Der katholische Widerstand gegen den Faschismus im

63 Erik Peterson, Offenbarung des Johannes und politisch-theologische Text, hrsg. von Barbara Nichtweiss/Werner Löser SJ., Erik Peterson Ausgewählte Schriften, Vol. 4, Würzburg 1994. Zu Veränderungen siehe IX–XXXV.

64 Peterson, Offenbarung des Johannes, S. 44.

20. Jahrhundert wäre somit eine apokalyptische Opposition gegen das Imperium, wie wir sie in der *Offenbarung Johannes* bewahrt finden.

Aber Peterson macht keinen solchen Schritt, denn das würde bedeuten, die katholische Kirche auf die Seite des orientalischen Judentums zu stellen und sie von dem Pol der römisch-imperialen Kontinuität zu trennen, mit dem sie historisch so eng verbunden war. Die „römische Analogie" an den Nationalsozialismus abzutreten würde allem zuwiderlaufen, dem sich Petersons exegetisches Projekt gewidmet hatte.[65] So geht Peterson in der neuen Einleitung zu den Vorlesungen („Der Kaiserkult") einen ganz eigenen Weg und stellt den Nationalsozialismus auf die Seite eines orientalischen, imperialen Kultes, der selbst Rom fremd ist (eine Beschwörung der alten These, dass die orientalischen Kulte importiert und auf einen ursprünglichen Strang des römischen Republikanismus aufgepfropft wurden). Demgegenüber stellt Peterson „die polemische Einstellung des europäischen, das heißt des griechischen Geistes gegenüber dem Kaisertum und dem Gottkaisertum insbesondere [...] und die Abneigung gegen die Monarchie [die] in den Kreisen der Gebildeten lebendig geblieben war".[66] Dieser unkorrumpierte Strang republikanischer Romanitas, der sich sowohl gegen die Blüte orientalischer Kulte im Römischen Reich als auch gegen das religiöse Ressentiment der orientalischen Massen gewendet habe, wurde von Peterson mit einem spezifischen Verständnis des zeitgenössischen „europäischen Geistes" identifiziert. Diese Eroberung oder Rückeroberung eines unverfälschten römischen Kerns – die erst durch Petersons exegetischen Akt der Konservierung Gestalt annimmt – entkoppelt und rekonstituiert die Pole Rom vs. Alexandria, Imperium vs. Apokalypse, um die *Offenbarung des Johannes* nun zum Schauplatz einer konservativen, aristokratischen römischen Kontinuität zu machen, die in der katholischen Kirche bewahrt wird. Der Anstoß zu einem solchen Schritt ergibt sich aus Petersons eifrigem Versuch, die katholische Kirche sauber von ihren jüdischen Ursprüngen zu trennen: „Die christliche Apokalyptik ist von der jüdischen wesentlich unterschieden, da der Christus der Kirche sich von dem Messias der Synagoge wesentlich unterscheidet." Der Gegensatz zwischen Rom und dem Orient kann zum Teil nur durch die Verleugnung des Judentums aufrechterhalten werden, eine These, die Peterson in seinem berühmten *Monotheismus als politisches Problem*, das im Jahr nach seinem Heidelberger Vortrag (1935) veröffentlicht wurde, ausführlicher auslegen würde.

Peterson war keineswegs der Einzige, der versucht, die Wende von Weimar zum Faschismus durch Rückgriff auf antike Analogien des „nahöstlichen Widerstands" aufzuarbeiten. Harald Fuchs' immer noch einflussreiche Schrift *Der geistige*

65 Vgl. Erik Peterson, Theologische Traktate, München 1951.
66 Peterson, Die Offenbarung des Johannes, S. 7.

Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt – erstmals 1933 als Vortrag gehalten und 1938 veröffentlicht – enthält eine breite Palette solcher Klagen in einer Vielzahl von Genres.[67] Arnaldo Momigliano würde später behaupten, dass „[f]ür meine Generation [diese] zwei Bücher [d.h. Fuchs' und Petersons], beide auf Deutsch, und beide als Reaktion auf die faschistisch-nazistische Weltanschauung [...] das Interesse an der religiösen Situation des Römischen Reiches bestimmten".[68] Im Nachhinhein würde Momigliano während der Nachkriegszeit immer wieder auf die Spannungen – aber auch auf die Anpassungen – zwischen messianisch-apokalyptischen und säkular-historischen Zeitvorstellungen zurückkommen. Momigliano besaß eine ausgesprochen einsichtige Art zu erkennen, dass die politisch-theologischen Debatten, die sich im Laufe des 20. Jahrhunderts entfalteten, ihre Ausgangspunkte in den Bezügen auf die Antinomien der klassischen Welt hatten. Er hatte aus erster Hand erlebt, wie die faschistischen Tobsuchtsanfälle der 1930er- und 1940er-Jahre, nicht zuletzt im Bereich der Altertumswissenschaften, auf den antiken Gegensatz zwischen Rom und Alexandria zurückgegriffen hatten, um ihre eigene Aussagen durch diesen vermeintlich antiken Gegensatz zu untermauern. Er verstand, dass ein einfaches Plädoyer für einen bestimmten Pol der Opposition (wie bei Taubes) lediglich die starre, binäre Struktur im Spiel hielt und notwendigerweise jede synkretistische Textur im Zwischenraum nivellierte. Ein solcher ahistorischer Schematismus lag einer Reihe von Werken des 20. Jahrhunderts zugrunde, von Aurelio Perettis 1943 *La Sibilla Babilonesi nella propaganda ellenistica*, dessen „Lesart der Eschatologie einer faschistischen Beugung von Nietzsches Theorie des Ressentiments" geschuldet war, bis hin zu Max Webers Darstellung des Judentums als Pariareligion und den oben erwähnten Studien von Taubes und Fuchs.[69]

Momigliano ging einen ganz anderen Weg. Im Mittelpunkt seiner Analyse standen zwei jüdische apokalyptische Texte aus dem 1. und 2. Jahrhundert v. Chr.: das *Buch Daniel* und die *Sibyllinischen Orakel* (und in geringerem Maße *die Offenbarung des Johannes*), die jeweils eine eschatologische Darstellung der Abfolge der Imperien beziehungsweise des *translatio-imperii*-Topos enthalten.[70] In einer Reihe von Aufsätzen bewies Momigliano, dass es zwar unbestreitbar gewesen sei, dass diese

67 Harald Fuchs, Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt, Berlin 1938.

68 Arnaldo Momigliano, On Pagans, Jews, and Christians, Middletown, CT 1987, S. 120. Im Folgenden schulde ich viel der Analyse von Howard Caygill, Historiography and Political Theology: Momigliano and the End of History, in: Alexandra Lianeri (Hrsg.), The Western Time of Ancient History: Historiographical Encounters with the Greek and Roman Pasts, Cambridge 2011, S. 99–116.

69 Sowie Samuel Eddy, The King is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism, 334–31 B.C., Lincoln 1961.

70 Vgl. Reinhard Kratz, Translatio imperii: Untersuchungen zu den aramaischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1987; Andrew Perrin/

Texte religiöse Opposition gegen das römische Imperium aufgezeichnet hätten, dass aber das historiographische Schema, von dem dieser eschatologische Widerstand abhängt – der *translatio* topos – selbst ein griechisch-römisches Konstrukt gewesen sei, mit dem die Autoren des *Buches Daniel* und der *Sibyllinischen Orakel* gut vertraut gewesen seien.[71] Diese Texte hätten also ein Ende der (zunächst ptolemäischen, später römischen) Vorherrschaft innerhalb der griechisch-römischen Erzählnormen vorgesehen, sowohl metrisch (z. B. hexametrisch) als auch historiografisch (z. B. der Topos der vier Reiche). Auf diese Weise sei jede klare Opposition zwischen Alexandria und Rom durch die Aneignung und Wiederverwendung des ursprünglich imperialen Charakters des gewählten rhetorischen Konstrukts nivelliert worden.

Vielleicht wird Momiglianos These nirgendwo deutlicher bestätigt als in der Tatsache, dass die drei hier infrage stehenden Texte sich jeweils jenes ursprünglichen politisch-theologischen Bildes bedienten, das in dieser Studie untersucht wurde: das bedrohliche Seeungeheuer.[72] *Daniel* 7 beginnt mit einer visionären Allegorie von vier aus dem Meer aufsteigenden Tieren, die für die vier Reiche (Babylonier, Meder, Perser und Griechen) stehen, von denen das letzte – das Ptolemäerreich – speziell als ein aus dem Wasser aufsteigender Drache dargestellt wird (Daniel 7,7–8). In Buch III der *Sibyllinischen Orakel*, das von alexandrinischen Juden irgendwann im 1. Jh. v. Chr. (möglicherweise unter römischer Herrschaft nach Actium) verfasst wurde, wird Roms Aufstieg zur mediterranen Supermacht in ebenso monströser Weise gegeißelt: „Auch die verschiedenen Völker Mazedoniens werden herrschen [...], aber der himmlische Gott wird sie aus dem Meer vertilgen. Und danach wird ein anderes Reich entstehen, weiß und vielköpfig aus dem westlichen Meer [αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ᾽ ἄλλης βασιληίδος ἔσσεται ἀρχή λευχὴ / καὶ πολύχρανος απ᾽ ἐσπερίοιο θαλάσσης III. 172–6].[73] Im 13. Kapitel der *Offenbarung des Johannes* schließlich erzählt der Sprecher in einem deutlichen Echo vorangegangener apokalpytischer Texte „Und

Loren Stuckenbruch (Hrsg.), Four Kingdom Motifs before and beyond the Book of Daniel, Leiden 2020.

71 Z.B. Arnaldo Momigliano, From the Pagan to the Christian Sibyl: Prophecy as History of Religion, in: A.C. Dionisotti/Anthony Grafton/Jill Kraye, The Uses of Greek and Latin: Historical Essays, London 1988, S. 3–18; Arnaldo Momigliano, Daniel and the Greek Theory of Imperial Succession, in: Arnaldo Momigliano, Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism, hrsg. von Silvia Berti/Maura Masella-Gayley, Chicago 1994, S. 29–35.

72 Zur Geschichte dieses Bildes: John Day, God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament, Cambridge 1985; Bernard Batto, Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition, Louisville, KY 1992; Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, A Postcolonial Reading of Apocalyptic Literature, in: John Collins (Hrsg.), The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature, Oxford 2014, S. 180–198.

73 Johannes Geffcken, Die Oracula Sibyllina [=Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 8], Leipzig 1902.

ich sah: ein Tier stieg aus dem Meer, mit zehn Hörnern und sieben Köpfen. Auf seinen Hörnern trug es zehn Kronen [ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον, ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κεράτων αὐτοῦ δέκα διαδήματα]" (Rev., 13:1), eine Darstellung, die sogar – wenn man Friesen glaubt – auf die Ikonografie „der Verehrung römischer Kaiser [...] aus dem Provinzkult in Pergamon, der sich innerhalb von zwei bis drei Jahren nach Octavians Sieg über Mark Anton bei Actium (31 v. Chr.) etabliert hatte", zurückgriff, sie zugleich zitierte und umsetzte.[74] An der Grenze des äußersten Antagonismus wies der nahöstliche Widerstand die griechisch-römische Herrschaft gemäß der eigenen Bedingungen des imperialen Diskurses zurecht. Dieser apokalyptische Antagonismus entpuppte sich als Kolloquium; der Grenzpunkt wich einer Schwelle des Austauschs. Wer hat hier wen erobert?

In diesem Aufsatz habe ich nicht nur versucht zu zeigen, *dass* oder *wie* eine Reihe von Typologien während der Weimarer Zeit konstruiert wurden, sondern auch zu hinterfragen, welche grundlegenden Elisionen von Ambiguitäten erforderlich sind, um diese Typologien zu produzieren. Ideologien der *translatio* beruhen im Wesentlichen auf der Illusion eines kontinuierlichen, nahtlosen Verlaufs der imperialen Regime, einer Illusion, die durch eine Reihe von fiktionalisierenden Operationen erzeugt wird. Aber wie alle Figurationsprozesse sind diese vermeintlichen Parallelen nicht einfach wahr oder falsch: Sie sind vielmehr in die kulturelle Polyphonie auflösbar, die allen rhetorischen Konstruktionen eigen ist. In unserem Fall veranschaulichen die metonymischen Identifikationspunkte deutscher (post)imperialer Subjektivität, wie am Beispiel der Alexandria-Rom-Opposition demonstriert wird, dass der Weg vom modernen Deutschland zu einer römischen imperialen Vergangenheit keineswegs gradlinig ist, sondern zwangsläufig auf metaphorische Umwege führt, die im Zick-Zack über die Landkarte des „pluriversen Universums" verlaufen.[75]

74 Steven Friesen, Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins, Oxford 2001, S. 176.

75 Zum Begriff vgl. Richard Faber/Achim Lichtenberger (Hrsg.), Ein pluriverses Universum: Zivilisationen und Religionen im antiken Mittelmeerraum, Paderborn 2015.

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Part II: **Distant Pasts**

Rolf Strootman

Imperial Leapfrogging: How Empires Anchor Their Rule in the Past

Abstract: How did premodern Afro-Eurasian empires anchor their rule in the past, and how did they position themselves vis-à-vis the empires that they conquered or came to replace? After an introductory discussion of the Roman appropriation of the figure of Alexander the Great, this paper aims to answer these questions through two case studies: (1) the Macedonian takeover of Babylon from the Persian Empire after 331 BCE, and (2) the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. We end with a shorter discussion of the replacement of the Parthian Arsakid dynasty by the Sasanian kings in third-century CE Iran.

It will be shown that in all these cases the conquerors employed a policy of "jumping over" their immediate predecessors in order to connect to a more distant past – a past that could be rewritten to resemble the post-conquest present. This enabled them to portray their precursors as unworthy, incompetent tyrants that had rightfully been removed from power to allow the beginning of a new Golden Age. Paradoxically, new imperial rulers habitually continued using the institutions, networks and even personnel of the former empire. For instance: despite the fact that the fifteenth-century Ottoman monarchy was in many respects a continuation of the Late Byzantine Empire, Mehmet II, the conqueror of Constantinople, "leapfrogged" over more than a thousand years of Byzantine rule to present himself as a new Constantine who had restored the Roman Empire to its former glory.

The question I aim to answer in this chapter is how premodern Afro-Eurasian empires anchored their rule in the past. My answer to that question is that they rather consistently did so by jumping over their immediate predecessors to appropriate and manipulate a more distant past. I aim to clarify why they did so.

This commonplace strategy of dealing with the past entails a paradox. After all, it usually are the more immediate predecessors who in terms of interimperial transfers influenced their successors most. What interests me, therefore, is not only how new imperial rulers constructed these historical models but how they presented the intermediate period. What did they do with the predecessors they replaced and often imitated? A famous anecdote about Octavian, the later Roman emperor Augustus, may serve as a paradigmatic example of the principle that I call "imperial leapfrogging."

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Octavian and the Tomb of Alexander

After the defeat of Kleopatra and Antony, the victorious Roman warlord Octavian entered the Ptolemaic capital, Alexandria, in 30 BCE, the year that Egypt formally became part of the Roman Empire. Two sources report that Octavian requested to see one of the main attractions in that city of marvels: the mausoleum called the Sēma containing the embalmed body of Alexander the Great, the city's founder. The first-century BCE geographer Strabo, who stayed in Alexandria not long after Octavian's departure, is our main source for the Sēma (or Sōma, "the Body"), which was the central monument of the Basileia, the Royal District of Alexandria.[1] Around 300 BCE the founder of the Ptolemaic Dynasty, Ptolemy I Soter, had brought the body of Alexander to Alexandria, the Mediterranean port that became the military, political, and cultural center of the Ptolemaic Empire.[2] Alexander's body allegedly was first deposited in a golden sarcophagus, but when Strabo visited Alexandria this sarcophagus had been replaced by one made of glass. At least since the reign of Ptolemy IV (222–204 BCE), the mausoleum of Alexander was the center of a complex that also included the tombs of the Ptolemies, the Macedonian dynasty that ruled Egypt and a maritime empire in the eastern Mediterranean from c. 323 to 30 BCE.

The biographer of Roman emperors, Suetonius (early second century CE) is the best-known account of Octavian's visit to Alexander's tomb:

> At this time, he had a desire to see the coffin and body of Alexander the Great, which [. . .] were taken out of the cell in which they rested; and after viewing them for some time, he paid honors to the memory of that prince, by offering a golden crown, and scattering flowers upon the body. Being asked if he wished to see the tombs of the Ptolemies also, he replied, "I wish to see a king, not some corpses."[3]

1 Strabo 17.1.8–9; on the Royal District, see Peter M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), I, 22–23; Rolf Strootman, *Courts and Elites in the Hellenistic Empires: The Near East After the Achaemenids, 330–30 BCE* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 74–81; Stefan Riedel, *Die Basileia von Alexandria: Topographisch-urbanistische Untersuchungen zum ptolemäischen Königsviertel* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020). On the body of Alexander in Ptolemaic and Roman times, see Andrew Erskine, "Life after death: Alexandria and the body of Alexander," *Greece & Rome* 49 (2002): 163–79.

2 On the Ptolemaic sea empire and the central place of Alexandria as an imperial cosmopolis, see Rolf Strootman, "The Ptolemaic sea empire," in *Empires of the Sea: Maritime Power Networks in World History*, ed. Rolf Strootman, Floris van den Eijnde, and Roy van Wijk (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 113–52.

3 Suet., *Aug.*18.1: *regem se voluisse ait videre, non mortuos*.

We have a second account of Octavian's visit to Alexander's tomb, one that differs enough from Suetonius's to warrant its quotation here. The Roman historian, Dio Cassius, working in the late second/early third century CE, wrote:

> After this Octavian viewed the body of Alexander and actually touched it, whereupon, it is said, a piece of the nose was broken off. But he declined to view the remains of the Ptolemies, though the Alexandrians were extremely eager to show them, remarking, "I wished to see a king, not corpses." For this same reason he would not enter the presence of Apis, either, declaring that he was accustomed to worship gods, not cattle.[4]

Associating a ruler with an illustrious conqueror from the past seems a logical thing to do. It is, however, not as obvious as it may seem; the renown of the great conqueror needs to be constructed first. It is furthermore striking that illustrious predecessors like Alexander are often conjured up from a rather distant past – a past, I argue, that can be manipulated because no active memory of it exists anymore, especially not in the premodern, largely illiterate societies that we are dealing with here.

Alexander is an illuminating case in point. In contrast to a now popular view, the Hellenistic kingdoms and empires did not exist "in the shadow of Alexander." Alexander died in Babylon in 323 BCE and for about two decades his Successors claimed power in his name. But after the so-called Year of the Kings 306/5 BCE – the year in which the Successors themselves adopted the royal title of *basileus* – Alexander no longer features prominently in royal ideology. In Ptolemaic ruler representation his role becomes restricted to his status as the deified founder of Ptolemaic Alexandria. The Seleukids, Alexander's successors as rulers of Iran and the Middle East, were even more radical in their rejection of Alexander. In their need to establish dynastic legitimacy, the Sleukids erased Alexander (to whose dynasty they were not related through kinship) from history. Instead, they settled on the year 312 BCE, some ten years after Alexander's death, as the beginning of a new imperial era, elevating Seleukos I Nikator to the status of founder of the Mac-

4 Cass. Dio 51.16.5; cf. Erskine, "Alexandria and the body of Alexander," 163: "The punchline is the same but the build-up portrays a clumsy and arrogant Augustus. [. . .] Perhaps this version reflects Dio's Greek perspective, or perhaps this was the story told by the Alexandrians themselves." The Apis Bull, an ancient fertility deity associated with Osiris and with kingship, was worshipped in Memphis, the capital of Ptolemaic Egypt. For the background to Octavian's alleged hostility to the Apis Bull, see Eric M. Orlin, "Octavian and Egyptian cults: Redrawing the boundaries of Romanness," *American Journal of Philology* 129, no. 2 (2008): 23–53; Roman aversion to Egyptian animal deities is discussed by Emily Hemelrijk and K.A.D. Smelik, ""Who knows not what monsters demented Egypt worships?" Opinions on Egyptian animal worship in Antiquity as part of the ancient conception of Egypt," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.17.4 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), 1852–2000.

edonian Empire, replacing Alexander.[5] This so-called Seleukid Era, the first ongoing time reckoning in history, marked the beginning of a new imperial era and cast the empire into the future by presenting it as eternal, the final phase in the succession of universalist empires.[6] The construction of Alexander's memory as a model for later kings and conquerors occurred only later, in the second century BCE, more than a century after his death. It is only then that kings in the Near East began to associate themselves with Alexander, using the name Alexander as a throne name or even as a sobriquet,[7] while cities in Asia Minor adopted Alexander as their deified founder.[8] From the second century BCE, the Macedonian Empire of Alexander and the Seleukid Empire are generally seen as one and the same empire;[9] indeed, as late as the later Middle Ages rulers like Timur-i Lenk and Mehmet II chose Alexander the Great as a model. Yet in the third century BCE, not even the Antigonid kings of Macedon chose him as a model.

The specific circumstances for the return of Alexander in the second century BCE need further study; it seems fair, however, to presume that Roman expansion in the eastern Mediterranean was of key importance in this development.[10] It is

5 The Seleukid Era and its various uses by both the Seleukids and their enemies, is the subject of a book-length study by Paul J. Kosmin, *Time and Its Adversaries in the Seleucid Empire* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap Press, 2018).

6 Rolf Strootman, "Seleucid Era," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. E. Yarshater *et al.* (Winona Lake, 2008); last revised 2015; on the idea of a succession of empires in Antiquity, see now Marie Oellig, *Die Sukzession von Weltreichen: Zu den antiken Wurzeln einer geschichtsmächtigen Idee* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2022).

7 E.g., the Seleukids Alexander I Balas (150–145 BCE) and Alexander II Zabinas (129–123), and the Ptolemies Ptolemy X Alexandros (107–88) and Ptolemaios XI Alexandros (80 only).

8 Carlos F. Noreña, "Ritual and memory: Hellenistic ruler cults in the Roman Empire," in *Cultural Memories in the Roman Empire*, ed. Karl Galinsky and Kenneth Lapatin (Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 2016), 86–100.

9 First in Jewish sources that probably reflect and subvert Seleukid ideology of the second century (Maccabees and Daniel), and later also in Roman sources of the Augustan period, esp. Pompeius Trogus (see Bernard van Wickevoort Crommelin, *Die Universalgeschichte des Pompeius Trogus: Herculea audacia orbem terrarum adgressus* (Hagen: MRM Verlags-und Buchhandelsgesellschaft Margit Rottmann, 1993); in the first book of Velleius Paterculus' *History* (1.6.6) a fragment of Aemilius Sura on the succession of empires has been preserved in which Macedonian world hegemony continues until the Romans defeated Philip V of Macedon and the Seleukid emperor Antiochos III after 200 BCE; on this passage and its place in Augustan ideology, see Ulrich Gotter, "The succession of empires and the Augustan Res Publica," in *Augustus and the Destruction of History: The Politics of the Past in Early Imperial Rome*, ed. I. Gildenhard, U. Gotter, W. Havener, and L. Hodgson (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 2019), 97–109.

10 See Rolf Strootman, "The Great Kings of Asia: Imperial titles in the Seleukid and post-Seleukid Middle East," in *New Perspectives on Seleucid History, Archaeology and Numismatics: Studies in Honor of Getzel M. Cohen*, ed. Roland Oetjen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 123–57, esp. 147.

in a Roman source – Plautus' comedy *Mostellaria* (line 775) – that Alexander is first called the Great – not as Greek *Megas* but as Latin *Magnus*. If the Romans indeed were the ones who made Alexander great, this likely occurred in the context of the Roman war against the Seleukid emperor Antiochos III, the first ruler in history known to have adopted the epithet The Great (*Megas*).[11]

Roman uses of Alexander in propaganda that was aimed against the Hellenistic (and later also the Parthian kings) brings us back to Octavian. His request to see the body of Alexander is in itself not remarkable. Octavian is a relatively late representative of a sequence of Roman warlords who appropriated the ideologies and mechanisms of rule of the Hellenistic empires but associated themselves with long-dead Alexander (among them Pompey, who even adopted the title Magnus himself).[12] The most interesting element in Suetonius' and Dio Cassius' account is therefore the way that Octavian used Alexander to denounce the Ptolemies, but that is not altogether new either; already during the Roman-Seleukid War of the early second century BCE, the Seleukids were framed as neo-Persian "Asians" who had come from the east to enslave the Greeks, allowing the Romans to present themselves as the protectors and liberators of the Greek poleis – precisely as Alexander supposedly had done.[13]

Octavian's ostentatious association with Alexander – as emperor, he used a seal with a portrait of Alexander on it[14] – turns out to be a stratagem to erase the Ptolemies (and by extension the Seleukids) from the sequence of successive universal empires, reducing them to insignificant kinglets. This is important because Roman and especially Augustan imperial imagery is an appropriation of Ptolemaic and Seleukid imperial ideology. The notion of the Roman Empire as an *imperium sine fine*, as well as the conceptualization of Rome as *caput mundi*, are derived

11 See App., *Syr*. 11.3.15; cf. Polyb. 4.2.7.

12 See Peter P. Spranger, "Der Große. Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des historischen Beinamens in der Antike," *Saeculum* 9 (1958): 22–58.

13 See Guillaume Flamerie de la Chapelle, "Les prises de parole d'Antiochus III dans l'œuvre de Tite Live." *Paideia* 67 (2012): 123–33; Robert Rollinger, "Exercitus Romanus ad Thermopylae? Zu f. 194r Z. 1–16 im neuen Dexipp," in *Emas non quod opus est, sed quod necesse est. Beitrage zur Wirtschafts-, Sozial-, Rezeptions- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Antike. Festschrift für Hans-Joachim Drexhage zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. K. Ruffing and K. Droß-Krüpe (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018), 439–438; Eran Almagor, "Echoes of the Persian Wars in the European phase of the Roman-Syrian War (with an Emphasis on Plut., *Cat. Mai*. 12–14)," in *Rome and the Seleukid East*, ed. A. Coşkun and D. Engels (Brussels: Peeters Publishers, 2019), 87–134. This Roman propaganda built upon earlier Greek and Ptolemaic attempts at "de-Hellenizing" the Seleukids, see e.g., Andrea Primo, *La storiografia sui Seleucidi: da Megastene a Eusebio di Cesarea* (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2009), 122.

14 Plin., *HN* 37.10; Suet., *Aug.* 50.

rather directly from Ptolemaic ideology.[15] Before Rome, Alexandria was constructed by the Ptolemies as the imperial cosmopolis *par excellence* where the world converged, and where objects, plants, animals, and knowledge were gathered.[16] Yet the Romans chose to treat the Ptolemies as mere kings of Egypt, despite the fact that their sea empire extended at its height from the Aegean to the Indian Ocean. Andrew Erskine argued that there is some evidence that in Roman times the tombs of the Ptolemies were removed from the surroundings of Alexander (they are indeed never mentioned again in the context of later visits to Alexander's tomb).[17]

The existing notion of *translatio imperii* from the Persians to the Macedonians thus became focused on the figure of Alexander while his successors were marginalized.[18] And it worked; we still think that after Alexander's death his empire "fell apart" or ceased to exist. Modern historians writing about the "Macedonian Empire" usually mean the empire of Philip II and Alexander III to 323 BCE, not the polity that they call "the Seleukid kingdom" – even though ancient authors normally included the Seleukids in their view of the Macedonian Empire as a world power.[19]

In what follows, I present two more cases of "imperial leapfrogging" as an ideological strategy to legitimize conquest vis-à-vis subjugated populations.[20] These case studies are (1) the imposition of Macedonian rule in third-century BCE Babylon and the invention of a Babylonian "Golden Age" under Nebuchadnezzar by Alexander

15 On universalistic and "Golden Age" ideology in Ptolemaic ideology, and its uses in Augustan propaganda, see Rolf Strootman, "Hellenistic imperialism and the idea of world unity," in *The City in the Classical and Post-Classical World: Changing Contexts of Power and Identity*, ed. Claudia Rapp and Hal Drake (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014b), 38–61; id., "The dawning of a new Golden Age: Images of peace and abundance in Alexandrian court poetry in the context of Ptolemaic imperial ideology," in *Hellenistic Poetry in Context. Tenth International Workshop on Hellenistic Poetry, Groningen 25th-27th August 2010*, ed. M. Annette Harder, Remco F. Regtuit, and Gerry C. Wakker (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2014), 325–341.

16 Alexandria as an imperial microcosm: Rolf Strootman, "Alexandrië: een wereldstad," *Lampas* 44, no. 4 (2011): 292–310; id., *The Birdcage of the Muses: Patronage of the Arts and Sciences at the Ptolemaic Imperial Court, 305–222 BCE* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2016), *passim*.

17 Erskine, "Alexandria and the body of Alexander," 177.

18 So also Reinhold Bichler, "Die Wahrnehmung des Alexanderreiches: Ein Imperium der Imagination," in *Historiographie – Ethnographie – Utopie. Gesammelte Schriften, Teil 4: Studien zur griechischen Historiographie*, ed. R. Rollinger and K. Ruffing (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), 183–218.

19 See, e.g., Just., *Epit.* 36.3 and 41.4.5; Aemilius Sura in Vell. Pat. 1.6.6; Joseph., *AJ* 12.11.2.

20 It may seem impudent to compare kings to frogs, but it could be pointed out that the original German title of the popular fairy tale known in English as "The Frog Prince" (Grimm No. 1; AT 440) is *Froschkönig*. "The Frog King".

and his Successors; and (2) the establishment of Ottoman rule after the conquest of Constantinople by sultan Mehmet II in 1453, and especially Mehmet's self-presentation as a "New Constantine" who had restored the Roman Empire.

More examples could be provided, of course, for instance, Alexander's own self-presentation *vis-à-vis* Iranian populations; the ancient Alexander historiography amply shows how the Macedonian king embedded his rule in third-century Achaemenid practices and ideas, even marrying into the Achaemenid family in order to claim the Achaemenid heritage for his possible sons. In his propaganda, however, Alexander associated himself with Cyrus II, the legendary founder of the Persian Empire who lived about two centuries earlier, presenting himself as Cyrus' successor by paying homage to him at his tomb.[21] I will briefly mention yet another example at the end of this article.

Babylon in the Early Macedonian Period

Alexander III of Macedon captured the city of Babylon in 330 BCE after defeating the Achaemenid Persian king, Darius III, in a battle near Erbil in northern Mesopotamia. Alexander and his court presented the capture (the city surrendered without resistance) as "liberation" rather than as conquest. The second-century CE Greco-Roman author Arrian wrote:

> Entering the city, he commanded the Babylonians to rebuild all the temples which Xerxes had destroyed, and especially that of Belos, whom the Babylonians venerate more than any other god. [. . .] Here also he met with the Chaldeans; and whatever they directed in regard to the religious rites of Babylon he performed, and in particular he offered sacrifice to Belos according to their instructions.[22]

"Belos" is the Greek rendition of Babylonian "Bēl," meaning "Lord," a title used by the Babylonians to address their principal deity, Marduk. The sanctuary that Alexander ordered to be restored was either the temple complex known as Esaĝil,

21 On Alexander's veneration for Cyrus II (559–530 BCE), see most recently Touraj Daryaee, "Alexander at Pasargadae and the Frawašī of Cyrus." In *The World of Alexander in Perspective: Contextualizing Arrian*, ed. Julian Degen and Robert Rollinger (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2023), 357–367. Alexander, or rather the historians at his court, relied heavily on Xenophon's rather fanciful *Cyropaedia* for the construction of Alexander's Cyrus; see Bogdan Burliga, "Xenophon's Cyrus, Alexander φιλόκυρος. How carefully did Alexander the Great study the Cyropaedia?" *Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica* 15, no. 3 (2014): 134–46; Sabine Müller, "Xenophon's Kyroupaideia and the Alexander historiographers," in *Ancient Information on Persia Re-assessed: Xenophon's Cyropaedia*, ed. Bruno Jacobs (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2020), 261–282.

22 Arr., *Anab.* 3.16; cf. 7.17.2; Diod. Sic. 17.112.1–3; Strabo 16.1.5.

or the ziggurat Etemenanki that formed part of it. Arrian's assertion that the Persian king Xerxes had destroyed this sanctuary became a source of controversy from the 1980s, as ancient historians understood it as a later construct resulting from hostile Greco-Roman stereotypes of the Persian kings, and especially Xerxes, as cruel tyrants and habitual destroyers of temples – a form of Orientalistic labeling.[23] There is contemporaneous cuneiform evidence, however, that in 484 BCE, in the early reign of Xerxes (486–465), uprisings took place in Babylon and Uruk and that these were partly instigated by the Babylonian priestly elites.[24] Uprisings often occur at the beginning of new reigns, and as Caroline Waerzeggers and others have shown, king Xerxes responded in the usual manner: by punishing the rebellious communities through their religious institutions – perhaps not by the wholesale destruction of temples,[25] but at least by "closing" them (as evidenced by a sudden end of the production priestly texts, the so-called "end of the archives"),[26] and by delegating power to other groups.[27]

Therefore, there may have been a tradition of discontent among the priestly elites in Babylon when Alexander entered the city. Instead of dismissing the alleged temple destruction as a later literary trope, it is more likely that this narrative originated from contemporaneous Macedonian propaganda developed in dialogue with the Babylonian priesthood. If the Achaemenids had shifted their favor from the priestly elites to other groups following a revolt, the Macedonians

23 See esp. Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White, "Xerxes' destruction of Babylonian temples," in *Achaemenid History. Volume 2: The Greek Sources*, ed. A. Kuhrt and H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1987), 69–78; Amélie Kuhrt, "Xerxes and the Babylonian temples: A restatement of the case," in *The World of Achaemenid Persia: History, Art and Society in Iran and the Ancient Near East*, ed. J. Curtis and S. J. Simpson (London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2010), 491–94.

24 On the revolts, see the essays collected in Caroline Waerzeggers and Maarja Seire, eds., *Xerxes and Babylonia: The Cuneiform Evidence* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2018).

25 Sandra Heinsch and Walter Kuntner, "Die babylonischen Tempel in der Zeit nach den Chaldäern," in *Tempel im Alten Orient*, ed. K. Kaniuth, A. Löhnert, J.L. Miller, A. Otto, M. Roaf, and W. Sallaberger (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013).

26 For Babylon, see Caroline Waerzeggers, "The Babylonian revolts against Xerxes and the end of archives," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 50 (2003/2004): 150–73, and for Uruk, see Karlheinz Kessler, "The fate of the Eanna Archive, the Gimil-Nanāya B Archive, and their archaeological evidence," in *Xerxes and Babylonia: The Cuneiform Evidence*, ed. Caroline Waerzeggers and Maarja Seire (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2004), 73–88; Heather Baker, "Babylon in 484 BC: The excavated archival tablets as a source for urban history," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* 98, no. 1 (2008): 100–116.

27 Michael Jursa, "The transition of Babylonia from the Neo-Babylonian Empire to Achaemenid rule," in *Regime Change in the Ancient Near East and Egypt. From Sargon of Agade to Saddam Hussein*, ed. H. Crawford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 73–94.

likely will have tried to reverse the balance. This is indeed what Arrian tells us; the Chaldeans, the temple priest who "directed [everything] in regard to the religious rites of Babylon," became Alexander's main local informers precisely because they had been disenfranchised by the Achaemenid regime. Moreover, taking care of the maintenance and restoration of temples was a duty of the Babylonian king, in particular at the time of his accession.[28] Alexander likely assumed that role when he became the new ruler of Babylon.

After Alexander, the Seleukid dynasty (c. 312/11–64/3 BCE) ruled with variable levels of success the largest part of the Macedonian Empire, in almost constant competition with the Ptolemies, the Macedonian king who managed a maritime empire from their Mediterranean capital, Alexandria. Their empire was not only built upon the conquests of Alexander but also in many respects was a continuation of the Persian Achaemenid Empire. Yet the Seleukids chose to downgrade the Achaemenids and present their own rule as a liberation from an Achaemenid yoke. After *c.* 306/5 BCE, Alexander, too, disappeared from Seleukid self-presentation, as we already saw.

The Seleukid Empire consisted of several core regions held together through various strategies: a mobile imperial court, the spread of dynastic and Macedonian toponyms from Asia Minor to Central Asia, the empire-wide dissemination of dynastic emblems such as the elephant or the anchor,[29] and most importantly a universalistic imperial ideology.[30] Babylonia was the wealthiest and most densely populated satrapy;[31] it is also one of the best documented parts of the Seleukid Em-

28 Hanspeter Schaudig, "The restoration of temples in the Neo- and Late-Babylonian periods: A royal prerogative as the setting for political argument," in *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient near East and Hebrew Bible. Studies in Honor of Richard Ellis*, ed. M.J. Boda and J.R. Novotny (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2010), 141–64; cf. Claus Ambos, "Building rituals from the first millennium BC: The Evidence from the ritual texts," in *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient near East and Hebrew Bible. Studies in Honor of Richard Ellis*, ed. M.J. Boda and J.R. Novotny (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2010), 221–238. Protection of temples and cults as a duty of the Babylonian king in general: Caroline Waerzeggers, "The pious king: Royal patronage of temples in the Neo-Babylonian period," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Cultures*, ed. K. Radner and E. Robson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 725–51.

29 Paul J. Kosmin, *The Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

30 Strootman, "Hellenistic imperialism and the idea of world unity".

31 For the centrality of Babylonia in the Seleukid Empire, see Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White, eds. *Hellenism in the East: The Interaction of Greek and non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia After Alexander* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

pire because of the rich cuneiform record.[32] In addition, we have several Greek-language sources directly associated with the Seleukid Empire, the two most important of these being first the surviving fragments of the *Indica* (Greek *Indikē*) by Megasthenes, Seleukos I's ambassador to the court of the Indian ruler Chandragupta Maurya in the early third century BCE,[33] and second a history of Babylon from Creation to Macedonian rule known as the *Babyloniaca* (Greek *Babyloniakē*) of Berossos, a Babylonian priest who dedicated his work to the Seleukid emperor Antiochos I Soter (co-ruler 297/6–281, sole ruler 281–261 BCE).[34]

Like Alexander, the early Seleukids integrated Babylon and other Babylonian cities in their empire by coopting the priesthood.[35] A third-century Babylonian text,

32 See Joachim Oelsner, *Materialien zur babylonischen Gesellschaft und Kultur in hellenistischer Zeit* (Budapest: Eötvös University, 1986); Tom Boiy, *Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylon* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2004).

33 On Megasthenes as a Seleukid author, see Primo, *La storiografia sui Seleucidi*, 53–65; cf. Paul J. Kosmin, "Apologetic ethnography: Megasthenes' Indica and the Seleucid elephant," in *Ancient Ethnography: New Approaches*, ed. Eran Almagor and Joseph Skinner (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013a), 97–115; Robert Rollinger, "Megasthenes, mental maps and Seleucid royal ideology: The western fringes of the world or how Ancient Near Eastern empires conceptualized world dominion," in *Megasthenes und seine Zeit/Megasthenes and His Time*, ed. J. Wiesehöfer *et al.* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), 129–64. The extant fragments are collected and translated by Richard Stoneman, *Megasthenes' "Indica": A New Translation of the Fragments with Commentary. Routledge classical Translation* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2021).

34 Primo, *La storiografia sui Seleucidi*, 65–72; cf. Amélie Kuhrt, "Berossus' *Babyloniaka* and Seleucid rule in Babylona," in *Hellenism in the East: The Interaction of Greek and non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia After Alexander*, ed. A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 32–56; Robartus J. van der Spek, "Berossus as a Babylonian chronicler and a Greek historian," in *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern World View and Society Presented to Marten Stol*, ed. id. *et al.* (Bethesda, ML: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 277–318; Geert E. E. de Breucker, "Berossos: His life and his work," in *The World of Berossos*, ed. Johannes Haubold, Giovanni Battista Lanfranchi, Robert Rollinger, and John M. Steele (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013), 15–28. For the text, consult Stanley M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1978); Gerald P. Verbrugghe and John M. Wickersham, *Berossus and Manetho, Introduced and Translated: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); or Geert E.E. de Breucker, *De Babyloniaca van Berossos van Babylon. Inleiding, editie en commentaar* (PhD thesis; University of Groningen, 2012).

35 Rolf Strootman, "Babylonian, Macedonian, King of the World: The Antiochos Cylinder from Borsippa and Seleukid imperial integration," in *Shifting Social Imaginaries in the Hellenistic Period: Narrations, Practices, and Images*, ed. Eftychia Stavrianopoulou (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 67–97. The growing importance of the priesthood found expression in the flourishing of new forms of priestly literature, see Michael Jursa, "Wooing the victor with words: Babylonian priestly literature as a response to the Macedonian conquest," in *The Legitimation of Conquest: Monarchical Representation and the Art of Government in the Empire of Alexander III the Great*, ed. K. Trampedach and A. Meeus (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2020), 165–78. And Céline Debourse,

the so-called *Ruin of Esaĝil Chronicle* (BCHP 6, *c*. 294/3–281 BCE), records that Antiochos I made offerings on the ruined Esaĝil and then cleared away the debris of the temple, making a great show of it by using elephants.[36] In the Antiochos Cylinder of 268 BCE Antiochos claims to have restored two important Babylonian cult centers, the temple of Marduk in Babylon and the temple of Nabû in Borsippa, both of which played an essential role in the Babylonian new year festival Akītu (see below). The revival of Akītu in the early Seleukid period was in part an invention of tradition in response to the priests' newly found importance and confidence.[37] In Uruk, the renowned temple of Anu and its cult were revived under the early Seleukids.[38] In Larsa, the Ebabbar, the temple of the sun god Šamaš, was rebuilt,[39] and in Nippur the temple of Inanna.[40]

Above all, the Seleukids used the illustrious city of Babylon as a showcase for their patronage and benevolence.[41] A wide variety of sources suggest that the Seleukid kings associated their rule in Babylonia with the kings of the Neo-Babylonian Empire from three centuries earlier, in particular Nebuchadnezzar II (605/4–562 BCE),[42] who also features prominently in the anti-Seleukid book of Daniel.[43] Like

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"A new hope: The new year's festival texts as a cultural reaction to defeat," in *Culture of Defeat: Submission in written sources and the archaeological record*, ed. K. Streit and M. Grohmann (Piscataway, NbJ: Gorgias Press LLC, 2021), 139–63. A shift in power relations in Babylon occurred again in the early second century, cf. Philippe Clancier and Julien Monerie, "Les sanctuaires babyloniens à l'époque hellénistique. Évolution d'un relais de pouvoir." *Topoi* 19, no. 1 (2014): 134–146.

36 BCHP 6, obv. 4′–9′; because he is described as "son of the king" (DUMU LUGAL, *mār šarri*), which is the Babylonian rendering of the Hellenistic office of co-ruler—with both father and son bearing the title of *basileus*—the text likely dates to the period when Antiochos I was viceroy in the eastern satrapies (296–281 BCE), perhaps on the occasion of his accession.

37 Debourse, "The new year's festival texts".

38 Julia Krul, *The Revival of the Anu Cult and the Nocturnal Fire Ceremony at Late Babylonian Uruk*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 95 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

39 Olivier Lecomte, "Occupation hellénistique et séleuco-parthe d'un temple babylonien tardif: l'E.Babbar de Larsa," in *Golf-Archäologie. Mesopotamien, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Vereinigte Arabische Emirate und Oman*, ed. K. Schippmann, A. Herling, and J.-F. Salles (Buch am Erlbach: M.L. Leidorf, 1991), 71–82.

40 Oelsner, *Materialien zur babylonischen Gesellschaft und Kultur in hellenistischer Zeit*, 104–106.

41 Amélie Kuhrt, "The Seleucid kings and Babylonia," in *Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship*, ed. P. Bilde *et al.* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1996), 41–54.

42 Kuhrt, "Berossus' *Babyloniaka*"; Ronald H. Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2004).

43 See Carla Sulzbach, "Nebuchadnezzar in Eden? Daniel 4 and Ezekiel 28," in *Stimulation from Leiden; Collected Communications to the XVIIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Leiden 2004*, ed. H.M. Niemann and M. Augustin (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2006), 125–36.

the Neo-Babylonian kings, the Seleukids favored the cult of Nabû, whom they associated with their tutelary deity, Apollo.[44] In the Antiochos Cylinder, a royal foundation inscription written in cuneiform Akkadian and dated to March 268 BCE, Antiochos I Soter presents himself as the patron of both the Ezida, Nabû's temple in Borsippa near Babylon, and the Esaĝil, the main sanctuary of Nabû's father Marduk in Babylon (the same temple that Alexander claimed to have restored).[45] Ostensibly set in "traditional" wordings,[46] and using "samples" from texts dating to the Neo-Babylonian period,[47] the Antiochos Cylinder nonetheless contains innovations that likely derive from negotiations between the Babylonian priesthood and the imperial court.[48] Among these is the association of the Seleukid "reigning triad" of king, queen, and crown prince/co-ruler – here "Antiochos, king of (all) countries, king Seleukos, his son, (and) Stratonike his consort, the queen" (col. 2, ll. 24–27) – with an innovative divine triad of the Babylonian pantheon consisting of "the ruler" Marduk, his wife Erûa', "the queen who creates offspring," and their "foremost son" Nabû.[49]

Another cuneiform document, known as the *Chronicle of Antiochos and the Temple of Sîn* (BCHP = ABC 11), uses the rare Akkadian expression "the son of the king of the succession house" (*mar šarri ša bīt ridûti*) to describe the crown prince

44 Kyle Erickson, "Apollo-Nabû: The Babylonian policy of Antiochus I," in *Seleucid Dissolution: The Sinking of the Anchor*, ed. Kyle Erickson and Gillian Ramsey (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 51–66; Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Nabû and Apollo: The two faces of Seleucid religious policy," in *Orient und Okzident in hellenistischer Zeit. Beiträge zur Tagung „Orient und Okzident – Antagonismus oder Konstrukt? Machtstrukturen, Ideologien und Kulturtransfer in hellenistischer Zeit", Würzburg 10.–13. April 2008*, ed. F. Hoffmann and K. S. Schmidt (Vaterstetten: Patrick Brose Verlag, 2014), 13–30. The Neo-Babylonian kings' preference for Nabû is apparent from their use of theophoric throne names: Nabû-apla-uṣur (Nabopolassar), Nabû-kudurri-uṣur (Nebuchadnezzar), Nabû-na'id (Nabonidus).

45 Debates on the interpretation of the Antiochos Cylinder are ongoing, see Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, "Aspects of Seleucid royal ideology: The cylinder of Antiochus I from Borsippa," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 111 (1991): 71–86; Strootman, "Babylonian, Macedonian, King of the World"; Kosmin, *The Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire*; Kathryn Stevens, "The Antiochus Cylinder, Babylonian scholarship and Seleucid imperial ideology," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 134 (2014): 66–88.

46 Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, "Aspects of Seleucid royal ideology".

47 Stevens, "The Antiochus Cylinder".

48 Strootman, "Babylonian, Macedonian, King of the World".

49 Ibid., 89–90. The term "Seleukid Triad" was coined by Alexander McAuley, "The Seleukid royal family as a reigning triad," in *Culture and Ideology Under the Seleucids: Unframing a Dynasty*, ed. Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides and Stefan Pfeiffer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 23–40. Notably the central place of the first queen (*basilissa*) as the mother of the successor is typical of Macedonian rather than Babylonian or Persian monarchy; see Strootman, *Court and Elites*, 96–110.

Antiochos.[50] This formulation also occurs in two chronicles of the Neo-Babylonian period, where the phrase is used to designate Nebuchadnezzar as the rightful successor of his father Nabopolassar, the founder of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty. Van der Spek suggests that the chronicler equated Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochos on purpose, citing Amélie Kuhrt's comments on the similarities between the reigns of Seleukos and Antiochos and Berossos' depiction of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar; like Seleukos, Nabopolassar "rose from the position of governor to found the most glorious phase of Babylonian history and re-established order after a lengthy war of liberation (Fragment 7). Much of this was accomplished with the help of his son Nebuchadnezzar, whose consolidation and extension of his father's achievements after the latter's death culminated in the extensive programme of reconstruction within Babylonia (Fragment 8)."[51]

A cuneiform tablet dated to 187 BCE – one of the so-called Astronomical Diaries – says that in February of that year Antiochos III, the great-grandson of Antiochos I, made offerings to Bēl (Marduk) and his consort Bēltiya (the same divine queen as the above-mentioned Erûa but under a different name) for the safety of his dynasty and offered a "purple garment of king Nebuchadnezzar":

> [. . .]. That day, he went up to Esaĝil (and) prostrated himself. That day, he entered the All Day Temple. [He sacrificed] bulls and sacrif[icial] sheep [to Bēl, Bēltiya and the great gods in front of Ištar of] Babylon, the golden crown, the golden box of Bēltiya and the purple garment of king Nebuchadnezzar, which [were stored] in the storehouse. He removed the aforementioned [.. .. ..] <that?> [were sto]red? in the storehouse. He crossed over <to>? the garden of the king which is on the west bank. That day, he entered his palace.[52]

Irene Madreiter has shown how the robe affirmed Antiochos' status as king of Babylon and bridged the divide between him and his illustrious predecessor as Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, who lived three centuries before.[53] But Seleukid use of

50 BCHP 5, obv. 1′; see the commentary by Van der Spek in press, *ad loc*.

51 Kuhrt, "Berossus' *Babyloniaka*" 56.

52 AD −187A 10′–12′, new translation by Van der Spek, Finkel, Pirngruber, and Stevens in press (I am grateful for an advance copy). The tablet is now in the British Museum (BM 34711). On the presence of Seleukid royals in the Astronomical Diaries, see Marijn Visscher, "Royal presence in the Astronomical Diaries," in *Keeping Watch in Babylon: The Astronomical Diaries in Context*, ed. Johannes Haubold, John M. Steele, and Kathryn Stevens (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 237–68.

53 Irene Madreiter, "Antiochos the Great and the robe of Nebuchadnezzar: Intercultural transfer between Orientalism and Hellenocentrism," in *Cross-Cultural Studies in Near Eastern History and Literature*, ed. Saana Svärd and Robert Rollinger (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2016), 111–36; on this text, see also Reinhard Pirngruber, "Seleukidischer Herrscherkult in Babylon?" in *Interkulturalität in der Alten Welt. Vorderasien, Hellas Ägypten und die vielfältigen Ebenen des Kontakts*, ed. Robert Rollinger *et al.* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 535–538; Graslin-Thomé, "Le règne d'Antiochos III vu depuis Babylone: Antiochos III dans les sources cunéiformes," in *Antio-*

the Babylonian past went beyond the mere appropriation of elements of monarchical representation; that past was also consciously rewritten to resemble the Seleukid present, as was suggested by Kuhrt (see above). The early third-century writer Berossos shaped his narration of "Nabokodrosoros" (Nebuchadnezzar) to mirror the reign of his patron Antiochos I (Berossos *FGrH* 680 F 8).[54] It can moreover be shown that Berossos' description of the capture of Babylon by the Persian king Cyrus, which ended the independence of Babylon, is openly hostile;[55] Paul Kosmin showed that one generation before Berossos, Megasthenes did something similar by synchronizing the reign of Nebuchadnezzar with that of Seleukos I Nikator.[56]

In sum, the Seleukids, who controlled Babylonia from 312/1 to 141 BCE, anchored their rule in the period of the last Babylonian Empire (605–539 BCE). No one had active memories of that period, while only the priests had access to the written records, which allowed them to manipulate that Babylonian past in such a way that it looked the same as the Seleukid present. The Seleukids and their local agents could thus present Macedonian rule as a restoration of a "Golden Age" under Babylon's greatest kings, which legitimated both the Seleukid takeover as well as the rising power of the local priesthood. In fact, modern textbooks still present the Neo-Babylonian period of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar as the apex of Babylonian history. At the same time, the Achaemenid kings who had ruled Babylonia from 539 to 330 BCE were marginalized and vilified; here Greco-Macedonian and Babylonian negative views of the Achaemenids, in particular Xerxes, merged.

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chos III et l'Orient. Actes de la rencontre franco-allemande tenue à Nancy du 6 au 8 juin 2016, ed. Christophe Feyel and Laetitia Graslin-Thomé (Paris: Association pour la diffusion de la recherche sur l'Antiquité, 2017), 211–42.

54 Kuhrt, "Berossus' *Babyloniaka* and Seleucid rule in Babylona," followed by Primo, *La storiografia sui Seleucidi*, 69–71, and Paul J. Kosmin, "Seleucid ethnography and indigenous kingship: The Babylonian education of Antiochus I," in *The World of Berossos*, ed. Johannes Haubold, Giovanni Battista Lanfranchi, Robert Rollinger, and John M. Steele (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013), 199–212; also see Giovanni Battista Lanfranchi, "Babyloniaca, Book 3: Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians," in *The World of Berossos*, ed. Johannes Haubold, Giovanni Battista Lanfranchi, Robert Rollinger, and John M. Steele (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013), 61–74, esp. 70, suggesting that when Berossos (Fragment 9) rather unhistorically states that Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt to restore Babylonian rule there after the rebellion of the governor over Egypt and Syria, this offered an ideological justification for Antiochos I's war against Ptolemy II Philadelphos.

55 Erik van Dongen, "Propaganda im frühen Perserreich (ca. 550–500 v.Chr.)," in *Inszenierung des Sieges – Sieg der Inszenierung*, ed. M. Fahlenbock, L. Madersbacher and I. Schneider (Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: Studien Verlag, 2011), 173–80, esp. 177. On Berossos' image of Babylon during the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods, see Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Berossus on late Babylonian history." *Oriental Studies* (2006): 116–49; Lanfranchi, "Babyloniaca".

56 Kosmin, "Apologetic ethnography".

Mehmet II and the Refoundation of Constantinople

My second case study is the establishment of Ottoman rule in Constantinople. I argue that during the decades following the city's capture by the forces of Mehmet II in 1453, Mehmet and his court adopted a policy that linked the Ottoman sultan to the founder of the Imperial City, Constantine the Great. Mehmet, who took the title Kayser-i Rum (Caesar of Rome) after the conquest, could thus be presented as a second Constantine who had refounded Constantinople and restored the Roman Empire to its former glory. This allowed him to dissociate himself from the Byzantine rulers whose empire he had taken over.[57]

Mehmet II Khan, later known as Fatih or The Conqueror (reigned 1444–1446 and 1451–1481), the seventh ruler of the Ottoman dynasty, had inherited an empire in the eastern Balkans and western Anatolia, an area that roughly corresponded to the core territories of the medieval Byzantine Empire. But what modern historians have named the Byzantine Empire was seen as the Roman Empire by its own ruling elites, and by the Ottomans as well.[58] From the seventh century CE, the conviction that the conquest of the Roman capital was a prerequisite for the establishment of an Islamic world empire had been upheld by successive dynasties in the post-Roman Near East. Before the Ottomans arrived on the scene in the fourteenth century, about ten attempts to capture the City had already been made.

After a two-month siege, Mehmet II, barely 21 years old, rode into the city on a white horse on 29 May 1453.[59] The city that Mehmet's multi-ethnic army captured was a shadow of its former self, the glorious City of Miracles from the heyday of the Late Roman Empire – a collection of scattered villages rather than a

57 This section is based upon two earlier articles in Dutch: Rolf Strootman, "Hippodroom wordt Paardenplein: de wederopstanding van Constantinopel na 1453," in *Constantinopel. Een mozaïek van de Byzantijnse metropool*, ed. Diederik Burgersdijk and Willemijn Waal (Leuven: Ex Oriente Lux, 2011), 183–98; and Rolf Strootman, "Mehmet Caesar: de val van Constantinopel en de doorwerking van Grieks-Romeinse heerserideologie in het Osmaanse Rijk," *Lampas* 46, no. 3 (2013): 317–31.

58 The term "Byzantine" is a modern invention; the Byzantines referred to themselves as "Romans" (*Rhomaioi*) and were referred to in Arabic-Islamic writings as *al-Rūm* ("the Romans").

59 On the Ottoman siege, see now the extensive study by Marios Philippides and Walter K. Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography and Military Studies* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2011). Good accessible histories of the siege were published by Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople, 1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965; 2nd edn., 1969); and Roger Crowley, *Constantinople: The Last Great Siege, 1453* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005).

real cosmopolis. But the great cathedral of Hagia Sophia was still standing. The city was given over for three days of looting by the victorious Ottoman troops and their Christian allies, but the monuments remained intact because these became the property of Mehmet.[60]

In nineteenth-century historiography Mehmet has been framed as an "Oriental" ruler, a new Xerxes in an ongoing struggle between East and West. In fact, he came not from the east but from the west, born and raised in Thrace and Macedonia. In more recent literature, Mehmet is seen as a ruler at whose court eastern (Persianate) and western (Renaissance) cultural influences merged. But this alleged "in-betweenness" does not do justice to his dynastic persona and the culture of his court, and moreover continues the imaginary antagonism of "East" and "West" as oppositional cultural systems.

The conquest of Constantinople legitimized Mehmet's assumption of the title *Kayser-i Rūm*,[61] Caesar of the Roman Empire, thus placing himself above his two main rivals: the Mamluk ruler of Egypt and the Holy Roman Emperor in the West.[62] The failed Ottoman invasion of southern Italy at the end of his reign in 1480/81 likely aimed at capturing the city of Rome as a next important step in Mehmet's ambition to restore the Roman Empire in its entirety.[63] Universalistic imperial claims were henceforth emphasized in Mehmet's dynastic image. For in-

60 Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople*, 199–204.

61 On Ottoman use of Romano-Byzantine royal titles, see Hasan Çolak, "Tekfur, fasiliyus and kayser: Disdain, negligence and appropriation of Byzantine imperial titulature in the Ottoman world," in *Frontiers of the Ottoman Imagination: Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey*, ed. M. Hadjianastasis (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 5–29; cf. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Khan, caliph, tsar and imperator: The multiple identities of the Ottoman sultan," in *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, ed. Peter F. Bang and Dariusz Kołodziejczyk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 175–93. On the various meanings of the term *Rūm*, and *Rūm* as a contemporaneous synonym for the Ottoman Empire after 1453, see F. Asli Ergul, "The Ottoman identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?" *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 4 (2012): 630–31.

62 In the sixteenth century, official writings of the Mughal emperors in India—allies of the Ottomans—would refer to the Ottoman sultan as *khawandkar-i Rum* ("Lord of Rome"), *sultan-i Rum* ("Ruler of Rome"), and *qaisar-i Rum* ("Caesar of Rome"); see Naimur Rahman Farooqhi, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations: A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations Between Mughal India and The Ottoman Empire, 1556–1748* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1989), 200.

63 Peter Thorau, "Von Karl dem Großen zum Frieden von Zsitva Torok: zum Weltherrschaftsanspruch Sultan Mehmeds II. und dem Wiederaufleben des Zweikaiserproblems nach der Eroberung Konstantinopels," *Historische Zeitschrift* 279 (2004): 309–34. The planned "reconquest" was partly legitimized by the belief that the Ottomans descended from the Trojans, and through Aeneas could lay claim to Old Rome, see Johannes Koder, "Romaioi and Teukroi, Hellenes and Barbaroi, Europe and Asia: Mehmed the Conqueror: Kayser-i Rum and Sulţān al-barrayn wa-l-bahrayn." *Athens Dialogues*, 12 November 2010, 10–12; cf. Günay Uslu, *Homer, Troy and the Turks:*

stance, he commissioned the translation into Arabic of Ptolemy's *Geography*, a work that aimed to describe the entire *oikoumenē*, and also a large world map meant to be shown at public occasions.[64]

In spite of the fact that the last phase of depopulation of the City had been his own doing, Mehmet II took vigorous measures to repopulate the city. He did so in part by attracting Muslim migrants from Anatolia and the Balkans but since the majority of his empire's population consisted of Christians, he did so most of all by granting them permission to occupy the empty houses, and by allowing Christian worship to continue in most of the churches. He moreover facilitated the return to Constantinople of the Orthodox liturgy; in an attempt to gain the support of the Pope in Rome and the rulers of Latin Christendom, the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI, had adopted the Roman Catholic liturgy. Mehmet won popular support by appointing as the new patriarch Gennadios, an Aristotelian theologian (*c*. 1400–1473) who had been the figurehead of resistance against the imposition of Catholic worship, and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate would henceforth become an important instrument of Ottoman rule.[65] The city's culture and population for a long time remained predominantly Greek.[66] There was in other words, more continuity than change after 1453. Most importantly for the present discussion, the city's principal name remained Konstantinopolis, the city of Constantine, Turkish Kostantiniyye, referred to in Ottoman documents as Qosṭanṭiniyya al-Kubrā ("the Great").[67]

Heritage and Identity in Late Ottoman Empire, 1870-1915. Heritage and Memory (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017).

64 Maria Mavroudi, "Translators from Greek into Arabic at the court of Mehmet the Conqueror," in *The Byzantine Court: Source* of *Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, Istanbul, Turkey, June 2010*, ed. A. Ödekan, N. Necipoğlu, and E. Akyürek (Istanbul: Koc University Press, 2013), 195–207; cf. Gottfried Hagen, "Legitimacy and world order," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. H.T. Karateke and M. Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 55–83, on the Ottoman concept of world order (*nizām-i ʻālem*); also see Günes İsiksel, "Le sultan des Deux Terres et des Deux Mers : représentations diplomatiques ottoman au XVIe siècle," in *Political Thought and Practice in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. M. Sariyannis (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2019), 45–58, on the early Ottoman sultans' self-presentation as the rulers of Europe and Asia.

65 See Hasan Çolak and E. Bayraktar-Tellan, *The Orthodox Church as an Ottoman Institution: A Study of Early Modern Patriarchal Berats* (Ecclesiastica Ottomanica 1) (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2019).

66 Halil İnalcık, "The policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek population of Istanbul and the Byzantine buildings of the city," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23/24 (1969): 229–49.

67 With a pun on Constantinople's (Greek) folk name "Istanbul", Mehmet II had shortly after the conquest renamed the city Islambol ("Islam Abounds") but this name failed to catch on and was

After Hagia Sophia the most important shrine of Byzantine Constantinople had been the Church and Monastery of the Holy Apostles, the burial place of the city's founder, Constantine the Great, and a number of later emperors. By 1453 the Church of the Holy Apostles was in bad repair but cannot have been a total ruin as it became the seat of the Patriarchate until in 1463 it was relocated to Hagia Pammakaristos (now Fethiye Mosque).[68] The Ottoman authorities thereafter ordered the clearing of the site to prepare for an ambitious building project; over the course of seven years on this already hallowed ground, Fatih Camii, the Mosque of the Conqueror, arose. The first and largest of the Ottoman imperial mosque complexes, Fatih Camii was meant to rival Hagia Sophia and intended as the location of Mehmet's own tomb and that of his wife, Gülbahar Hatun.[69] There are two ways to understand this. It is possible to interpret the construction of Fatih Camii as a form of imperial appropriation, the replacement of a pivotal Romano-Byzantine religious and political monument by a religious and political monument of the conquerors, with the aim of erasing the memory of Constantine the Great. It makes more sense, however, that by locating his own tomb on the site of the (lost) tomb of Constantine, Mehmet wished to associate himself with the Roman emperor and become a second founder of the city. The reason why this is the more likely interpretation is the fact that Mehmet associated himself with Constantine more often. For instance, in his personal library, which consisted of manuscripts in Greek, Persian, and Arabic, he boasted to have collected 120 manuscripts that had purportedly belonged to Constantine's library.[70]

Gülrü Necipoğlu has pointed out the deliberate connections of Mehmet's nocturnal funeral procession in 1481 and that of Constantine the Great in 337. In both cases, the funerary rites began in the rulers' respective palaces at the easternmost end of the city, after which the coffins adorned with the rulers' insignia were carried by the light of candles and torches to the Church of the Holy Apostles/Fatih Camii.[71] Necipoğlu concludes that "[t]he similarity between Constantine's and Meh-

later used only by the ulema; see Halil İnalcık, "Istanbul: An Islamic city," in *Essays in Ottoman History*, edited by id (Istanbul: Eren, 1998), 253.

68 Çolak and Bayraktar-Tellan, "The Orthodox Church as an Ottoman Institution," 119.

69 On the construction of the new mosque, Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2009), 66–96.

70 Julian Raby, "Mehmet the Conqueror's Greek scriptorium." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): 15–34.

71 Gülrü Necipoğlu, "Dynastic imprints on the cityscape: The collective message of funerary imperial mosque complexes in Istanbul," in *Cimetières et traditions funéraires dans le monde islamique*, ed. J.-L. Bacqué-Grammont and A. Tibet (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1996), 23–36, esp. 26–27 with nn. 11–12.

med's funeral processions no doubt served to represent the founder of the Muslim city as the legitimate successor to its Christian founder."[72] A Persian adaptation of the Greek *History of Constantinople and Hagia Sophia*, prepared for Mehmet in 1480, associated his new palace, Topkapı Sarayı, which was located on the site of the ancient Greek colony Byzantion, not only with the legendary founder of that colony, Byzas, but with a clever invention of tradition also with Constantine.[73]

By associating with Constantine, Mehmet erased as it were from history the Byzantine emperors of the centuries between him and the late Roman Empire, announcing a restoration of a presumed Golden Age after centuries of misrule and decline.[74] The historian Tursun Beg, author of a history of Mehmet's reign entitled *Tarih-i Ebülfeth* ("History of the Conqueror"), recorded that Mehmet would not accept that Constantine XII was addressed as Roman Emperor, a title that he claimed for himself.[75] Mehmet (and his collaborators after his death) thus wrote Ottoman rule not only into the history of the Roman Empire but also in the longer tradition of what was known in the Medieval west of *translatio imperii*, an ancient Greek concept according to which universal rule was transmitted from one empire to the next: from the Assyrians to the Persians, from the Persians to the Macedonians, and from the Macedonians to the Romans.[76] This alleged restoration of a thousand-year old past however, can be contrasted to the awareness among modern historians that the early Ottoman Empire continued many practi-

72 Necipoğlu, "Dynastic imprints on the cityscape," 27.

73 Gülrü Necipoğlu, "From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye: Creation of a cosmopolitan capital and visual culture under sultan Mehmed II," in *From Byzantion to Istanbul: 8000 Years of a Capital. Sakıp Sabancı Museum, Istanbul, June 5–September 4, 2010* (Istanbul: Ilke Basin Yayin, 2010), 268–69.

74 Justinian the Great, the sixth-century restorer of the Roman Empire and builder of Hagia Sophia, was an exception since he was remembered more positively as the builder of Hagia Sophia; it is highly significant that under the Ottomans Hagia Sophia retained its original name even as a mosque (as Ayasofya Camii); in the Ottoman conception, Hagia Sophia was a work of God destined to fall to the True Faith (see İnalcık, "Istanbul: An Islamic city," 253). An anonymous Ottoman chronicle records Mehmet's great interest in the history of Constantinople (Koder, "Romaioi and Teukroi," 7, with the references in n. 21).

75 Halil İnalcık and Rhoads Murphey, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Beg* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1978), 33.

76 For the Late Antique association of universal empire with Christian monotheism and its transmission to the Byzantine Empire, see Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Dimiter Angelov and Judith Herrin, "The Christian imperial tradition – Greek and Latin," in *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kołodziejczyk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 149–74.

ces and institutions of the late Byzantine Empire, as was shown already in the 1970s by the late Halil İnalcık.[77]

It must be kept in mind that until the sixteenth century the Ottoman Empire was to a large degree a Christian empire, as the majority of the population consisted of Christians, and through the system of *devşirme* Christian populations provided the personnel for the Ottoman standing army – the janissaries – as well as the empire's principal officials, including the viziers to whom the sultan delegated power.[78] Christian rulers had played important roles in the establishment of Ottoman hegemony in the Balkans as vassals or allies;[79] in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was not uncommon for Christians to become members of the Ottoman landholding nobility, holding timars (fiefs) and serving as *sipahi* cavalry.[80]

Mehmet's treatment of the urban landscape of Constantinople consisted of adaptations of the Byzantine past, but these appropriations of the Byzantine heritage were consciously presented as a restoration of a Golden Age. His building activities in Constantinople, and other aspects of his self-presentation, showed that Mehmet sought to associate himself with Constantine the Great – whose name was retained in the Ottoman name for the city, Kostantiniyye – and thereby become a second founder of the city who had restored the Golden Age of Roman greatness when Constantinople ruled the world.

Conclusion: The Past Becomes the Present (and Vice Versa)

More examples of "leapfrogging" emperors can be adduced, and I will briefly present one more. The Sasanians, the dynasty that ruled the powerful New Persian Empire of Late Antiquity, referred back to a legendary dynasty called the

77 See Hilal İnalcık, *Studies in Ottoman Social and Economic History* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985).

78 See Hilal İnalcık, "The meaning of legacy: The Ottoman case," in *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, ed. L.C. Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 17–29., emphasizing that the Ottoman Empire was not a Turkish state; cf. Ergul, "The Ottoman identity: Turkish, Muslim or Rum?", who is doubtful whether the early Ottoman state could even be characterized as Islamic.

79 Klaus-Peter Matschke, "Research problems concerning the transition to Tourkokratia: The Byzantine standpoint," in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, ed. F. Adanır and S. Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 79–114.

80 İnalcık, "The policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek population of Istanbul," 249.

Kayanids who by Late Antiquity were credited with the building of the main Achaemenid sites such as Persepolis and the tombs at Naqš-i Rustam. The time of the Kayanids was seen as the world's mythical Golden Age, a time of unity and peace (two recurring elements of virtually all imperial ideologies of premodern Eurasia). However, unity disappeared after Alexander, followed by a period of disunity and chaos, with the first Sasanian king, Ardaxšīr I, subsequently claiming that he had restored the divinely-ordained order of the legendary past. Recent research, however, has shown that the Sasanian Empire was in almost all respects a continuation of the later Parthian Empire but under a new dynasty.[81]

It should be noted that the Sasanians' real predecessors, the Arsakid kings of the Parthian Empire, had held the imperial mantle for almost four centuries. However, they hardly feature in Sasanian historical narratives and when they do turn up it is in a negative light.[82] The Zoroastrian manuscript MU29, a short apocalyptic text that can be dated to the late Sasanian period, uniquely acknowledges the Arsakids as predecessors of the Sasanians in an ex-eventu prophecy ascribed to Zoroaster: "And the third, the brazen branch, that you (*sc*., Zoroaster) saw, which is the rulership of the Arsakids (**aškyānīyān*), who are manifest in the way and manner of evil, and who will rule over Ērānšahr in the manner of Alexander of the seed of wrath, and they destroy the Good Religion, and then themselves will fall back into hell from the material world."[83]

While the Arsakids were seen as evildoers, the Seleukid Dynasty that preceded them was erased from memory entirely – only Alexander was retained; he was presented either as a destroyer (in accordance with Avestan tradition) or, paradoxically, written into the history of the by then legendary Achaemenids as the half-brother, nephew, or foster-brother of the last Achaemenid king, Dāra (the Darius III of Classical sources). In Ferdowsī's *Šāhnāmeh*, Alexander becomes

81 See Henning Börm, "Herrscher und Eliten in der Spätantike," in *Commutatio et Contentio: Studies in the Late Roman, Sasanian, and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. Henning Börm and Josef Wiesehöfer (Düsseldorf: Wellem Verlag, 2010), 159–98; and Henning Börm, "Dynastie und Charisma im Sasanidenreich," in *Das Charisma des Herrschers*, ed. D. Boschung and J. Hammerstaedt (Paderborn: Fink Wilhelm GmbH, 2015), 253–80 („im Grunde vor allem ein Dynastiewechsel"); see also M. Rahim Shayegan, "The end of the Parthian Arsacid Empire," in *The End of Empires*, ed. Michael Gehler, Robert Rollinger, and Philipp Strobl (Zürich: Springer VS, 2022), 213–47.

82 Ehsan Yarshater, "Iranian National History," in *The Cambridge History of Iran. Volume 3.2: The Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassasian Periods*, ed. id (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 359–477, esp. 473; cf. Touraj Daryaee, "On forgetting Cyrus and remembering the Achaemenids in Late Antique Iran," in *Cyrus the Great: Life and Lore*, ed. M. Rahim Shayegan (Los Angeles: Ilex Foundation, 2019), 221–31.

83 Touraj Daryaee, "Alexander and the Arsacids in the Manuscript MU29," *Dabir* 1 (2016): 8–10, esp. 8.

a true Persian king modeled after the example of the Sasanian kings.[84] The Seleukids, however, do not figure in the main texts of Late Antique/early Medieval Iran, the *Avesta* and the *Šāhnāmeh*. The Sasanians thus leapfrogged over about half a millennium of history, not because the Sasanian had "forgotten" about the Parthians and Seleukids, and to a large extent also the Achaemenids. Historical information about these dynasties was readily available in the Greek and Latin historiography that the Sasanians certainly had access to. They consciously chose to forget their predecessor.

An alternative metaphor for the leapfrogging phenomenon could be the "folding" of time and space – a principle from the natural sciences and popularly known from science fiction, where it is used to explain away the impossibility of interstellar space travel. Early modern empires folded time, too, connecting to a distant past that could be rewritten in imperial propaganda to become a long-gone Golden Age modeled upon the present, so hence it could be claimed that the Golden Age had been restored. As the Seleukid and Ottoman cases show, new imperial regimes usually do so in collaboration with local elites who have access to the written records of the older period. The Seleukid construction of a Babylonian Golden Age under Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar, created in close collaboration with Babylonian priesthood, is one the most successful examples; we still believe that is true. Mehmet's presentation, with the assistance of Greek intellectuals, of his rule as a restoration of the Roman Empire at its height, however, did not have the same effect on western historiography because western Europeans preferred to see him as an Oriental "Other."

These narratives often downplay the significance of the intermediate period and the immediate predecessors of the new rulers. The preceding centuries are either depicted as times of disunity and chaos or are entirely erased from history. Ironically, the new rulers frequently continue many of the institutions of the dynasties they replace. For example, the empires of Alexander and the Seleukids were, in several respects, continuations of the Achaemenid Empire. The Sasanians replaced the Arsakids as the ruling dynasty but largely maintained the Arsakid

84 On the image of Alexander in the *Šāhnāmeh*, Haila Manteghi, "Alexander the Great in the Shāhnāmeh of Ferdowsī," in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson, and Ian Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2012), 161–74; there are good discussions also by Touraj Daryaee, "Imitatio Alexandri and its impact on Late Arsacid, Early Sasanian and Middle Persian literature," *Electrum* 12 (2007): 89–97, and Jake Nabel, "Alexander between Rome and Persia: Politics, ideology, and history," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great*, ed. Kenneth R. Moore (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 197–232. The same transformation into a Persian king of course occurs in the *Eskandar-nāma*, the Persian Alexander Romance. The bibliography on Alexander traditions in Iran is enormous; see Haila Manteghi, *Alexander the Great in the Persian Tradition. History, Myth and Legend in Medieval Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018).

(Parthian) Empire's structure, including its ruling elite and military organization. Similarly, the early Ottoman Empire can be seen as a continuation of the later Byzantine Empire, even in geographical terms.

Abbreviations

All abbreviations of ancient sources are according to the Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th edition, apart from the following:

ABC *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, ed. A.K. Grayson (1975).
BCHP *Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period*, ed. R. J. van der Spek et al. (in press).
FGrH *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby (1923–).

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Rogier E.M. van der Heijden

Empire and Imagination in Roman Sardis: The Wadi B Temple of the Imperial Cult as Mnemonic Cluster

Abstract: This chapter studies the entanglement of local imperial history and imperial worship in the Roman-period city of Sardis, modern-day Türkiye. In constructing its historical narrative and civic identity Sardis differentiated itself from surrounding cities, which mostly took Greek (mythological) figures and events for promotional strategies and the formation of collective memory. Sardis' strategies of identity formation and its uses of imperial and mythological pasts were responses to the competition that arose between the cities of the province of Asia in the context of the imperial framework of the Roman empire. Looking at archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic evidence from the period, this chapter discusses to what extent a post-imperial Lydian memoryscape was constructed in the provincially-organised temple of the imperial cult at Sardis. I will argue that the sanctuary dedicated for the veneration of the emperors in the very centre of the city not only served as a focal point of imperial allegiance, but also of the juxtaposition of contemporary imperial power with civic, post-imperial history and memory.

Introduction: An Ancient Lydian City in the Roman Empire

Lydian Sardis was already an ancient city in the Roman period, having reached its geopolitical zenith under the rule of the Mermnad dynasty during the late seventh and early sixth centuries BCE. According to Greek and Roman writers, king Croesus was the wealthiest man of his time, thanks to the gold that flowed in the small river Pactolus from the Tmolus mountain range south of the city onto the Hermus plain north of the city.[1] Between the reigns of the illustrious kings Gyges and Croesus (the first and last kings of the Mermnad dynasty respectively), the

1 Crawford H. Greenewalt, Jr., "Gold and Silver Refining at Sardis / Sardeis'te Altın ve Gümüş Arıtımı," in *Lidyalılar ve dünyaları / The Lydians and Their World*, ed. Nicholas D. Cahill (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 134–41.

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Lydians from Sardis conquered much of western Anatolia, establishing an emerging multi-ethnic empire that consisted of various Greek and Anatolian peoples.[2] Around 550 BCE, they encountered an even more powerful opponent in the east in the form of the Persians, who defeated the Lydians, sacked Sardis, and captured their king, Croesus.[3] Sardis and Lydia would never be independent again, but would be ruled subsequently by the Persians, Alexander the Great and his successors, the Pergamene Kingdom, and the Romans.

Since the start of the modern excavation series in the 1950s it has become clear that cultural memory in (Roman) Sardis was heavily focused on the past belonging to the period of the Lydian empire. According to George Hanfmann, one of the earlier excavation directors at Sardis, archaic Sardians suffered from a "regular Leontomania," referring to the use and reuse of lion statues in the city, as the lion was the symbol of Lydian kingship and its association with the indigenous goddess Cybele.[4] This preoccupancy resurfaced during the Roman imperial period, when Sardis witnessed a significant increase in expressions of pride and remembrance of its Lydian past, prominently advertised on coins and in central public spaces. At the same time, the Persian and Hellenistic histories were largely forgotten.[5] Such a development of supposedly increased attention for the local past was not odd for a city in the Roman period; in fact, this was a widespread phenomenon all across the eastern Mediterranean.

This chapter focuses on imperial cultural memory in one such public space, the first-century CE "Wadi B" temple of the imperial cult in the city centre of the city of Sardis. I will show that this sanctuary from the Roman imperial period combined not only Roman-period Sardis with the veneration of the emperor, but that it connected this with Sardis' illustrious past, thereby creating an expectation

2 Although the Lydian kingdom existed for multiple centuries, its "imperial" phase lasted less than a century. At the same time, its afterlife was long-lasting and carried meaning beyond the borders of the Lydian empire. For short-term empires, see Robert Rollinger, Julian Degen and Michael Gehler, "Approaching Short-Term Empires in World History, a First Attempt," in *Short-Term Empires in World History*, ed. Robert Rollinger, Julian Degen, and Michael Gehler, Universal- und kulturhistorische Studien. Studies in Universal and Cultural History (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2022), 1–22.

3 Christopher H. Roosevelt, "Iron Age Western Anatolia: The Lydian Empire and Dynastic Lycia," in *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel T. Potts (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 896–913.

4 George M.A. Hanfmann, "The Sculpture of the Prehistoric, Lydian, and Persian Periods," in *Sculpture from Sardis. The Finds through 1975*, ed. George M. A. Hanfmann and Nancy H. Ramage, Sardis Report 2 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 20–23.

5 For a typology of "forgetting" in opposition to "remembering" see Aleida Assmann, *Formen des Vergessens* (Göttingen: Walstein Verlag, 2016).

of the present and envisioning the city's future.[6] As the interaction with the region's past was an inherently communal affair, and because this was a past far removed from anyone's lived experience in the Roman imperial period, this chapter will rely on the concept of cultural memory as developed over the last three decades (see "Introduction," this volume).[7] Furthermore, I will argue that the Wadi B temple formed visible, symbolic, and mnemonic connections with multiple features in the landscape surrounding the city, thereby tying the present of imperial worship to a past of imperial (and mythological) might.

To this end, I will first start the references to history and myth in the Wadi B sanctuary, as they were inscribed on statue bases of emperors and benefactors and sculpted into the architectural decoration of the temple. Second, I will turn to a 2016 chapter by archaeologist and historian Christina Williamson, in which she shows how the Attalid kings of Pergamum ideologically tied the acropolis on which they built their palace and main sanctuary to visible geographical elements in the surroundings of the city that were associated with myths; I will show that something similar can be seen in the Wadi B sanctuary at Sardis, from where the grave mounds of the Lydian kings and the mythological landscape of the Catacecaumene to the north and the east of Sardis were visible.[8] Third, I will discuss how these memories were "activated" and reiterated in relation to the religious activity in the sanctuary. The final section will explore the temporal visions resulting from the concentration and activation of Sardian memory in connection with its place in the imperial order, whether imagined or not, showing the entanglement of memories and histories. After all, the past is not just the past, but always perceived from the present with eyes on the present and the future.[9]

6 Gregor Feindt et al., "Entangled Memory," *History and Theory* 53 (2014): 29.

7 Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, Beck'sche Reihe 7 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992); Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1999); Feindt et al., "Entangled Memory"; for a recent methodological discussion of memory and ritual in ancient Greek sanctuaries, summarizing past methodological advances, see Efrosyni Boutsikas, *The Cosmos in Ancient Greek Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 21–30.

8 For the inherent relation between memory and space, see e.g. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, eds., *Cultural Memory Studies*, Media and Cultural Memory/Medien und kulturelle Erinnerung 8 (Berlin; New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2008).

9 Feindt et al., "Entangled Memory," 40-41.

The Wadi B Temple of the Imperial Cult

Sardis was built against the slopes of a spur of the Tmolus (Boz Dağ) mountain range in modern-day western Türkiye. People had been living on the spurs of the Sardian acropolis since the Iron Age, where they transformed the spurs into terraces that cascaded down from the hill. In the archaic period, these terraces featured elite housing and large complexes that have been interpreted as the dwellings of the Lydian kings and the Lydian elite.[10] The Wadi B temple, called after the ephemeral riverbed in this area, was built on one such terrace (Figure 1, no. 79).

The temple was discovered in the early 1980s, but only a small part of the complex was excavated at first.[11] On the basis of stylistic elements, the use of building materials and techniques, and the available knowledge of the history of Sardis, the temple has been dated to the second or third quarter of the first century CE.[12] The complex consisted of a broad open space of around 100 by 150 metres, a richly decorated temple on the south side of the plaza, and a porticus on the west, north, and east side of the terrace.[13] The only archaeologically attested entrance was located on the north side; from the lower city, a monumental staircase led up to terrace, creating a vista between the staircase and the temple building itself. The temple's stylobate – the top of the platform on which the columns were placed – was 5.6 metres higher than the floor level of the plaza, commandeering the attention of the entire complex and giving the temple an increased monumentality within the already sizeable sanctuary. East of the sanctuary lay the possibly contemporary Theatre-Stadium complex (Figure 1, no. 25-26), only separated from the sanctuary terrace by a road leading from the lower to the upper city.[14]

The finding of an inscription belonging to the architrave of the temple mentioning the Senate in Rome ("σύνκ[λητ- (*sic*)") has led to the interpretation of the

10 Nicholas D. Cahill, "The Lydian Palaces at Sardis in the Light of New Research," *Türk Arkeoloji ve Etnografya Dergisi* 86, no. 2 (2023): 11–41.

11 Christopher Ratté, Thomas N. Howe, and Clive Foss, "An Early Pseudodipteral Temple at Sardis," *American Journal of Archaeology* 90, no. 1 (1986): 45–68.

12 First argued by Ratté, Howe and Foss, "An Early Pseudodipteral Temple," 59; this dating was confirmed and specified to the middle of the first century CE by recent excavations: Nicholas D. Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple of Roman Sardis: A Sanctuary from the First Century Through Late Antiquity," *American Journal of Archaeology* 128 (2024): 397.

13 For a detailed archaeological map of Field 55, see Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 383, fig. 2.

14 Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 383–386.

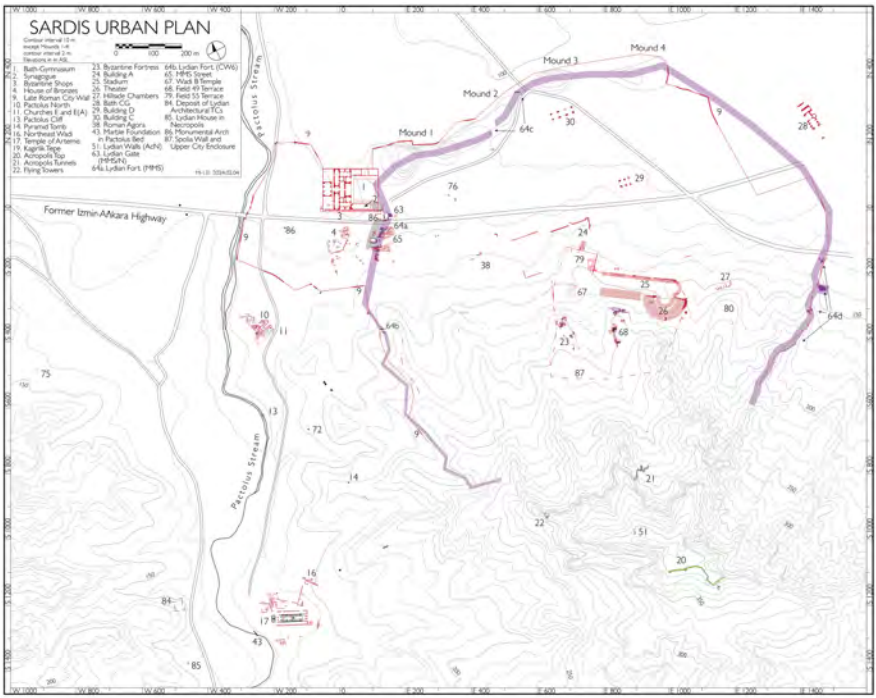

Figure 1: Archaeological map of Sardis. ©Archaeological Exploration of Sardis/President and Fellows of Harvard College.

sanctuary as a temple for the imperial cult.[15] The sanctuary was in use until the second half of the fourth century CE, judging from the material found.[16] Over the last 20 years, new excavations have been conducted, most importantly on the eastern side of the complex, where in late antiquity a villa was built from material that origi-

15 *I.Sardis* 2, 421; Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 392–393. It is important to note, however, that all the letters on this inscription were reconstructed from the holes into which the bronze letters of the inscription were fixed.

16 The original report stipulated that the temple was destroyed by natural circumstances halfway the second century CE, but this has been corrected by recent excavations and a reinterpretation of the coins found in this area in the 1980s: Ratté, Howe, and Foss, "An Early Pseudodipteral Temple," 67; Jane DeRose Evans, *Coins from the Excavations at Sardis*, Sardis Monograph 13 (Cambridge MA: Archaeological Exploration of Sardis, 2018); Georg Petzl, *Sardis: Greek and Latin Inscriptions, Part II: Finds from 1958 to 2017*, Sardis Monograph 14 (Istanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2019), 63–67; Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 402–403.

nally belonged to the temple complex.[17] Much of the excavated material comes from a context of reuse in and around the late antique villa; in particular, the so-called "spolia wall," a monumental wall on the east side of the complex which possibly functioned as an "intraurban fortification," contained a significant number of architectural material and honorific monuments with inscriptions.[18] A relatively large part of the inscriptions was dedicated to priests of the imperial cult, and the appearance of the Roman Senate on the abovementioned architrave block makes it likely that a significant part of the epigraphic material found in this area belonged to the Wadi B temple that was dedicated to the imperial cult.

Inscribed and Carved Cultural Memory

Imperial cult temples in this part of the Roman empire were usually organised and administered by a league of cities (κοινόν). The grants for temples of the imperial cult, however, were issued by the Senate and the emperor.[19] One type of source material that stands out are the large number of honorific inscriptions with a set of titles with which the council and the people's assembly described itself and the city. With the emperor as the symbolic and physical "lynchpin" of the system of benefaction and honouring in the entire Mediterranean, the erection of a statue of a benefactor with base and inscription in the sanctuary of the imperial cult tied the honoured individual to the emperor and the empire. It also tied the dedicating individual or institution, creating a relational triangle of empire and emperor, the benefactor, and the city through the council and assembly as dedicator.[20]

One well-preserved statue base with dedicatory inscription belonged to a statue of Flavius Eugenetor, who served as fiscal procurator in the administration of the province of Thrace. The inscription is telling for the advertisement of civic cultural memory and myth in Sardis and in Asia Minor. During the second and early third century CE, cities started to decorate the phrase "The council and the people of the

17 On the archaeology of Field 55 in late antiquity, see Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 403–417.

18 Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 404.

19 For the imperial cult in Asia Minor, see Simon R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Barbara Burrell, *Neokoroi. Greek Cities and Roman Emperors*, Cincinatti Classical Series 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

20 Anna Heller and Onno M. van Nijf, "Introduction: Civic Honours, from Classical to Roman Times," in *The Politics of Honour in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire*, ed. Anna Heller and Onno M. van Nijf, Brill Studies in Greek and Roman Epigraphy 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 15.

. . .” with titles and adjectives that showed their history and uniqueness. In Sardis, an honorific inscription from this period would typically look as follows:

Φλ(άβιον) Εὐγενέ̣[τορα], τὸν
κράτιστον [ἐπ]ίτρο-
πον τῶν Σ[εβα]στῶ[ν],
ἄνδρα εὐπ[ρεπ]ῆ(?) κα[ὶ]
ᵛᵛ δικαιότᾰ̣[το]ν ᵛᵛ
ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δ[ῆ]μος τῆ[ς]
αὐτόχθονος [κ]αὶ πρω-
τόχθονος καὶ ἱερᾶ[ς]
[τ]ῶν θεῶν καὶ μη̣τ[ρ]ο-
πόλεως τῆς Ἀσίας κα[ὶ]
Λυδίας ἀπάσης καὶ Ἑλ-
λάδος κὲ δὶς νεωκό[ρου]
τῶν Σεβαστῶν κατὰ̣
[τ]ὰ̣ δόγματα τῆς ἱερᾶ[ς]
συ̣ν[κ̣λή]̣του καὶ τὰς [κρί]-
σεις τῶν αὐτοκρατ[ό]-
ρων, [φ]ίλης κα[ὶ] συμ-
μάχ̣[ου Ῥ]ωμα[ίω]ν κα̣[ὶ]
οἰκ̣[είας] τ̣ῷ̣[ν κυ]ρ̣ί̣ω̣[ν]
ἡμῷ̣[ν Σαρδι]α̣νῶ̣[ν]
ᵛ μη[τροπόλε]ως ᵛ
vacat [ ]
- - - - - - -

The Council and the People of the *metropolis* of the Sardians, *autochthonous* and *protochthonous* and sacred to the gods and *metropolis* of Asia and of all Lydia and of Hellas, and keeper of two Koinon temples of the Augusti by virtue of the decrees of the sacred Senate [and the decisions] of the [emperors - - - (honoured)] Fl(avius) Eugene[tor], *vir egregius*, *procurator Augustorum*, a decent(?) and very lawful man.[21]

This set of city titles can be divided up into two parts. The first part signified the city’s illustrious past and the second its supposedly special relationship with the

21 *I.Sardis* 2, 382–83. The inscription was published as two separate honorific inscriptions with the exact same text, but four of the six fragments of 383 (a, c, d, f) fit the cut marks of 382 exactly – fragment (e) joins fragment (d) and fragment (b) joins fragment (a); See Georg Petzl, “Addenda and Corrigenda to I.Sardis II”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (forthcoming 2024 or 2025); trans. author based on Petzl, *Sardis: Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, 71; The Greek κράτιστος (literally “strongest,” “best,” “most excellent”) is a translation of the Latin *vir egregius* (“excellent man”) which grew into a title of honour for imperial officials in the second half of the second century CE: Meret Strothmann, “Vir Egregius,” in *Brill’s New Pauly: Antiquity Volumes*, ed. Hubert Canci, Helmut Schneider and Christine F. Salazar (Leiden: Brill, 2016), accessed 21 May 2024, https://doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_dnp_e12205440.

Romans, thereby suggesting an intimate connection between Sardis and the Roman emperor. In what I call the "Lydian part," Sardis highlighted selected episodes from its illustrious history; it was a *metropolis*, which literally means "mother city." In the Roman period, the word metropolis could also point to a central position in a region or an important administrative function within its province, thereby not excluding possible ambiguities in its meaning.

The citizens of Sardis, too, chose to be not too precise with the use of the word in its inscriptions. Whereas metropolis of Asia signified its important administrative function in the province, "metropolis of Lydia" pointed to its role as most important city in the region of Lydia culturally, economically, and historically. Sardis was known throughout Antiquity as the capital city of the glorious Lydian empire, as we can tell from the many descriptions of different ancient authors.[22] The third metropolis claim is an odd one and a bold one, in which Sardis claimed to be the mother city of Hellas, a term for the Greek mainland. The reference creates ambiguity on purpose, but most likely it referred to the myth of Pelops as prince of Lydia.[23] As such, Sardis attempted to claim its status as mother city, but used the *totum pro parte* Hellas to insinuate its superior antiquity to the cities of the Greek mainland. Simultaneously, it is possible that Sardis' metropolitan statuses are references to their memberships of three leagues of cities with their own imperial cults, namely the abovementioned Asian *koinon*, the recently suggested (mostly Lydian) Koinon of the Thirteen Cities, and the Panhellenion, a league of cities with united in their Greek identity with its headquarters in Athens.[24]

By using the words αὐτόχθων ("autochthonous") and πρωτόχθων ("protochthonous"), Sardis tried to claim a superior antiquity over its rivals in the region.

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22 For a collection of literary texts on Sardis and its history, see John G. Pedley, *Ancient Literary Sources on Sardis*, Sardis Monograph 2 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

23 Pind., *Ol.* 1.24; Paus. 5.1.6; Philostr., *Imag.* 1.17; 1.30; Nic. Dam., *FGrH* 90f10; Eur. Schol., *Or.* 5.01: "Τμώλου καὶ Πλουτοῦς υἱὸς ὁ Τάνταλος, Ταντάλου δὲ καὶ Εὐρυανάσσης Πέλοψ, Βροτέας, Νιόβη": "Tantalos was the son of Tmolus and Ploutos; Pelops, Broteas and Niobe the children of Tantalos and Euryanassa." Trans. author; Ath. 14.21 is more ambiguous about Pelops' origin; Strab. 7.7, on the other hand, argued that Pelops was from neighbouring Phrygia; regardless of Pelops' actual origins, a Sardian embassy referred to his Lydian identity already in a Senate meeting in 26 CE, when it plead its case for the grant to build a temple for the imperial cult to emperor Tiberius: Tac., *Ann.* 4.55. For Tiberius this was not convincing enough, as he decided to give the grant to Sardis' rival Smyrna (modern-day İzmir).

24 For the Koinon of the Thirteen Cities at Sardis, see Martin Hallmannsecker, "The Ionian Koinon and the Koinon of the 13 Cities at Sardis," *Chiron* 50 (2020): 1–27; Christopher Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 117–18, has argued that the phrase "metropolis of Asia, Lydia and Hellas" must also have referred to the story that the first Lydian king was the son of Zeus and Earth (Gē), and suggests that the elaborate phrase could have been the result of a triumph over a rival.

Αὐτόχθων means "from the earth itself" or "indigenous," and conveyed an almost strictly mythological (and thereby old and divine) association. Πρωτόχθων, on the other hand, meaning "first of the earth," can be seen as both an extension and an augmentation of αὐτόχθων.

The "imperial part" of the title set shows Sardis' loyalty to Rome and the emperors, and the privileges they had received from the Romans; first and foremost, it stated the grant of two official temples of the imperial cult, decided upon by the emperors and the Senate. As such, Sardis could boast being favourable with both the emperor and the highest "administrative" institution in the Roman empire. If that was not clear through this statement, Sardis made sure that readers would not be mistaken and specified that they were φιλὴ καὶ συμμάχος Ῥωμαίων, "friend and ally of the Romans," implying also their supposed autonomous status, pretending that they voluntarily allied themselves with Rome.[25]

In addition, in the late antique context of the spolia wall two fragments were found of a potentially long inscription on the city's history, possibly inscribed on

Figure 2: Fragments of a larger inscription recording the early history of Sardis. ©Archaeological Exploration of Sardis/President and Fellows of Harvard College.

25 See Petzl, *Sardis: Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, 81, for a summary of suggested interpretations of the claim of being οἰκεῖος ("of the same household") to the emperors.

a marble slab covering a wall within the Wadi B sanctuary.[26] Throughout the eastern Mediterranean several of such inscriptions have been found, either inscribed at central civic buildings or in important sanctuaries.[27] It is difficult to reconstruct the text and context of these inscriptions, given their fragmentary state, but some things can be deducted even from this. There is unfortunately no way to say until when this history of Sardis would have run, but the inclusion of its Lydian history is certain, with the first fragment reading as follows (Figure 2, left):

- - - -
]Ọ̣ΣΗ[
]Ạ̣ Ἡρακλε̣[-
ν]εικᾶ̣ Κόρο[ιβος
]ΟΝ ἀφ᾽ οὗ ΑΙḭ[
]αδες – Δ[
]Ḥ̣Σ Σαδυάτ̣[(τ)-
] π̣αῖδες J[
οἵτι]νες ἠρξ[αν –
]ΕΚΑΔΟΥ[
]ΜΟΥΑΔ̣Ι[
]Ṇ̣ΟΑΡΔ̣[
]ΨΕΟΣ[
- - - -

[- - -] Herakle[- - -] Koro[ibos] is victorious [- - -] since [- - -] Sadyat[(t)es - - -] children [- - -] ruled [- - -] the (aforementioned) Ard[ys (?) - - -].[28]

The text seems to have contained a number of names, including Heracles, Sadyattes, and Ardys. Heracles played a prominent role in the early history of Sardis. According to the circulating myths, he married the Lydian princess Omphale when he was in Lydia. The prominence of this episode is visible on the obverse and reverse of this local coin from Sardis, minted at some point in the second century.[29] Second, he was the supposed founder of one of Sardis' royal dynasties, the

26 The two fragments were both found in the "fills over marble collapse from the late antique Spolia Wall, F55 13.1 Locus 3": Petzl, *Sardis: Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, 175–76.

27 Petzl, *Sardis: Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, 175, has argued that the fragments belonged to a kind of chronicle; Peter Thonemann, on the other hand, has argued against the genre of a chronicle, preferring the identification of a "local history", like Xanthus of Lydia's Lydiaka; Peter Thonemann, "A New "Lydian History" from Sardis," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 213 (2020): 81.

28 *I.Sardis* 2, 577. Transl. Petzl.

29 *RPC* III 2411 = *BMC Greek Coins* Lydia 79–80.

Heracleids. Pseudo-Apollodorus and Plutarch, for example, tell that Heracles married the Lydian princess Omphale and conceived a child with her.[30] Sadyattes and Ardys were kings of Lydia, but belonged to an even older dynasty.[31]

The second inscription, which is even more fragmentary, seems to mentions an ancient king and members of a royal family (Figure 2, right):

- - - -
] βασ[ιλε-!
ἀδελ?]ΦΗΣΠ̣[
]ΗΝΑΙΛΕ̣Ι[
ἀ]δελφὸς Μ[
]ΟΒΗΘΕΙΠ̣[
] . ΤΗΝ̣Ι[
] . [
- - - -

[- - -] king? [- - -] sister(?) [- - -] brother [- - -].[32]

The amount and quality of the temple's sculptural decoration corresponded with the size and significance of the sanctuary. Modillions depicting lions and bulls decorated the cornice, and the roof was laid with marble roof tiles, while the pediment is likely to have shown a sculpture with captions.[33] A Corinthian capital that likely belonged to the temple's peristasis included the depiction of four nude muscular male torsos and might also have featured bulls and lions. Three of the torsos show a lion skin draped over the shoulder and tied together on the chest, and the column capital thus likely depicted Heracles, who was not just a Pan-Hellenic hero and deity, but featured prominently in Sardian history, as we have seen above.[34] From

30 Apollod., *Bibl.* 2.6.3; 2.7.8; Plut., *An seni* 4; Plut., *Quaest. Graec.* 45; other authors also allude to this, e.g. Ov., *Her.* 9.55; Stat., *Theb.* 10.646-649.

31 As Peter Thonemann has convincingly argued, the Sayattes and Ardys mentioned in the fragment are not the kings with the same name from the Mermnad dynasty, but rather from a pre-Heracleid dynasty as told by Nicolaus of Damascus: Thonemann, "A New "Lydian History"", 79–81. In the second fragment, which was carved by another stone mason, only the word ἀ]δελφὸς = brother can be reconstructed with certainty, but I would not be surprised if line 1 would have mentioned a βασ[ιλευς = king, and line 2 may have contained the mentioning of an ἀδελ?]ΦΗ = sister, analogous of the mentioning of the brother in line 4. It is therefore very well possible that this fragment records something about a royal family: *I.Sardis* 2, 578.

32 First published as *I.Sardis* 2, 578. New edition by author based on study in the summer of 2022. The partially visible letter in line 1, for example, can only be reconstructed as Β.

33 *I.Sardis* 2, 572.

34 Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 394–397; Crawford H. Greenewalt Jr., "Sardis," *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 28 (2007): 745.

the frieze, finally, the finds are most fragmentary; the fragments suggest figures in static poses against a plain background, but the carvings are of high quality, according to the excavators. They identify a number of figures, among which they suggest an Attis, a Phrygian god of vegetation and husband to Cybele, the Anatolian mother goddess, whose cult was prominently present in Sardis throughout its history.[35] The style of the decorations is comparable with other architectural buildings in the province of Asia (modern western Anatolia) from the Julio-Claudian period, but the specific scenes and depictions thus seem to have been tailored to the local context.[36] All in all, the Wadi B sanctuary of the imperial cult seems to have placed specific emphasis on the distant past and mythology of Sardis as the royal seat of the emerging Lydian empire next to a focus on the Roman emperor.

Sanctuaries, Memory, and Landscapes

The Wadi B sanctuary at Sardis was located on a terrace overlooking the lower parts of the city to the north. As such, from the temple there is a view over the Hermus valley in which Sardis was located. From here, the multiple Lydian grave mounds dating back to the archaic period are easily visible and several other myths were said to have played in other areas in and around the valley. In a 2016 article, Christina Williamson shows how the Hellenistic kings of Pergamum anchored their rapidly growing city and kingdom to the mythological landscape around it through the creation of visual connections between sanctuaries in the city with burial mounds in the distance.[37] The focus of the article centres on the

35 Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 397; in the Roman imperial period Cybele shows signs of syncretism with Artemis and Kore, but is also frequently depicted on her own: María-Paz de Hoz, "The Goddess of Sardis: Artemis, Demeter or Kore," in *Between Tarhuntas and Zeus Polieus. Cultural Crossroads in the Temples and Cults of Graeco-Roman Anatolia*, ed. María-Paz de Hoz, Juan Pablo Sánchez Hernández and Carlos Molina Valero, Colloquia Antiqua 17 (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 185–24; see also Sardian coins of Salonina from the mid-third century CE, which depict Cybele-Leto on the reverse sides: *GRPCL* 733, 734; for the cult of Cybele in the Lydian period, see Crawford H. Greenewalt Jr., "The Gods of Lydia / Lidya Tanrıları," in *Lidyalılar ve Dünyaları / The Lydians and Their World*, ed. Nicholas D. Cahill (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2010), 233–46.

36 Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 398–399.

37 Christina G. Williamson, "Mountain, Myth, and Territory," in *Valuing Landscape in Classical Antiquity. Natural Environment and Cultural Imagination*, ed. Jeremy McInerney and Ineke Sluiter, Mnemosyne Supplements 393 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 70–99; for the intricate relationships between myths and landscape, see e.g. Greta Hawes, ed., *Myths on the Map: The Storied Landscapes of Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

natural mound Kalerga Tepe, or Teuthrania as it was known in antiquity, which could be seen from the acropolis in Pergamon, but also from everywhere else in the landscape between Pergamon and the Aegean Sea in the west. Williamson convincingly shows how features in the landscape surrounding a city could serve and be activated as powerful *lieux de mémoire* in combination with public spaces in the city itself, allowing for the study of similar cases in which landscape, (civic) history, and urban elements are combined into a nexus of cultural memory.[38]

In the article, Williamson makes a number of important theoretical observations taken from anthropological and geographical studies. First, from the work of anthropologist Eric Hirsch she takes the distinction between "foreground" and "background" spaces, where the foregrounded features "are well-known places that are mentally prominent due to their familiarity [and often] places of tradition", and background spaces are "less know and unpredictable [. . .] 'modern,' with places of the future', usually on a larger distance or even on the horizon.[39] Then, combining this with Waldo Tobler's so-called First Law of Geography, she says that "things that *seem near* are more related than distant things. So foregrounded places can feel near without actually being near."[40] Third, public spaces as "*lieux de mémoire* [. . .] are spatio-mnemonic linchpins, tying select events from the past to select physical locations in the present. At the same time, they are catalysts of communication, triggering thought and emotions that are shared. This is intrinsic to their power to evoke a sense of community and territory."[41]

In another contribution from the same volume, Elizabeth Minchin argued for the continued relevance and significance of the burial mounds in the Troad region throughout history, not just in the Roman period, but also beyond, noting the significance for the Roman emperor Hadrian and the Ottoman *qayṣar-i Rūm* Mehmet II alike.[42] Here, the continuous engagement with the burial mounds which supposedly corresponded to the burial mounds made for the Greek heroes Achilles, Patroclus, Ajax and Protesilaus during the Trojan war, ensured also their

38 See also Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire, 3 Vols.* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

39 Williamson, "Mountain, Myth, and Territory," 91.

40 Williamson, "Mountain, Myth, and Territory," 91; Waldo R. Tobler, "A Computer Movie Simulating Urban Growth in the Detroit Region," *Economic Geography* 46 (1970): 234–40; see also Barbara Tversky, "Cognitive Maps, Cognitive Collages, and Spatial Mental Models," in *Spatial Information Theory. A Theoretical Basis for GIS*, ed. Andrew U. Frank and Irene Campari (Berlin: Springer Verlag GmbH, 1993), 14–24.

41 Williamson, "Mountain, Myth, and Territory," 92; Keith H. Basso, "Wisdom Sits in Places. Landscape and Language among the Western Apache," in *Senses of Place*, ed. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996), 56–57.

42 Elizabeth Minchin, "Heritage in the Landscape: The "Heroic Tumuli" in the Troad Region," in *Valuing Landscape in Classical Antiquity. Natural Environment and Cultural Imagination*, ed. Jeremy McInerney and Ineke Sluiter, Mnemosyne Supplements 393 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 264–69.

continued significance for these time periods. Key in this were the distinctive topography of the landscape filled with tumuli; "a 'humanizing' narrative that, first, links the viewer to the landscape, and, second, enhances his or her experience of the wider world"; the significance of the mounds beyond the community of the Greek and Roman Troad region; related to this, "attentive and engaged visitors"; regular and recurring ritual activity; and the transmission of cultural memories by tourist guides, informants and storytellers.[43]

Landscape and the Wadi B Temple

A similar argument to Williamson's and Minchin's can be applied to Roman Sardis.[44] As religious complexes the imperial cult temples had a profound effect on the city and its inhabitants, affecting not only the image of a city but also the experience of the city and its history in relation to the empire. Onur Öztürk has shown that the Roman temples of the imperial cult in the province of Asia changed the form and experience of a city

> [t]hrough a series of platforms, walls and other architectural elements [. . .] During festivals and rituals the other senses (especially hearing and smell) came into play. Their sculptural decorations aimed to catch the gazes of the viewers and provided rich sensorial experiences. The history of each city, the associated cult and the new city titles formed the core of [a] set of [cultural] responses [. . .]. Promotion of the temples of divine rulers through inscriptions and coins further strengthened the perception of these projects as significant contributors of urban image.[45]

Although these temples were obviously "Roman" or rather "imperial" in nature, at the same time they were placed in an inherently local tradition, for example by combining the sanctuary with a local patron deity or hero.[46] In Sardis, for example, another cult for the emperor was "inserted" into the already long-existing Temple of Artemis during the reign of emperor Hadrian (r. 117–138 CE). In other words, through their function as provincially organised sanctuaries dedicated to

43 Minchin, "Heritage in the Landscape," 270–72; Minchin used for her analysis the work of Michael Schudson: Michael Schudson, "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory," in *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past*, ed. D.L. Schachter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 346–64.

44 This is denied by Minchin in the article discussed above: Minchin, "Heritage in the Landscape," 272.

45 Onur Öztürk, "Temples of Divine Rulers and Urban Transformation in Roman-Asia" (PhD Dissertation, Austin, TX, University of Texas at Austin, 2013), 238–39.

46 Öztürk, "Temples of Divine Rulers," 242.

Figure 3: Overview photo of Sardis, looking south towards the acropolis from no. 64c on the map of Figure 1 (photo and labels author).

the central figure and personification of the empire, the temples of the imperial cult tied their host cities to the structure of the empire. Their central function in civic life and their usually central or at least prominent location in the urban environment over time potentially caused the local populations to rethink or reimagine their histories and relationship to their region and to the wider empire.

This can also be seen in the Wadi B imperial cult sanctuary at Sardis. As can be seen on the map and the photo (Figures 1 (no. 79) and 3), the sanctuary located on so-called sector Field 55 had a central location both horizontally and vertically, arguably the most prominent location in the city for a public space. Located right between the upper and lower parts of the city, in about the geographical centre of the urban area, the monumental sanctuary and terrace could not have gone unnoticed to the ancient visitor. Through its central location, it is possible that the sanctuary functioned as the central landmark in the city by which to navigate, thereby being an important reference point in daily life.[47] Furthermore, it was surrounded by several other important public spaces. To the north and above was so-called Field 49 (Figure 1, no. 68), likely an affluent residential area on a terrace already built in the Lydian period. In fact, parts of the Lydian walls and

47 For navigating the ancient city, see e.g. Diane Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Lydian building blocks would still have been visible in Roman times and they could be seen directly from the Wadi B sanctuary.[48] The road between Field 55 and the Theatre-Stadium complex formed a key artery connecting the two urban sections.[49] To the west might have been the Roman agora (Figure 1, no. 38), which has not been excavated yet, with any conclusive interpretation impossible at this moment., However, the visible remains of buildings suggest that this area was of

Figure 4: View over the Hermus plain towards the Bin Tepe ridge. The Tumulus of Alyattes (Kocamutaf Tepe) can be seen on the right. On the left is Karnıyarık Tepe. Photo taken from the northern end of Field 49, above Field 55 (photo author).

a monumental and public nature. The Wadi B sanctuary thus occupied a central place within Sardis' urban landscape.

48 This concerns the boulder wall on the eastern side of the terrace, the so-called "Field 49 South Lydian I terrace." See Güzin Eren, "Making Place for Thy Lydian Kings" (PhD Dissertation, Boston, CT, Boston University, 2022), 92–94, nn. 301, 308.

49 Cahill et al., "The First Koinon Temple," 398, n. 54.

Figure 5: View of Bin Tepe from Karnıyarık Tepe, looking towards Sardis and the Tmolus. ©Archaeological Exploration of Sardis/President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Beyond the urban area two significant landscape elements created visible and symbolic connections with the Wadi B sanctuary. Standing on the Wadi B terrace looking north, the height difference between the acropolis and the plain in front of it creates a mighty feeling. The best recognisable feature in the landscape in front of it is the ridge of Bin Tepe to the north of the city, just in front of the Gygaean Lake. The ridge is scattered with archaic tumulus graves, of which the three larger ones were probably tombs reserved for the Lydian kings, members of the royal family, and other members of the Lydian elite (Figure 4 and 5). In fact, the tumulus located most to the east has been identified as the tomb of the penultimate Lydian king Alyattes, the father of Croesus. The Bin Tepe tumuli fired imagination throughout antiquity, with the Greek poet Hipponax describing the mounds already in the late sixth century BCE, only a few decades after the conquest of Lydia: ". . . follow the road to Smyrna, go on through Lydia past the tomb of Attales, the barrow of Gyges and Sesostris' stele, and the †μνῆματ' ὥτος†, lord at Mutalis, turning your belly towards the setting sun."[50] Herodotus expressed his awe a short century later, writing:

50 Hipponax, *Hipponactis Testimonia et Fragmenta*, ed. Enzo Degani. 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1991), 30–32, no. 7; trans. Alexander Dale, "Hipponax fr. 42 *IEG*^{2} = 7 Degani", *Zeitschrift für Papy-*

> The land of Lydia does not have many marvels to record, such as other lands do, except the gold dust brought down from the Tmolus. It presents however one work which is the greatest of all, apart from the works of the Egyptians and the Babylonians: There is there the grave of Alyattes, the father of Croesus, the base of which is made from great stones and the rest of it of mounded earth.[51]

Accounts such as these would have circulated still in the Roman imperial period, which makes it more than likely that the inhabitants of Roman Sardis would have known about the nature and identities of the tumuli of Bin Tepe. Furthermore, early Lydian remains on the top of one of the tumuli, Kocamutaf Tepe or the "Tomb of Alyattes," were most likely renovated at some point in time, possibly during the Roman period.[52] It is certain that during the late Hellenistic and the Roman imperial period, the locals' interest in these monuments grew, as objects from this period have been found in and around the tumuli and newly established cultic activity is known for the area of the mounds and the Gygaean Lake.[53] These ancient man-made structures, which had become almost semi-natural features in the landscape, formed the backdrop of every activity on the terraces and spurs of the acropolis.[54] The tumuli cannot be missed standing on Field 55; the Tumulus of Alyattes, the largest on the Bin Tepe ridge, is almost 70 metres high and has a diameter of around 361 metres and a circumference of more than a kilometre.[55] The tumuli graves are located 11 to 12 kilometres from the Wadi B temple, which means that the details would disappear but the structure is still visible and recognisable.[56]

The second, myth-laden landscape that the ancient observer could and would have seen from the Field 55 terrace is the Catacecaumene, an ancient volcanic landscape full of petrified lava flows on the other side of the Hermus plain, northeast of the city. According to the mythological traditions in the region, this was the area where Tylos and Masdnes went out to defeat a large serpentine or dragon-like monster that terrorised the population. In the fight Tylos was hit by

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rologie und Epigraphik 187 (2013): 49; Hipponax identified Karnıyarık Tepe with the tomb of Gyges, but this has been proven wrong by Christopher Ratté: Christopher Ratté, "Not the Tomb of Gyges," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 114 (1994): 157–61.

51 Hdt. 1.93. Trans. author.

52 Felipe Rojas, "Antiquarianism in Roman Sardis," in *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alain Schnapp (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2014), 188–90.

53 Strab. 13.4.5-7; Christina Luke and Christopher H. Roosevelt, "Memory and Meaning in Bin Tepe, the Lydian Cemetery of the 'Thousand Mounds," in *Tumulus as Sema. Space, Politics, Culture and Religion in the First Millennium BC*, ed. Oliver Henry and Ute Kelp, Topoi. Berlin Studies of the Ancient World 27 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 419–20.

54 Just as Kalerga Tepe for the Pergamenes: Williamson, "Mountain, Myth, and Territory," 84.

55 Rojas, "Antiquarianism in Roman Sardis," 186–87.

56 Williamson, "Mountain, Myth, and Territory," 86 and n. 61.

the venom spewed by the dragon and died. However, Masdnes and Tylos' sister (or father, depending on the literary tradition) managed to lay their hands on a plant that brought Tylos back to life, and in the end, the dragon was defeated.[57]

The Catacecaumene is located considerably further away from Sardis, at a distance of around 36 kilometres, in the so-called long-distance range, where individual elements tend to become unclear and integrate with the bluish background. The landscape would therefore only have been recognizable on days with clear weather conditions. The Catacecaumene is visible from Field 55 under these conditions, not blocked by other elements in the landscape. As such, all communal rituals and religious practices in the Wadi B sanctuary would also have been performed against the backdrop of the mythological volcanic landscape of the Catacecaumene.

The significance of the myth for the people of Roman Sardis is attested on three coin types from the third century CE which show different stages of the myth. The reverse side of one coin shows Masdnes fighting the dragon, which is teasingly showing the magic plant to Masdnes, with a club[58] (Figure 6). On another coin Tylos is seen

Figure 6: Reverse side of a Sardian civic coin from the reign of Gordian III (238-244 CE), showing Masdnes fighting the dragon of Catacecaumene (*RPC* VII.1 232.2). © BnF, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques, Fonds général 1309.

57 Nonnus, *Dion*. 25.451–552.l; Plin., *HN* 25.5.14; Felipe Rojas, *The Pasts of Roman Anatolia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 81–88.
58 *RPC* VII.1 232.2.

Figure 7: Reverse side of a Sardian civic coin from the reign of Severus Alexander (222–235 CE), showing Tylos holding club and extending his left hand to receive the plant from Masdnes, holding club and chlamys; at their feet lies the defeated dragon (*BMC Greek Coins* Lydia 179. © The Trustees of the British Museum, 1892,0507.156).

Figure 8: Reverse side of a Sardian civic coin from the reign of Philippus Arabs (244–249 CE) showing Tylos, holding an indistinct object, standing in a biga drawn by two winged serpents riding over the lying earth goddess Gē, holding ears of corn (© BnF, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques, Fonds général 1313A).

receiving the plant from Masdnes with the defeated dragon at their feet (Figure 7).[59] On a third coin, finally, we see Tylos riding a chariot drawn by snakes with Gē, the personification of earth, depicted underneath lying down (Figure 8).[60] All three coin types were produced by the local mint of Sardis itself and form a unique design in the region, especially in a period in Roman history when dies were shared increasingly often between different local mints for the minting of civic coinage.[61]

The significance of the myth appears even more prominently through the fact that one of the administrative subdivisions of Sardis was named after Masdnes, who was also the legendary founder of Sardis' first royal dynasty.[62] On one coin from the reign of Caracalla and Geta (209-211 CE) Tylos is even depicted as a Sardian hero, personifying the Sardian citizenry, holding a cult statue of the Sardian Kore facing Androclus for Ephesus.[63] The myth of Tylos and Masdnes thus not only accidently played in sight of the city of Sardis, but was also closely tied to Sardis' ancient but glorious history for centuries. It therefore fitted well into the narrative of the city's history in the Roman period, too.

Activating Memory

As mentioned above, features in the landscape surrounding a city could serve as powerful *lieux de mémoire* in combination with public spaces in the city itself. However, the presence of commemorative monuments and monumental features in itself does not automatically signify actively felt meaning apart from the moment of erection. Rather, meaning has to be "activated" through use, connection, and association with practices, preferably institutionalised and recurring, in order to be ingrained in collective memory.

There is not much direct information from Sardis about the rituals and practices in the imperial cult sanctuary at the Wadi B terrace, other than one mention

59 *BMC Greek Coins* Lydia 179.

60 Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Monnaies, médailles et antiques, Fonds général 1313A, accessed 22 May 2024, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b85550326.

61 George Christopher Watson, "The Development and Spread of Die Sharing in the Roman Provincial Coinage of Asia Minor," *American Journal of Archaeology* 125, no. 1 (2021): 123–42.

62 *Sardis* VII 1, 125; Louis Robert, *Études Anatoliennes: Recherches sur les Inscriptions Grecques de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris: Boccard, 1937), 135–39.

63 *GRPCL* 546; María-Paz de Hoz has suggested that Tylos is also depicted on another Severan-period Sardian coin in the manner of Triptolemos (*BMC Greek Coins* Lydia 152): De Hoz, "The Goddess of Sardis," 94.

of annual sacrifices to the emperors, which could cost up to multiple thousand *denarii*.[64] This was a considerable amount of money, considering that the annual donation by the city to the cult of Mēn Askenos at Sardis in 188 CE "for the sacrifices and libations for the god and for the victory and eternal permanence of the Emperor and for plentiful harvest" only cost 600 *denarii*.[65] Other studies on similar temple complexes in western Asia Minor, such as the one by Onur Öztürk, show that temples of the imperial cult had a significant impact on the urban experience of the local population, that they were typically embedded within local traditions and stories, and that the meaning and significance of these traditions and stories were respectively enhanced and activated by the rituals performed in them, because of the communal nature and sensory stimulation of these rituals.[66] Due to the similarities between the Wadi B sanctuary and the other imperial cult temples in Western Anatolia, Öztürk's conclusions may be transferred to the situation in Sardis. The significant amount of money dedicated to the annual sacrifices to the emperor indicates a rather lavish recurring ritual that would have stayed in the minds of the civic population. Through the annual reiteration of the communal rituals its presence in civic memory would have been reiterated as well and thus ingrained into civic life and into the idea of what it meant to be a citizen of Sardis in the Roman period.[67]

Similarly, the presence of inscriptions advertising Sardis' imperial history, mythology, and their relevance for contemporary Sardians activated this memory, too. Their erection in a central public space meant that they were read by the sanctuary's visitors during festivals and rituals, but also on other days. The depiction of episodes and symbols from the Lydian past and the myth of Tylos and Masdnes on locally minted coins enhanced the anchoring of the messages in and in connection to the Wadi B temple also in other areas and contexts in Sardis.[68]

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64 *I.Sardis* 2, 348, ll. 12-16: "Ὑπὲρ ἧς Μένανδρος ὁ πα/τὴρ ἀνέθηκεν εἰς θυσίας / τῶν Σεβαστῶν καὶ κρατῆ/[ρα τ]ῇ βουλῇ κατ᾽ ἐνιαυτὸν / [δη]νάρια ἐξακισχίλια." Trans. Petzl: "Her father Menandros dedicated on her behalf for yearly offerings/sacrifices of the Augusti and for a bowl (*symposion*) for the Council 6,000 denarii"; *I.Sardis* 2, 331, mentions a festival on behalf of the emperors (*Augusti*) celebrated in the village of the Tagenoi (possibly near modern-day Ahmetli) for which an altar was erected to Caligula (r. 37-41 CE).

65 *I.Sardis* 2, 321. Trans. Petzl.

66 See also Beate Dignas, *Economy of the Sacred in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

67 To denote the active engagement with recurring rituals, this has been called "repetition with revision," also signifying the inherent moldability of rituals and (collective) memory: Thompson-Drewal in Boutsikas, *The Cosmos in Ancient Greek Experience*, 25.

68 For "anchoring," see Ineke Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation: A Classical Research Agenda," *European Review* 25, no. 1 (2016): 20–38.

Conclusion: Empire and Imagination in Roman Sardis

The Sardians in the Roman imperial period constructed temporal horizons on four levels. In the past, Sardis had been a mighty city under the Lydian kings, of which the memory was anchored in the landscape surrounding the city. Second, in the less distant past, they had proven their loyalty and worth to the Romans, which led in the contemporary present to the presumed favourable position of the city in the eyes of the Romans – or so the Sardians claimed – and the bestowal of important grants and privileges by the imperial authorities. Together this would lead, so the Sardians hoped, to more privileges and a higher status in the region, compared to the other cities with which they competed.

From its onset the Wadi B sanctuary was meant to connect local (imperial) history and mythology with the worshipping of the emperor. The epigraphic and numismatic sources discussed in this contribution show that the Sardians continued to tie their own history and mythology to the Roman empire in the second and third century CE. The references in the inscriptions in the sanctuary and on the coinage of the city connected, activated, and enhanced the associations between the temple, the city, and the civic past.

As such, we can come up with the following conclusions. Already due to its location, the Wadi B temple of the imperial cult formed an important space in the city of Sardis, centrally located and spatially connected to important public spaces and buildings. Due to its function as a space in which the city venerated the emperor, the sanctuary served as a locus for expressions of history and civic identity. The inscriptions featuring Sardis' titles implied Sardis' proposed and aspired identity and status in the province of Asia and in the Roman empire. Although relatively inconspicuous on their own, together they would have activated the memory of the Lydian past in the setting of the imperial cult by being read repeatedly and on many of the inscriptions. An explicit connection to the Lydian past was made by the probably extensive inscription recording Sardis' early history. The most conspicuous remains of this past could be seen directly from the temple up close in the form of the Lydian walls of Field 49 south of and above the temple, and in the distance in the form of the archaic mounds of Bin Tepe north and below the temple. The connection between Sardis, the Lydian past, and the landscape of the Catacecaumene northeast of the city may have been less obvious due to its distance to the city, but was made explicit in the third century CE through its depiction on locally minted coins.

All together, these markers highlighted Sardis' glorious history in a public space dedicated to the veneration of the most important men of the empire, the

emperors of Rome. This brought together the reality of empire with the imagination of imperial history, suggesting a temporal transfer of past glory and power to the city of the Roman period. These claims were not only marks of adherence to the civic culture and practices in the province of Asia, but also served a political goal, namely the quest for privileges resulting from the claim of transfer of historical power, status, and prestige. This was only possible through a temporal identification between Roman Sardis and Lydian Sardis. In other words, Roman Sardis was not just the successor of old Lydian Sardis, but essentially the same city, only in another time period. Through the constant reiteration of the temporal identification in a spatial manner, that is, the spatial and visual connections with the Lydian royal tombs at Bin Tepe and the pre-foundation myths of the Catacecaumene, which were then "activated" in the sanctuary when rituals were performed in proximity of the statues and inscriptions and possible involving them as well, Roman Sardis was identified with Lydian Sardis of the Archaic period. Its implication? Sardis was not only a city with a rich past, but through its illustrious history was entitled to such status in the world of the Roman empire as well.

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations of ancient sources are according to the Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th edition, or the list of abbreviations provided by the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) (https://www.dainst.org/fileadmin/Media/Website/02_Forschung/Publikationen/Publizieren_am_DAI/Liste_abzukuerzender_Titel.pdf, accessed 18 May 2024), apart from the following:

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I.Sardis 2	Petzl, Georg. *Sardis: Greek and Latin Inscriptions, Part II: Finds from 1958 to 2017*. Sardis Monograph 14. Istanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2019.
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Alexandr Osipian

Political Justification of Territorial Expansion from Catherine II to Putin: Inventing "Novorossiya" in Imperial and in Post-imperial Context

Abstract: The province of "Novorossiya" was established in 1764 as Russia's movable borderland, absorbing new conquered lands and gradually expanding to the shores of the Black Sea. In Russian imperial discourse the new province was reinvented and appropriated as the restoration of the periphery of ancient civilisations. The ancient Greek and Roman pasts of this area were rediscovered in the framework of Enlightened absolutism. After the annexation of Crimea and efforts to claim south-east of Ukraine as Russia's "Novorossiya" in 2014 the old imperial narratives were used for justification of territorial expansion. Vladimir Putin's "Novorossiya" was reinvented as a stronghold of Russian radical nationalism and isolationist obscurantism.

This chapter employs a retrospective approach to examine Russia's current interference in Ukraine by comparing it to "the golden age of Catherine the Great." Thus, the chapter examines imperial and post- or neo-imperial strategies used for the legitimation of Russia's territorial expansion then and now. It compares the "Novorossiya" projects promoted by Catherine II and Putin. Of particular importance is the issue how historical imagination was used to justify Russian territorial expansion.

On 17 April 2014 Russia's president Vladimir Putin introduced a new concept into the Ukraine crisis. During a four-hour question and answer session on Russian TV[1] he pointedly mentioned "Novorossiya"[2] – a large province gradually absorbed by the Russian Empire in the late eighteenth century. Just like Plato's Atlantis, "Novorossiya" suddenly emerged from the dark waters of oblivion in Russian po-

1 Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, Kremlin.ru, 17 April 2014, accessed 4 September 2023, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/7034; video available at Priamaia liniia s Vladimirom Putinym, 17 April 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IE54L3Xpqc.

2 Novorossiya only existed as a territorial unit in the time of Catherine II and her son Paul I. However, it has been often used since then as an imagined space and a political myth. In this chapter, I will therefore use Novorossiya as the name of the historical territorial unit and "Novorossiya" as the political concept.

Note: A version of this paper was also presented at the 54. Deutscher Historikertag, Leipzig, 19–22 September 2023.

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litical and historical discourses. However, "Novorossiya" was once invented in the age of Enlighted absolutism by the Empress Catherine II and her creative lover and powerful favourite prince Grigory Potemkin.

In 1940s–1970s, one by one west European countries lost their overseas empires, thus, transforming into the "normative" nation-states. Finally, the collapse of the USSR in 1991 was considered as the end of the "age of empires."[3] However, Putin's reinvention of "Novorossiya" brought to life a new phenomenon of territorial neo-imperialism cynically justified through imperial historical imagination – on 30 September 2022 Russia annexed a large section of south-east Ukraine "claimed back" by Putin as "Novorossiya."[4]

This chapter employs a retrospective approach to examine Russia's current interference in Ukraine in comparison with "the golden age of Catherine the Great." Thus, the chapter examines imperial and post(neo)imperial strategies used for the legitimation of Russia's territorial expansion then and now. It compares the "Novorossiya" projects promoted by Catherine II and Putin. Of particular importance is the issue of how historical imagination was used to justify Russian territorial expansion. Accordingly, the chapter starts with an analysis of the changes brought to Russia's territorial expansion by Enlightened absolutism of Catherine II, particularly juxtaposition of the narratives of "civilisation" and "barbarianism." It then goes on to examine the strategies of international legitimation and symbolic appropriation of territorial acquisitions made by Catherine II. Then it analyses the variety of Russia's official and nationalist discourses on "Novorossiya" in 2014. The final section focuses on the legitimization of annexations through exhibitions.

3 Hendrik Spruyt, "The End of Empires: Developing a Comparative Research. Agenda for Imperial Dissolution in the Modern Era," *Acta Politica* 32 (1997): 25–48; Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, eds., *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective* (Armonk, N.Y: M. E. Sharpe, 1997); Robert Strayer, "Decolonization, Democratization, and Communist Reform: The Soviet Collapse in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of World History* 12, no. 2 (Fall, 2001): 375–406; John Arquilla, "The (B)end of History: Francis Fukuyama was wrong, and 2011 proves it," *Foreign Policy*, 15 December 2011, https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/12/15/the-bend-of-history/; John Mueller, "Did History End? Assessing the Fukuyama Thesis," *Political Science Quarterly* 129, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 35–54; Francis Fukuyama, "Will We Ever Get Beyond The Nation-State?" *NOEMA*, 29 April 2021, https://www.noemamag.com/francis-fukuyama-will-we-ever-get-beyond-the-nation-state/; Alexander J. Motyl, "The Inevitable Fall of Putin's New Russian Empire: What history tells us about collapsed empires trying to restore their former possessions," *Foreign Policy*, 5 November 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/11/05/russia-ukraine-empire-imperialism-war/?tpcc=recirc_latest062921.

4 "Obrashchenie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii," Kremlin.ru, 21 September 2022, accessed 23 September 2022, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69390; "Podpisanie dogovorov o priniatii DNR, LNR, Zaporozhskoi i Khersonskoi oblastei v sostav Rossii, Kremlin.ru, 30 September 2022, accessed 30 September 2022, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69465.

Emergence of "Novorossiya" in the Framework of the Black Sea History

From the 1470s to the 1770s the sparsely populated plain between Russia, Poland-Lithuania, the Ottoman Empire, and the Crimean Khanate was a buffer zone without clearly defined borders. In early modern Russian sources these areas were called "wild field" (Дикое поле), that is "virgin land," while in Latin *Loca deserta* or *Campi deserti inabitati*.[5] In 1752–1753 two provinces were established on the southern borderland of Russian Empire (in present day central Ukraine) – *Novaya Serbia* (New Serbia) and *Slavyano Serbia* – populated with Serbian military colonists.

In 1764 the Empress Catherine II (1762–1796) established a new province there – Novorossiya (New Russia) – which included Novaya Serbia and some other lands with an administrative centre in the town of Kremenchuk. Due to Catherine II's successful expansionist politics, "Novorossiya" became Russia's movable borderland which absorbed new conquered lands and gradually expanded to the shores of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. After the Russian-Ottoman wars in 1768–1774 and 1787–1791, Russia conquered the Ottoman provinces, incorporated the Zaporozhian Cossack Host (1775),[6] and annexed the Crimean Khanate (1783).[7] Besides Russian generals and statesmen, "Novorossiya" was conquered and ruled by many Europeans on Russian service – José de Ribas, François Sainte de Wollant, Arman du Plessis Duke de Richelieu, Louis Alexandre Andrault, comte de Langéron, and John Paul Jones, to mention a few. New cities and sea ports were founded there – Yekaterinoslav ("Glory for Catherine"),[8] Kherson, Nikolaiev (Ukrainian: Mykolaiv), Mariupol, Sevastopol, Simferopol, and Odesa, to mention the most important cities. Numerous settlers were invited to populate these lands – Germans,

5 Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Alexandr Osipian, "Restraining-encouraging violence: Commerce, diplomacy, and brigandage on the steppe routes between the Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania, and Russia, 1470s-1570s," in *A Global History of Early Modern Violence*, ed. Peter H. Wilson, Marie Houllemare, and Erica Charters (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 124–41.

6 Brian Davies, *The Russo-Turkish War, 1768-1774: Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 206–207, 213.

7 Alan W. Fisher, *The Russian Annexation of the Crimea, 1772-1783* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Kelly O'Neill, *Claiming Crimea. A History of Catherine the Great's Southern Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017); Ulrike von Hirschhausen and Jörn Leonhard, *Empires: Eine globale Geschichte 1780-1920* (München: C.H. Beck, 2023), 27–28.

8 Andrii Portnov. *Dnipro: An Entangled History of a European City* (Brookline, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2022), 33–35, 38–40.

Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Moldavians, Wallachians, Jews, along with Russians and Ukrainians who constituted majority of the multi-ethnic population there.[9]

The new province of "Novorossiya" was different from Russia's southward territorial expansion in the "wild field" of the period between the sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth centuries.[10] "Novorossiya" became a testing ground for the Catherine II's efforts to reform Russian Empire in accordance with ideals of Enlightened absolutism – well-managed state bureaucracy, happiness of the subjects, safety on the roads, religious tolerance and secularization, pursuit of knowledge, natural law, progress, however, avoiding more radical ideals which led to the French revolution. Thus, "Novorossiya" was imagined and developed as a project based on Enlightenment ideas by the Empress Catherine II whose plans reached as far as the conquest of Constantinople and the restoration of the Byzantine Empire – the so-called "Greek project."[11] The new province was reinvented and appropriated neither as former "realm of Islam"[12] nor as "land of savages" but as the restoration of the periphery of an ancient civilisation. This political imagination was not without foundation. Since the seventh century BCE there were prosperous Greek colonies along the shore of the Black Sea – Olbia, Tyras, Theodosia, Panticapaeum, Nymphaion, Myrmekion, Chersonesus (Chersonesus of Tauris), Kerkinitis, and numerous rural settlements.[13] In the year 63 BCE the Romans established their control there after defeating Mithridates VI Eupator,

9 James A. Duran, Jr., "Catherine II, Potemkin, and Colonization Policy in Southern Russia," *Russian Review* 28, no. 1 (1969): 23–36; Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital: The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia, 1762–1804* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 109–142.

10 Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2002); John P. LeDonne, "The Southern Borderlands," in John P. LeDonne, *Ruling Russia: Politics and Administration in the Age of Absolutism, 1762–1796* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 291–315.

11 Hugh Ragsdale, "Evaluating the Traditions of Russian Aggression: Catherine II and the Greek Project," *Slavonic and East European Review* 66, no. 1 (January 1988): 91–117; Emily Bryant, "A Third Rome?: Catherine the Great's "Greek Project,"" *The Crimson Historical Review* (2004): 54–63; Elena Smilianskaia. "Catherine's Liberation of the Greeks: High-Minded Discourse and Everyday Realities," in *Word and Image in Russian History: Essays in Honor of Gary Marker*, ed. Maria di Salvo, Daniel H. Kaiser, and Valerie A. Kivelson (Academic Studies Press, 2019), 71–89; Olga I. Eliseeva. *Geopoliticheskie proekty G. A. Potemkina* (Moskva: RAN Institut rossiiskoi istorii, 2000); Martin Schulze Wessel, *Der Fluch des Imperiums: Die Ukraine, Polen und der Irrweg in der russischen Geschichte* (München: C. H. Beck, 2023), 53–60.

12 In the pre-Petrine Russia the world of Islam was defined either as "realm of Hagerenes" (царство Агарянское) or "realm of Ismaelians" (царство Измаилтянское).

13 Thomas S. Noonan, "The Grain Trade of the Northern Black Sea in Antiquity," *American Journal of Philology* 94, no. 3 (1973): 231–42; Alfonso Moreno. *Feeding the Democracy: The Athenian Grain Supply in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BC* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

the king of Pontus and Bosporus. Finally, the ancient civilisation there was gradually destroyed by the Goths and the Huns in the third to fifth centuries CE. For centuries the nomads replaced each other. Since the collapse of the Golden Horde in the first half of fifteenth century these lands constituted the Crimean Khanate (dependent from the Ottoman sultan since 1475) or were under direct Ottoman control. Then, for three centuries the Tatars backed by the Ottomans permanently raided Russia – as well as other neighbour countries – and trafficked numerous captives to the slave markets of the Ottoman Empire.[14]

Figure 1: Greek colonies of the Black Sea, 7th century BCE – 5th century CE. George Tsiagalakis. Wikipedia Commons. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Greek_colonies_of_the_Northern_Euxine_Sea_%28Black_Sea%29.svg.

14 Alan Fisher, "Muscovy and the Black Sea Slave *Trade*," in *A Precarious Balance*: *Conflict, Trade, and Diplomacy on the Russian-Ottoman Frontier* (Istanbul: the Isis Press, 1999), 27–46; Dariusz Kołodziejczyk. "Slave Hunting and Slave Redemption as a Business Enterprise. The Northern Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries," *Oriente Moderno* 86, no. 1 (2006): 149–59; Mikhail Kizilov, "The Slave Trade in the Early Modern Crimea from the Perspective of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources," *Journal of Early Modern History* 11 (2007): 1–31; Aleksandr Lavrov. "Captivity, slavery and gender: Muscovite female captives in the Crimean Khanate and in the Ottoman empire," in *Eurasian Slavery, Ransom and Abolition in World History, 1200-1860*, ed. Christoph Witzenrath (London: Routledge, 2016), 309–19; Eizo Matsuki. "The Crimean Tatars and their Russian-Captive Slaves. An Aspect of Muscovite-Crimean Relations in the 16th and 17th Centuries," *Mediterranean World* 3 (2006): 171–82.

Civilization Versus Barbarians: an Enlightened Justification of Territorial Expansion

For centuries Russia/Muscovy was considered in Europe to be a landlocked peripheral country with rather Asian features bordering the Tatar nomads and the primitive hunters of the Arctic and Siberia whom Russia absorbed one by one, finally reaching the shores of the Pacific Ocean. In an attempt to change this, Tsar Peter I (1689-1725) tried to westernize Russia's army and nobility.[15] In 1703 he founded a new capital on the Baltic shore named Petersburg after the western habit and invited westerners to settle there. His summer palace followed Versailles as a model and was named in a western way – Petergof (German: *Peterhof*). Conquered by Peter I from Sweden in 1721, the Baltic provinces of Estland and Livland looked quite European after centuries of German colonization.[16] However, the vast majority of Russia's provinces continued to follow their traditional – or barbarian from the western point of view – way of life. It was of particular importance for Catherine II to represent the Russian Empire as part of European civilization. Russia's new legal code – the Instruction (*Nakaz*) passed in 1767 – opened with the declaration that "Russia is a European state."[17] The ancient Greco-Roman legacy of the Black Sea northern shores, which Russia persistently tried to conquer[18] and which was mainly known from ancient writings of Herodotus and Strabo, was of particular importance for representing a "European Russia" to Europe. At the beginning of her rule, Catherine II corresponded with Voltaire, Diderot, and d'Alembert to spread through the famous intellectuals a new positive image of Russia in Europe.[19]

15 Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2004).

16 Reinhard Wittram, *Geschichte der Ostseelande Livland, Estland, Kurland 1180–1918. Umrisse und Querschnitte* (Oldenbourg: Wissenschaftsverlag, 2009).

17 *Nakaz Ekateriny II Komissii o sostavlenii proekta novogo Ulozheniia. 1767 god*, accessed 23 June 2023, https://runivers.ru/doc/d2.php?CENTER_ELEMENT_ID=147504&PORTAL_ID=7138&SECTION_ID=6778.

18 John P. LeDonne, "Geopolitics, Logistics, and Grain: Russia's Ambitions in the Black Sea Basin, 1737–1834," *International History Review* 28, no. 1 (2006): 1–41.

19 Maurice Tourneux, *Diderot et Catherine II* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1899); "Catherine the Great letter to D'Alembert," in *Readings in Modern European History*, ed. James Harvey Robinson and Charles Beard (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1908), vol. 1, 209–10; *Voltaire, Catherine II. Correspondance, 1763-1778*. Texte présenté et annoté par Alexandre Stroev (Paris, 2006); *Catherine the Great: Selected Letters*, ed. Andrew Kahn and Kelsey Rubin-Detlev (Oxford: OUP, 2018); Vesa Oitti-

Since the outbreak of the Russo-Ottoman war on 25 September 1768 Voltaire encouraged the Empress to expel the Ottomans from Europe and liberate Greece – a motherland of arts and sciences – in almost every letter he sent. The war was represented by Voltaire as a combat between civilization and barbarians with the main goal to restore the ancient glory of enslaved Greece. Voltaire insisted that Catherine II must conquer Constantinople, Adrianople, and Athens. He promised to join the Empress' court in the conquered Istanbul – ancient Byzantium.

On 30 July 1771, after receiving news about the Russian conquest of the Crimea (ancient Tauris), Voltaire dressed his greetings to the Empress into the garments of ancient Greek myth and drama: "Now you can enjoy at least ruling the Kingdom of Thoas where Iphigenia was a priestess for a long time and from there her brother Orestes took off the idol."[20] Voltaire referred to the ancient Greek hero Orestes[21] whose story was a subject of many classic dramas by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. One of the dramas – *Iphigenia in Tauris* by Euripides – is directly related to the ancient Crimea – Tauris. According to the playwright, Orestes was ordered by Apollo to go to Tauris, carry off the statue of Artemis, and bring it to Athens. When Orestes arrived to Tauris – ruled by the King Thoas – he was imprisoned by indigenous people – the Taurians – whose custom was to sacrifice all strangers in honour of Artemis. Nevertheless, Orestes successfully escaped from Tauris carrying with him the statue of Artemis.

Writing in response to Voltaire on 14 August 1771, Catherine II used the Orestes story to suggest that present day Crimean Tatars were even more barbarian than cruel ancient Taurians: "I am sure now Orestes couldn't steal a single statue in Crimea, because there is not a shred of fine art among these people."[22] Naturally, as Muslims, the Tatars were forbidden to make any statues. In the same letter, Catherine II informed Voltaire that after every Russian victory over the Ottomans she erected a marble column in her garden: "However, if this war goes on, my garden at Tsarskoe-Selo will be like a skittle alley, because every

nen. "When Diderot Met Catherine: Some Reflections on an Archetypic Event," *Transcultural Studies: A Journal in Interdisciplinary Research* 14, no. 2 (2018): 171–82.

20 *Perepiska rossiiskoi imperatritsy Ekateriny II i gospodina Voltera, prodolzhavshaiasia s 1763 po 1778 god*, trans. Ivan Fabian (Moskva: V volnoi tipografii Gariia i Kompanii, 1803), 20.

21 Voltaire wrote a play called *Oreste* in 1750.

22 "Je défierais à présent Oreste de voler une seule statue en Crimée, parce qu'il n'y a pas l'ombre des beaux-arts chez ces gens-là," in *Bumagi imperatritsy Ekateriny II, khraniashchiesia v gosudarstvennom archive ministerstva inostrannykh del. Sbornik Rossiiskogo Imperatorskogo Obshchestva*. Vol. 13, ed. Iakov Karlovich Grot (Sankt Peterburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1874), 145–46. Transl. author.

time I win, I have some monument erected there."[23] The juxtaposition was clear: while the Tatars had no idea on fine arts, the Empress – frequently compared to Minerva, patroness of arts – transformed her garden into a classic Mouseion.

Though in 1772 the war was far from concluded and the Russian army held no single fortress south of the Danube, a painting was commissioned to Stefano Torelli to glorify the victory of the Russian army, with "Allegory of Catherine the Great's Victory over the Turks and Tatars" depicting the Russians' triumphal entry to Istanbul/Constantinople. The city can be identified by the Patriarch greeting Russian Empress at the city gates, the minarets of invisible Hagia Sophia, and the Russian fleet in a bay. Catherine II is portrayed as the ancient goddess Minerva in a triumphal chariot, with the Empress crowned with a wreath by the flying goddess Nike. The chariot is accompanied by a group of women dressed in luxurious oriental garments. However, their faces are unveiled. In their correspondence Catherine II and Voltaire frequently discussed the liberation of women from the sultan's seraglio after Russia's expected victory. With the sultan defeated and the Russian army entering Istanbul, the women would be liberated out of the seraglio and from their restrictive dress-code. Catherine II's chariot is followed by a group of mounted Russian generals – dressed as ancient Greco-Roman warriors – the cavaliers of the recently established Russian military order of St George: Petr Rumyantsev, Alexei Orlov, Petr Panin, Vasily Dolgorukov, Nicholas Repnin, and Fedor Orlov. The procession is led by Grigory Orlov – then the Empress' favourite – a leader of the coup d'état which brought Catherine II to power in 1762, who is decorated with a diamond portrait of the Empress. At the very end of the procession a group of dismounted Ottoman statesmen and Janissaries are accompanied by some camels loaded with trophies.

Although the previous Russo-Ottoman wars were represented as religious clashes between the world of Islam and Russian Orthodox (post-Byzantine) Christendom, the war of 1768–1774 is contrastingly represented as a combat between Enlightened civilization and barbarianism. Furthermore, through liberating Greece – perceived as the cradle of European civilization – Russia proved its belonging to Europe and for this reason the triumphant Russians are dressed as ancient warriors. The imagined victorious entrance of the Russians into Constantinople is displayed not only as coming back to the original source of the Russian Orthodox Christianity – a patriarch and St Sophia cathedral – but mainly as joining the cohort of European powers through appropriating the legacy of ancient civilization.

23 "Mais si cette guerre continue, mon jardin de Tsarskoé-Selo ressemblera à un jeu de quilles, car à chaque action d'éclat j'y fais élever quelque monument," ibid., 146.

Figure 2: "Allegory of Catherine the Great's victory over the Turks and Tatars" by Stefano Torelli in 1772. State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia. © Heritage images / Fine Art Images / akg-images.

International Legitimation and Symbolic Appropriation of Territorial Acquisitions

Catherine II's solemn journey to her new domains in January-July 1787 greatly contributed to the foundation myth of "Novorossiya" – the narrative of "enlightened power" reclaiming back this space after the "dark ages of barbarianism." The journey was organized by the Catherine II's favorite/lover – prince Grigory Potemkin (1739-1791), the powerful and industrious general-governor of Russia's new provinces.

Among the most important goals of the voyage was international legitimation of Russia's recent territorial acquisitions. Catherine II's court was accompanied by diplomatic fellow-travellers: Austrian ambassador Johann Ludwig Joseph von Cobenzl, British ambassador Alleyne FitzHerbert, French ambassador Louis Philippe, *comte* de Ségur, and Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne.

Several European monarchs were also engaged into the journey at some important points. In the town of Kaniv on Russian-Polish border Catherine II was greeted by Stanisław August, the last king of Poland (r. 1764–1795). There, an obelisk was erected on the hilltop, while at night fireworks lighted up the picturesque landscape of Dnipro river. The Empress and her court continued their journey on

galleys down the Dnipro river. In the vicinity of recently founded town of Yekaterinoslav Catherine II was joined by the Emperor Joseph II (r. 1765–1790) who travelled under the name "Comte Falkenstein"; together they visited the most important locations in Crimea.

Along the Empress' path monuments were erected and theatrical events took place referring to the imagined ancient past. A triumphal arch was built in the city of Novhorod-Siverskyi symbolising the transit from "Great Russia" (*Velikorossiya*) to "Little Russia" (*Malorossiya* – former Ukrainian Hetmanate abolished by the Empress in 1763). Catherine's so-called milestones – an imitation of the ancient Roman milestones – were erected along the road from Kherson to the Crimean cities. In Balaklava, Crimea, Catherine II and Joseph II were greeted by the notorious Amazon company, a troop of Greek women whom the governor Potemkin smartly dressed in raspberry velvet skirts edged with golden fringe, green velvet jackets, and white gauze turbans with ostrich feathers, each armed with a rifle and three cartridges. It was meant as the costume of the ancient Amazons who, according to Herodotus, inhabited Scythia and Sarmatia to the north of the Black Sea.[24]

The journey was immortalized by the means of visual propaganda. A painting by Ferdinand de Meyes called "Catherine II's journey in her own country in 1787" depicts the journey and displays the programme of appropriation and incorporation of the new area through the narratives of Enlightenment and ancient Greek-Roman past. The Empress is depicted as travelling in the ancient Roman chariot, a *quadriga*. In her left hand she keeps a torch as a symbol of the Enlightenment she brought to the lands recently liberated from the "barbarian hands" of the Ottomans and Tatars. The Empress is crowned by Nike – the ancient goddess of victory – keeping in her right hand an ancient golden crown and two laurel crowns. Catherine II's triumph is also observed from the heaven by two men, one of them the first Russian emperor Peter I (1689–1725) who initiated Russia's military expansion to the Black Sea region,[25] depicted in the laurel crown holding his right hand on the globe. Peter I is accompanied by Zeus/Jupiter depicted with naked torso and an eagle. The empress is greeted by the mobs of her Russian and Ukrainian subjects as well as by single female and male persons dressed as Tatars and, finally, a woman in western dress (presumably a wife of the painter) representing the western settlers.

24 Hdt. 4.110–17.

25 Brian J. Boeck, "When Peter I Was Forced to Settle for Less: Coerced Labor and Resistance in a Failed Russian Colony (1695–1711)," *Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 3 (2008): 485–514; Andrei G. Guskov, Kirill A. Kochegarov, and Stepan M. Shamin, "Russko-turetskaia voina 1686-1700 gg.," *Rossiiskaia istoriia* 6 (2020): 30–49.

Figure 3: "Catherine II's journey in her own country in 1787" by Ferdinand de Meyes in 1787. State Historical Museum, Moscow, Russia. © Heritage images / Fine Art Images / akg-images.

The newly colonised space was shaped through replacing the Tatar and Ottoman placenames with "ancient" ones. Russian officials did not care if the "recovered" Greek placenames correlated with the real name of an ancient town. No one did any archaeological excavations to define the real name of the ancient ruins, and in many cases the ancient ruins were invisible. In some cases, Greek names were given to new towns with no ancient legacy. For instance, the city of Kherson (Херсон) got its name after the ancient Greek city of Chersonesus (Russian: Херсонес), despite the fact that Chersonesus was in Crimea while Kherson was founded in 1778 in the estuary of the Dnipro river. Furthermore, in the vicinity of the ruins of Chersonesus a new city was founded in 1783 and named Sevastopol, referring to the ancient Greek city of Sebastopolis. However, the ancient Sebastopolis was located in Abkhazia (present-day city of Sukhumi), far away from Crimea.

Many new Greek names were given to the settlements founded long before Catherine II's accession to power. The key element in a new name was the ending *polis* (Greek: *city*) – Russian *pol'* (поль) – which ultimately turned any place

name into a Greek one. In 1784 the Tatar town Aqmescit (Tatar: *White Mosque*) in Crimea was renamed as Simferopol (Greek: *City of common good*). However, in ancient times there was a city called Scythian Neapolis (Σκυθική Νεάπολις) mentioned by Strabo.[26]

It was well known that the ancient Greeks founded their settlements along the Black Sea shores. However, even those old and new towns in the hinterland – having no chance for any ancient Greek legacy – were renamed in a Greek way. For instance, in 1770 in the Ukrainian village Orlik a Russian fortress was built and given the German name Katherinenschantz (Russian: Катериненшанц) which in turn was renamed Olviopol in 1781 (since 1919 the town of Pervomaisk in Ukraine). Olviopol referred to the ancient Greek city of Olbia. However, the ruins of Olbia (present-day village Parutyne in Ukraine) are 200 kilometres to the south of Olviopol, and at that time were still in the Ottoman domains. Some new names did not last for long; in 1783 town of Eski Qırım (Tatar: Old Crimea) was renamed Levkopol and in 1787 was renamed again as Staryi Krym (Russian equivalent for Tatar Eski Qırım).

For a long time, the material traces of the ancient civilization were rather neglected by Russian authorities. In 1783 Potemkin founded Sevastopol which became the home base for the Russian Black Sea Fleet. Sevastopol was built on the ruins of the ancient city of Chersonesus, which was founded by the ancient Greeks in 422 BCE and abandoned by inhabitants in 1399 CE. The ruins of the ancient city were dilapidated by Russians to be used as construction material to build Sevastopol, with the same happening to the ancient and medieval ruins and antiquities in other places on the Black Sea shores.[27] Only in 1827 did Alexis Greig, a Russian admiral of Scottish origin, order lieutenant Karl Kruse to excavate in Sevastopol the ruins of the basilica where Volodymir, the Grand Prince of Kyiv, was reportedly baptised in 988.[28]

Catherine II's contribution to Russia's imperial future could be described in such terms as Enlightenment (enlightened absolutism), secularization, cosmopolitanism, urbanization, integration into global maritime trade (grain export through the Black Sea ports), territorial expansion, and planned restoration of the Byzantine

26 Strabo 7.4.7.

27 Genrikh E. Koller [Heinrich K. E. Köhler]. "O sredstvakh k sokhraneniiu dostopamiatnostei Tavridy," *Zhurnal Departamenta narodnogo prosveshcheniia* 6 (1822): 249–61; Ivan A. Stempkovskii [Stępkowski]. "Mysli otnositelno drevnostei v Novorossiiskom krae," *Otechestvennye zapiski* 29, no. 81 (1827): 40–72; Irina V. Tunkina. "Akademicheskaia arkheologicheskaia ekspeditsiia v Novorossiiskii krai 1821 g. pod rukovodstvom akademika E. E. Kellera (Novye arkhivnye materialy)," *Vestnik drevnei istorii* 1 (284) (2013): 197–214.

28 Vadim V. Khapaev. "'Zavedyvaiushchii otkrytiiami': pervye soobshcheniia o raskopkakh Khersonesa," *Prichernomorie. Istoriia, politika, kultura. Seriia A*, 19, no. 6 (2016), 12–13; Irina V. Tunkina, *Russkaia nauka o klassicheskikh drevnostiakh Iuga Rossii (XVIII - seredina XIX v.)* (Sankt Peterburg: Nauka, 2002), 511–12.

Empire (the so-called "Greek project"). "Novorossiya" was an exhibit of all these achievements which the Empress proudly displayed to the Emperor Joseph II and western ambassadors in 1787.

Replacing the Ottoman/Tatar "barbarianism" with Enlightened civilization rooted in the Greek-Roman heritage had justified the Russian conquest and colonization of the northern shores of the Black Sea. Numerous references to real and imagined Greek-Roman legacy helped to fulfil Russia's imperial mission in the Black Sea region.

Catherine II's Enlightenment zeal had its clear limits. On the one hand, she declared her intention to liberate the women of the sultan's seraglio/harem while, on the other hand, she expressed a negative attitude to the French Revolution of 1789. The Empress saw Russia as a force for stability, pitted against the French Revolution as a force for anarchy. Catherine II remained a staunch defender of absolutism against all forms of popular rule because, she argued, it had delivered the economic, cultural, and social achievements that she regarded as the civilisational achievement of reign. Revolution, she believed, had reduced France to a barbarism that undid the advances of the Age of Reason. Russia, she argued, would remain a bulwark of the tolerance, reason, and advances in social welfare she believed she had fostered as a pragmatic Enlightened ruler.[29]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the term "Novorossiya" was replaced with "South Russia" and its industrial heartland of Donbas – the Donets coal basin. Finally, the term "Novorossiya" was put into oblivion in the USSR and independent Ukraine.

Reinventing "Novorossiya" in Post-imperial and Neo-imperial Context: Russia's Official and Far-right Discourses in 2014

The successful annexation of Crimea in March 2014 became a watershed moment for a rising Russian revanchist resentment with an imperial consciousness. When justifying the annexation of Crimea in his speech on 18 March 2014 Russian president Vladimir Putin, among other arguments, referred to the historical legacy of the peninsula:[30]

29 Elena E. Prikazchikova. "Frantsuzskaia revolutsiia v diskurse rossiiskoi aristokratii," *Izvestiia Uralskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta.* Seriia 2: *Gumanitarnye nauki* 49, no. 13 (2007): 303–11.
30 For more details, see: Edwin Bacon, "Putin's Crimea Speech, 18 March 2014: Russia's Changing Public Political Narrative," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 1, no. 1 (2015): 13–36.

> To understand the reason behind such a choice it is enough to know the history of Crimea and what Russia and Crimea have always meant for each other. Everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptised. His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilisation and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The graves of Russian soldiers whose bravery brought Crimea into the Russian empire are also in Crimea. This is also Sevastopol – a legendary city with an outstanding history, a fortress that serves as the birthplace of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Crimea is Balaklava and Kerch, Malakhov Kurgan[31] and Sapun Ridge.[32] Each one of these places is dear to our hearts, symbolising Russian military glory and outstanding valour.[33]

Russia had an interest in keeping Ukraine within its sphere of influence and establishing a protectorate over south-eastern Ukraine defined as "Novorossiya," mentioned for the first time by Putin on 17 April 2014. That day, during talks in Geneva on resolving the crisis, the Russian president stated at a question and answer session that

> I would like to remind you that what was called "Novorossiya" (New Russia) back in the tsarist days – Kharkov, Lugansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Nikolayev, and Odessa – were not part of Ukraine back then. These territories were given to Ukraine in the 1920s by the Soviet government. Why? Who knows. They were won by Potemkin and Catherine the Great in a series of well-known wars. The center of that territory was Novorossiysk, so the region is called "Novorossiya". Russia lost these territories for various reasons, but the people remained.[34]

Here Putin showed his lack – as well as his aides' and speechwriters' – of historical accuracy and his ability to manipulate history. First, Kharkiv oblast as well as most of Luhansk oblast and the north of Donetsk oblast were never part of the "Novorossiya" governorate, but were part of the Sloboda Ukraine governorate, later known as the Kharkiv governorate. Second, the Russian Black Sea port city of Novorossiysk was never part of the "Novorossiya" governorate. Third, the city could not have given its name to the governorate because Novorossiysk was founded in 1838 while "Novorossiya" was established in 1764. Instead, Putin's "Novorossiya" reflects the electoral geography of post-Soviet Ukraine. Putin included into "Novorossiya" those regions which in 2002–2012 voted for the Party of Re-

31 Malakhov Kurgan is a ridge used by Russian troops to defend Sevastopol against British and French attacks during the Crimean War.

32 Sapun Ridge or Mount Sapun became the site of heavy fighting during the siege of Sevastopol in 1941–1942 and again in 1944.

33 Address by President of the Russian Federation, *Kremlin.ru*, 18 March 2014, accessed 4 September 2023, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

34 Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, *Kremlin.ru*, 17 April 2014, accessed 4 September 2023, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/7034.

gions and its leader Viktor Yanukovych.[35] Thus, Putin's statement reflects his imagined political geography – plans to transform Ukraine into fragile confederation of the proper "Ukraine" and so-called "Novorossiya" – a Russian protectorate. Thus, "Ukraine" with pro-western government in Kyiv would have no border with Crimea and could not claim back the annexed peninsula. Moreover, Crimea would be supplied with water, power, gas, and food from "Novorossiya." This confederation of Ukraine and "Novorossiya" would be modelled on Bosnia and Herzegovina after Dayton accords, consisting of a Muslim-Croatian federation and *Republika Srpska*, a Serbian protectorate.[36]

The idea that the lands of "Novorossiya" had been irresponsibly ceded to Ukraine by the Bolsheviks led by Vladimir Lenin was repeated by Putin much later in his essay (2021)[37] and in his speeches justifying the annexation of the southeastern Ukraine on 30 September 2022.[38] Putin mentioned "Novorossiya" for the second time on 29 August 2014 in the course of the battle of Ilovaisk in Donbas, issuing a statement addressed to the "Militia of Novorossiya" calling on it to show humanitarian compassion and allow surrounded Ukrainian soldiers to withdraw and reunite with their families. However, the actual text does not use that specific phrasing, mentioning only "the representatives of Donbas."[39] This was the last official statement by Putin addressing "Novorossiya" until 2022.

In his speech on 4 December 2014 Putin emphasised the symbolic significance of Crimea to Russian culture: "It was here in Crimea in ancient Khersones or Kor-

35 Alexandr Osipian and Ararat Osipian, "Regional Diversity and Divided Memories in Ukraine: Contested Past as Electoral Resource, 2004-2010," *East European Politics and Societies* 26, no. 3 (2012): 616–42.

36 Alexei Fenenko, "A Bosnian Scenario for Ukraine," *Valdai club*, 17 July 2014, accessed 10 October 2023, https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/a_bosnian_scenario_for_ukraine/; Vladimir Dergachev and Sergei Podosenov, "Novorossiya pishet 'bosniiskii stsenarii'," *Gazeta.ru*, 1 September 2014, accessed 10 October 2023, https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2014/09/01_a_6199469.shtml; "Bosniiskii stsenarii dlia Ukrainy: Zapad popytaetsia vvesti v Donbass 'mezhdunarodnykh mirotvortsev'," *Regnum.ru*, 24 July 2014, accessed 10 October 2023, https://regnum.ru/article/1829013; "Balkanskie motivy na ukrainskii lad. Gennadii Sysoev o tom, chem grozit Ukraine iugoslavskii stsenarii," *Kommersant*, 22 February 2022, accessed 10 October 2023, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5228293.

37 Vladimir Putin. "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," 12 July 2021, accessed 14 July 2021, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181

38 "Obrashchenie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Kremlin.ru*, 21 September 2022, accessed 23 September 2022, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69390; "Podpisanie dogovorov o priniatii DNR, LNR, Zaporozhskoi i Khersonskoi oblastei v sostav Rossii, *Kremlin.ru*, 30 September 2022, accessed 30 September 2022, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69465.

39 "President of Russia Vladimir Putin Addressed "Novorossiya" Militia," *Kremlin.ru*, August 29, 2014, accessed September 4, 2023, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46506.

sun[40] as the chroniclers called it, that Count Vladimir was baptized [in the tenth century] to then baptize the rest of Rus."[41] Here, too, the word "Novorossiya" was absent. However, "Novorossiya" returned in Putin's public speeches and interviews after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The efforts of pro-Russian activists backed by the Russian Security Service (FSB) to fuel insurgency in south-eastern Ukraine had failed. The insurgents only had succeed in establishing shaky control over 30 percent of the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts – two regions out of eight targeted by Russia in the early spring 2014. The failure of the secessionist insurgency became evident in August 2014.

The reinvented concept of "Novorossiya" was enthusiastically accepted by Russian nationalists and far-right extremists who flooded Donbas in spring-summer 2014 and fuelled military conflict there.[42] Marlene Laruelle has divided the nationalist readings of "Novorossiya" into three currents – red, white, and brown. "Red Novorossiya" is a leftist project of "Novorossiya" as an oligarchy-free part of "greater Russia," with strong nostalgia for the USSR as a superpower. "White Novorossiya" is based on ultraconservative political orthodoxy, with strong nostalgia for the Romanov Empire and a perception of Ukraine as "an artificial construct sponsored by the Bolsheviks to weaken Russia."[43] "Brown Novorossiya" is defined by Laruelle as an openly anti-regime project of Russian neofascists whose goal is to export "national revolution" (*Russkaya vesna* – "Russian spring") from Eastern Ukraine to Russia.[44] Thus, for Russian nationalists of various currents "Novorossiya" was both a promised land to be added to Russia and an anticipation of Russia's own transformation.

Contrastingly, most of the local Donbas insurgents in 2014 considered Putin's regime as their only hope and its conservative rhetoric as a model to follow.[45] For them "Novorossiya" was something new and exotic. They were proud of their regional Donbas identity while "Novorossiya" was out of use for almost a century.[46]

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40 Korsun is the old-Slavonic name of medieval Chersonesus used in contemporary chronicles of Rus'.

41 "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly," *Kremlin.ru*, 4 December 2014, accessed 4 September 2023, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47173.

42 Nikolay Mitrokhin, "Infiltration, Instruction, Invasion: Russia's War in the Donbass," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 1, no. 1 (2015): 219–49; Nikolay Mitrokhin: "Transnationale Provokation. Russische Nationalisten in der Ukraine," *Osteuropa* 5–6 (2014): 157–74.

43 Marlene Laruelle, "The Three Colors of "Novorossiya", or the Russian Nationalist Mythmaking of the Ukrainian Crisis," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 32, no. 1 (2016): 61–66.

44 Laruelle, "The Three Colors of Novorossiya," 66–70.

45 Alexandr Osipian, "The decline of the Left, populist mobilization and insurgency in the old industrial region of Donbas, 1991-2014," *Totalitarismus und Demokratie* 19, no. 1 (2022): 73–95.

46 Alexandr Osipian, "Historical Myths, Enemy Images and Regional Identity in the Donbass Insurgency (Spring 2014)," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 1, no. 1 (2015): 109–40.

The local Donbas insurgents internalised the Russian narrative of the "fascist junta" that came to power in Kyiv in late February 2014[47] and thus justified their insurgency as a sequel of the "Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945" (Russian name for the German-Soviet war) – a narrative distributed by Russian mass-media.[48]

For the first time since the lost fight for the *Supreme Soviet* (Russian parliament) in October 1993, Russian nationalists finally had a story that celebrated their achievements in actions, words, images, and music, offering a full complement of heroic battles and martyrs.[49] Putin has since disappointed all three "Novorossiya" camps; many were hoping that the Donbas would be integrated into Russia following Crimea's annexation, while Moscow saw the insurgency only as a way to maintain its influence over Ukraine's future.[50] The "Novorossiya" storyline validated a new kind of geopolitical adventurism and blurred the boundaries, both territorial and imaginary, of the Russian state, with possible boomerang effects that are difficult to forecast.[51] In order to reduce the growing popularity of the Russian nationalists inside Russia itself, some of the insurgent leaders were killed in Donbas, while others agreed to come back to Russia and live a quiet life.[52] They were replaced with the most loyal social climbers who agreed to play "the authorities" of the breakaway statelets actually ruled by the Russian FSB and GRU.[53]

Since 5 September 2014, when the so-called Minsk Accords were signed, Russia pursued the strategy of the "Trojan horse" to reintroduce the breakaway regions of DPR and LPR back into Ukraine as autonomous Russian protectorates, which could

47 Shaun Walker, "Donetsk's pro-Russia rebels celebrate expelling 'fascist Ukrainian junta'," *The Guardian*, 8 September 2014, accessed 7 October 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/08/donetsk-pro-russia-rebels-ukrainian-junta; Mykola Riabchuk. "Ukrainians as Russia's negative 'other': History comes full circle," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49, no. 1 (2016): 75–85.

48 Alexandr Osipian. "World War II Memory Politics in Russia and Ukraine, and Their Uses During the Conflict in the Donbas (Spring–Summer 2014)," in *Official History in Eastern Europe*, ed. Korine Amacher, Andrii Portnov, and Viktoriia Serhiienko (Osnabrück: fibre Verlag, 2020), 267–90.

49 Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism. Imaginaries, Doctrines and Political Battlefields* (London: Routledge, 2019), 208.

50 Laruelle (2019), 209.

51 Idem.

52 Marlene Laruelle. "Back From Utopia: How Donbas Fighters Reinvent Themselves in a Post-Novorossiya Russia," *Nationalities Papers* 47, no. 5 (2019): 719–33.

53 Vladislav Surkov was the main kingmaker to remove the most radical figures of the insurgency in order to transform it into a more classic frozen secessionist conflict under Moscow's stranglehold. See Catherine A. Fitzpatrick, "Kremlin 'Grey Cardinal' Surkov's Deal for a 'Donetsk Transdniestria'?", *The Interpreter*, 9 July 2014, accessed 11 July 2014, www.interpretermag.com/kremlin-grey-cardinal-surkovs-deal-for-a-donetsk-transdniestria/.

thus help Russia to undermine any democratic processes in Ukraine and block the country's pro-western drift. However, this strategy failed, and Russia launched the full-scale military invasion on 24 February 2022.[54] Now efforts were made to transform the annexed Crimea into the imagined sacral space of Russia.

When legitimizing the annexation of Crimea in his "Crimean speeches" of 18 March and 4 December 2014, Putin particularly emphasized two events: the baptism of Vladimir/Volodymyr, the grand prince of Kyiv, in Chersonesus in 988 (who then baptized the whole of Rus'), and the Crimean War of 1853–1855 fought by Russia against the Great Britain, France, Italy (Kingdom of Sardegna), and the Ottoman Empire. During his numerous visits to the Crimea since 2014 Putin predominantly visited memorials and monuments historically related to these two events – the baptism of Prince Vladimir and the Crimean War. According to Russian historical narrative and political discourse the baptism of Prince Vladimir in 988 separated Rus' from western Christendom (Catholicism) and led to the making of a particular "Russian civilization" – or a Russian *Sonderweg*. This "Russian civilization" includes Ukraine and Belarus as well, while the Crimean War symbolizes the stalemate between Russia and the West.

How are the annexations of Crimea in 2014 and of a big portion of south-east Ukraine in 2022 important for Russia's future? The annexation of Crimea is an integral part of Russia's naval expansion in Eastern Mediterranean. In 2013 Russia established a permanent naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea with its Mediterranean Squadron. The Black Sea Fleet based in Sevastopol, Crimea, has been the primary supplier of ships and logistics for the squadron, particularly since Russian military interference in Syria in September 2015. A Russian naval base in Tarsus, Syria, was established in 2017.[55] Between 2013 and 2016 Russia also made unsuccessful efforts to establish its naval base in Montenegro, albeit unsuccessfully.[56]

54 Adam Potočňák and Miroslav Mares, "Donbas Conflict: How Russia's Trojan Horse Failed and Forced Moscow to Alter Its Strategy," *Problems of Post-Communism* 70, no. 4 (2023): 341–51.

55 Dmitry Gorenburg, "Russia's Naval Strategy in the Mediterranean," *Marshall Center Security Insight*, no. 35, July 2019, https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/russias-naval-strategy-mediterranean-0.

56 "Montenegro government refuses Russia's request to set up a military base," *Sofia Globe*, 22 December 2013, accessed 27 July 2023, https://sofiaglobe.com/2013/12/22/montenegro-government-refuses-russias-request-to-set-up-a-military-base/#:~:text=The%20government%20of%20Montenegro%20has,the%20military%20base%20near%20Syria; "Officials dismiss talk of Russian military base in Montenegro," *Radio Svobodna Evropa*, 10 February 2015, accessed 28 July 2023, https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/officials-squash-talk-of-russian-military-base-in-montenegro/26839898.html; Ivana Sekularac. "End of the affair: Montenegro jilts Russia by joining NATO," *Reuters*, 22 May 2017, accessed 24 July 2023, https://www.reuters.com/article/cnews-us-montenegro-nato-idCAKBN18I0W3-OCATP.

These events refer to Russia's historical naval domination in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Archipelago expeditions of the Russian Baltic fleet in 1769–1774 and 1805–1807. In the first expedition the Russian Baltic fleet had fuelled the Greek uprising in the Peloponnese, which declared the independence of the Archipelago province under the protectorate of the Empress Catherine II. The Empress then blocked the sea routes, cutting the food supply to Istanbul and supporting the anti-Ottoman secession of Egypt.[57] During the conflict the island of Malta was used by the Russian fleet as its transit hub. The Order of Knights of the Hospital – also known as the Knights of Malta[58] – was protected by Catherine II while her son – the Emperor Paul I (1796-1801) – became a Grandmaster of the Order in 1799. During the second expedition the Russian Baltic fleet blockaded the Dardanelles while the Russian army operated in south of Italy, on the Danube, and in the Caucasus.[59]

In October 2021 the expedition "Flame of Chesma. The Greek Gambit" on the sailing vessel *Shtandart* – a 1999 replica of the 1703 frigate – followed the way of the Archipelago expedition of 1769–1774. The expedition was named after the Battle of Çeşme of 1770 (Chesma is the Russian name for Turkish Çeşme) and the Greek anti-Ottoman uprising backed by the Russian fleet. The expedition was organized by the Russian Geographical Society and financed by the Foundation of the Russian President's Grants.[60] It is even more interesting and telling of the significance of the expedition in the grand scheme of Russia's "Novorossiya" discourse that since 2009 the Russian Geographical Society has been headed by Sergei Shoigu, Russia's former Minister of Defence (2012–2024).[61] Furthermore, on 5 July 2012 Shoigu –

57 Paul du Quenoy, "Arabs under Tsarist Rule: The Russian Occupation of Beirut, 1773–1774," *Russian History* 41, no. 2 (2014): 128–41; Smilyanskaya, Elena, "Russian Warriors in the Land of Miltiades and Themistocles: The Colonial Ambitions of Catherine the Great in the Mediterranean," *Higher School of Economics Research Paper No. WP BRP 55/HUM/2014*, 13 May 2014, accessed 14 June 2023, https://ssrn.com/abstract=2436332 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2436332.

58 Since 1831 the official name is the Order of the Knights of St John.

59 Irina M. Smilianskaiia, Mikhail Velizhev, and Elena B. Smilianskaia, *Rossiia v Sredizemnomorie. Arkhipelagskaia ekspeditsiia Ekateriny Velikoi* (Moskva: Indrik, 2011).

60 Pavel Onoiko. "9 oktiabria v Piree startovala ekspeditsiia na frigate 'Shtandart'," *Afinskie novosti*, 14 October 2021, accessed 28 August 2023, https://rua.gr/news/news/44196-9-oktyabrya-v-piree-startovala-ekspeditsiya-na-fregate-shtandart.html; Ольга Венспи. "Plamia Chesmy. Grecheskii Gambit," *Afinskie novosti*, 15 October 2021, accessed 28 August 2023, https://rua.gr/news/news/44210-plamya-chesmy-grecheskij-gambit.html.

61 "Sergei Kuzhugetovich Shoigu," *Russkoe geograficheskoe obshchestvo*, accessed 8 August 2023, https://rgo.ru/about/structure/president-of-the-rgs/; "Sergei Shoigu nagradil serebrianoi medaliu glavnogo kostromskogo geografa," *k1news*, 27 May 2022, accessed 8 August 2023, https://k1news.ru/news/society/sergey-shoygu-nagradil-serebryanoy-medalyu-glavnogo-kostromskogo-geografa/.

then the governor of Moscow oblast – was awarded the Knight's Military Cross, the highest award of the Order of Malta.[62]

Shoigu has contributed to the glorification of the Crimea annexation through the visual propaganda. As powerful minister of defence he commissioned to build the Main Church of the Russian Armed Forces, which was dedicated on the outskirts of Moscow in a military theme park, "Patriot," in June 2020. Frescoes in the cathedral celebrate Russia's military might through history, from medieval battles to modern-day wars in Georgia and Syria, while mosaics depict the annexation of Crimea in 2014 with portraits of Putin, Minister of Defence Sergei Shoigu, Russia's political leadership, and soldiers. Undoubtedly, one can recognize the historical reference to the Byzantine model of depicting the emperors on frescoes and mosaics in the churches they built. On the one hand, it could reflect the Russian aspirations to be considered as the only true heir of the Byzantine imperial legacy. On the other hand, it could be reference to the Neo-Byzantine style which became dominant in Russian architecture in the reign of the Emperor Alexander II (1855–1881), illustrated by the cathedrals of St. prince Vladimir in Kyiv (1862–1882) and in Sevastopol on the ruins of Chersonesus (1861–1879) which were built in this style. The Byzantine model reflects the Putin's conservative turn, distancing Russia's *Sonderweg* from Western civilization. However, the mosaic was removed after public controversy, with Putin himself reportedly giving orders to take it down, saying it was too early to celebrate the country's current leadership.[63]

62 "Shoigu poluchil vysshuiu nagradu Maltiiskogo ordena," *RIA novosti*, 5 July 2012, accessed October 7, 2023, https://ria.ru/20120705/692720936.html.

63 Alexandra Dzhordzhevich. "'Izobrazheny rukovoditeli nashego gosudarstva, v tom chisle sredi naroda'. Pochemu Glavnyi khram VS RF ukrasili mozaikami s litsami Vladimira Putina I Iosifa Stalina," *Novaia gazeta*, 24 April 2020, accessed 25 April 2020, https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2020/04/24/85085-izobrazheny-rukovoditeli-nashego-gosudarstva-v-tom-chisle-sredi-naroda; "Russia's New Military Mega-Church to Feature Putin, Stalin, Crimea Mosaics," *The Moscow Times*, 24 April 2020, accessed 25 April 2020, https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/04/24/russias-new-military-mega-church-to-feature-putin-stalin-crimea-mosaics-a70100; Lena Surzhko Harned. "Holy wars: How a cathedral of guns and glory symbolizes Putin's Russia," *The Conversation*, 2 March 2022, accessed 4 September 2023, https://theconversation.com/holy-wars-how-a-cathedral-of-guns-and-glory-symbolizes-putins-russia-176786.

Mapping Space and Legitimizing Annexations Through Exhibitions

The official myth of "Novorossiya" was spread through historical narratives, novels, movies, and exhibitions in the central and local museums. The main focus was laid on the Russian victory in the Russo-Ottoman wars of 1768–1774 and 1787–1791, as well as annexation of the Crimean Khanate in 1783. Myth was developed on the well-prepared ground. Even in the USSR – despite the dominant narrative of class struggle and fierce criticism of "corrupted nobility" and "despotic monarchy" – generals Alexander Suvorov, Petr Rumyantsev, Mikhail Kutuzov, and admiral Fedor Ushakov were officially glorified for their victories over the Ottoman army and fleet. In post-2014 Russia one can witness the growing significance of Catherine II's cult, for example in the state-organised exhibition "the golden age of Catherine the Great."

Though Catherine II ruled in Saint Petersburg, the focal point of reinvented myth of "the golden age" was shifted to the actual capital in Moscow. In 2015 in Tsaritsyno museum in Moscow the exhibition series "Catherine II. The Golden Age of the Russian Empire" was launched,[64] after which the exhibition travelled to some other cities in Russia.[65] Predictably, series were open with the painting "Allegory of Catherine the Great's Victory over the Turks and Tatars" painted by Stefano Torelli in 1772.[66] Perhaps the choice of this painting is the best explanation of why Catherine II's rule is considered "the golden age" in Putin's Russia – because of military victories and territorial expansion. As Putin said on 6 February 2012: "Under Catherine II Russia incorporated more lands than ever. . . . She was a more effective ruler than Peter I – less blood, more deeds."[67] Putin repeated this point again on 30 June 2021, that "Under Catherine the Great Russia territori-

64 "Ekaterina II. Zolotoi vek Rossiiskoi imperii," *Musei Tsaritsyno*, accessed 5 July 2023, https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/events/exhibitions/p/ekaterina-ii-zolotoj-vek-rossijskoj-imperii-postoyanno-obnovlyayushhayasya-ekspozitsiya/.

65 From 7 November 2020 to 9 May 2021, as part of the Hermitage Days, the exhibition "Catherine the Great. The Golden Age of the Russian Empire" was opened in the Hermitage-Kazan Centre. Mikhail B. Piotrovskii, *Ekaterina Velikaia: Zolotoi vek Rossiiskoi imperii: katalog vystavki iz sobraniia Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* (Sankt Petersburg: Gosudarstvennyĭ Ėrmitazh, 2020); *Ekaterina Velikaia: Zolotoi vek Rossiiskoi imperii*, 7 November 2020, accessed 15 March 2023, https://kazan-kremlin.ru/exhibition/ekaterina-velikaya-zolotoj-vek-rossijskoj-imperii/.

66 "Ekaterina II. Vystavka odnoi kartiny: 23 aprelia 2018 – 23 avgusta 2018, *Musei Tsaritsyno*, accessed 4 July 2023, https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/events/exhibitions/p/obnovleniya-v-ekspozitsii-ekaterina-ii-zolotoj-vek-rossijskoj-imperii/.

67 "Putin schitaet samym 'effektivnym pravitelem' Ekaterinu II: 'menshe krovishchi, bolshe del'," *Gazeta.ru*, 6 February 2012, accessed 27 July 2023, https://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2012/02/06/n_2194321.shtml.

ally expanded more than ever."[68] Numerous exhibitions glorifying Russia's imperial past were accompanied with a series of lectures arranged by the "Arzamas project in humanities" and delivered by the best Russian experts on eighteenth-century history.[69]

Figure 4: Exhibition "Catherine the Great. The golden age of the Russian Empire". Kazan, Russia. 2020-2021. (Heading made in two languages – Russian and Tatar). Ekaterina Velikaia. Zolotoi vek Rossiiskoi imperii, November 7, 2020, accessed March 15, 2023, https://kazan-kremlin.ru/exhibition/ekaterina-velikaya-zolotoj-vek-rossijskoj-imperii/.

68 Aisel Gereikhanova, "Putin otmetil vydaiushchiesia dostizheniia Petra I, Ekateriny II i Aleksandra I," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 30 June 2021, accessed 24 June 2023, https://rg.ru/2021/06/30/putin-otmetil-vydaiushchiesia-dostizheniia-petra-i-ekateriny-ii-i-aleksandra-i.html.

69 "Ekaterina II. Zolotoi vek Rossiiskoi imperii," *Musei Tsaritsyno*, accessed 5 July 2023, https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/events/exhibitions/p/ekaterina-ii-zolotoj-vek-rossijskoj-imperii-postoyanno-obnovlyayushhayasya-ekspozitsiya/.

Tsaritsyno palace was founded by the Empress in 1775 in vicinity of Moscow and is now the most visited museum in Moscow, with 1,470,367 visitors in 2019.[70] That year there were five exhibitions in the museum devoted to Catherine II, with a permanent exhibition, "Tsaritsyno of Catherine the Great," inaugurated on 19 April 2019 and visited by 193,326 visitors by the end of the year.[71] The political message is evident: if the conquest of the shores of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov inaugurated "the golden age of Catherine the Great," the annexation of Crimea in 2014 became an apotheosis of "the golden age of Putin."

In 2019 a single portrait of Catherine II was displayed in Tsaritsyno palace.[72] In 1787 – after her solemn voyage to the annexed Crimea – Catherine II commissioned this portrait to famous painter Dmitry Levitzky as a gift to Emmanuel de Rohan, Grandmaster of the Order of the Knights of St John. Since 1790 the portrait was displayed in the Ambassadors Room of the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta, Malta.[73] With this diplomatic gift Catherine II showed her gratitude for maritime services and assistance received from the Order of St John against their common enemy, the Ottoman Empire, to the Russian Baltic fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Archipelago Expedition in 1769–1774. In the course of the expedition, on 24–26 June 1770, the Russian fleet completely defeated the Ottoman one in the Battle of Chesma. In 1774 Catherine II founded the palace of Chesma between Petersburg and her summer residence in Tsarskoe Selo (with the Chesma column erected there in 1778). In 1782–1796 the palace was used for the meetings of the leadership of the St George's Order frequently presided by the Empress.[74]

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70 "Tsaritsyno musei-zapovednik. Itogi 2019. Plany na 2020," *Musei Tsaritsyno*, accessed 25 May 2023, https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/uploads/2020/02/GMZ-TSaritsyno-Itogi-2019-goda-i-plany-na-2020-god.pdf.

71 "Tsaritsyno muzei-zapovednik. Itogi 2019. Plany na 2020," *Musei Tsaritsyno*, accessed 25 May 2023, https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/uploads/2020/02/GMZ-TSaritsyno-Itogi-2019-goda-i-plany-na-2020-god.pdf.

72 "Portret Ekateriny Velikoi s georgievskoi lentoi. Vystavka odnoi kartiny. 18 avgusta 2019 – 12 ianvaria 2020," *Musei Tsaritsyno*, accessed 25 May 2023, https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/events/exhibitions/p/portret-ekateriny-velikoj-s-georgievskoj-lentoj/; Liudmila A. Markina. *Maltiiskii portret Ekateriny Velikoi* (Moskva: Art volkhonka, 2019); Mikhail Trenikhin and Sergei Golovin. "Ekaterina II: iz Malty v Rossiiu," *Diletant*, 17 September 2019, accessed 25 May 2023, https://diletant.media/articles/45267076/.

73 Alvin Vassallo, "Painting from the National Collection to be displayed for five months in Moscow," *TVM news*, 18 July 2019, accessed 25 May 2023, https://tvmnews.mt/en/news/pittura-mill-kollezzjoni-painting-from-the-national-collection-to-be-displayed-for-five-months-in-moscow-se-titiehed-ghall-wirja-ta-5-xhur-fmoska/; Amy Sciberras and Christopher Grech, "Catherine the Great to head from Valletta to Moscow and then back. An oil painting by Levitzky will feature at a museum following restoration," *Times of Malta*, 18 August 2019, accessed 25 May 2023, https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/a-portrait-of-catherine-the-great-by-dimitri-levitzky.729431.

74 "Ansambl Chesmenskogo dvortsa," *Nash okrug*, accessed 4 July 2023, http://xn--b1aecbgc5andg.xn--p1ai/nash-okrug/dostoprimechatelnosti/ansambl-chesmenskogo-dvorcza.html.

Why was this particular portrait from faraway Malta chosen for the exhibition in Moscow? In this portrait Catherine II is depicted with the ribbon of the Order of St George,[75] which she founded in 1769. The very name of the exhibition – "The Portrait of Catherine the Great with St George's Ribbon" – emphasised the significance of the order and its ribbon. The exhibition commemorated the two hundred and ninetieth anniversary of the Empress' birthday (1729) and the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Order of the St George's foundation (1769). In Putin's Russia the St George's ribbon has become the main symbol of "the Great Victory" in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 and a symbol of loyalty to the ruling regime (though in the Soviet time the ribbon was called "ribbon of the guard" – *gvardeiskaya lenta*). Since 2014 pro-Russian insurgents and Russian commandos in Donbas have been decorating themselves with the St George's ribbon,[76] and during the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 numerous Russian servicemen attached the ribbon to their uniform as well. The exhibition of 2019 was therefore a combination of two historical myths (and symbols) – "the golden age of Catherine the Great" (plus "Novorossiya") and "the Great Victory in the Great Patriotic War."

Conclusion

The province of "Novorossiya" was established in 1764 as Russia's movable borderland. Then, after the Russian-Ottoman wars in 1768–1774 and 1787–1791, when Russia conquered the Ottoman provinces, the Zaporozhian Cossack Host was dissolved and its lands incorporated into the Russian empire (1775), just as the Crimean Khanate (1783). The province of "Novorossiya" was imagined and developed as a project of the Enlightenment by the Empress Catherine II (r. 1762–1796) whose plans reached as far as the reconquest of Constantinople and the restoration of the Byzantine Empire. The new province was reinvented and appropriated neither as the former "realm of Islam" nor as the "land of savages" but as restoration of the periphery of ancient civilisation. Catherine II's triumphant journey through her new domains in 1787 greatly contributed to the foundation myth of

75 The Exhibition of One Painting – The Portrait of Catherine the Great with St George's Ribbon, 18 August 2019, accessed 25 May 2023, https://heritagemalta.mt/whats-on/the-exhibition-of-one-painting-the-portrait-of-catherine-the-great-with-st-georges-ribbon/.

76 Brandon Schechter, "St. George's Ribbon," Perspectives on History. The Newsmagazine of the American Historical Association, 29 March 2023, accessed 6 November 2023, https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/april-2023/st-georges-ribbon.

"Novorossiya" – the narrative of "enlightened power" reclaiming back this space after the "dark ages of barbarianism." The ancient Greek and Roman pasts of this area were rediscovered in the framework of Enlightened absolutism. New colonised space was shaped through replacing the Tatar and Ottoman place names with "ancient" ones. Settlers of various religious and ethnic backgrounds – Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Lutherans and Mennonites – were invited from Western and South-Eastern Europe to settle in "Novorossiya" along with the Empress's own subjects.

In the nineteenth century, however, "Novorossiya" was reimagined by Russian men-of-letters as promised land for adventurous businessmen, industrious landowners, runaway serfs, even as a foreshadowing of the communist utopia. Then, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "Novorossiya" was replaced with "South Russia" and "Donbas" as its "industrial heart," and, finally, put into oblivion in the USSR and independent Ukraine.

After the annexation of Crimea and efforts to claim south-east of Ukraine as Russia's "Novorossiya" in 2014, however, the old imperial narratives were used for justification of territorial expansion. Despite claiming succession to the imperial past, Putin's "Novorossiya" has nothing in common with Catherine II's cosmopolitan project and its Greek-Roman background. In current revanchist narrative "Novorossiya" is represented as the promised land for ethnic Russians blessed by the Russian Orthodox Church. While the old imperial myth of "Novorossiya" symbolized the imagined futures and progress, Putin's "Novorossiya" is reinvented as a stronghold of radical nationalism and isolationist obscurantism.

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Elena Fellner

Memories of Empire: Imaginaries of Pasts and Futures in Iranian Anti-regime Online Spaces

Abstract: Past experiences with empire, whether positive or negative, play an important role in Iranian oppositional online spaces and collective memory more broadly. The Golden Age of the Achaemenid empire, the mytho-history of the Shahnameh, and the supposed decline following Iran's conquest by Arab-Muslim armies all serve as reference points to glorify the "Iranian nation," condemn the Islamic Republic, and (re)define what it means to be Iranian. Drawing on three case studies about heroization discourses surrounding recent protest "martyrs," this chapter analyses how Iranian memories of empire shape discourses both on diagnoses of Iran's present woes as well as expectations regarding its near future. It argues that references to select episodes of Iran's past are used to imagine a different version of the Iranian nation, separate from government-sanctioned ideology, which exists in a state of tension between genuine revolutionary enthusiasm and the necessity to mobilize for further protests. Heroizing narratives and the historical reference points they draw on thus serve as vehicles for debating the boundaries and possible future(s) of the national collective.

Introduction

"Memory is knowledge with an identity-index, it is knowledge about oneself."[1]

This is one side of the story. Memories are events, people, places, feelings and sensory information that I collect over the course of my life, that my brain sorts through to decide – sometimes in a seemingly random manner – what to scrap and what to keep. The things I end up keeping form the narrative into which I integrate new experiences or, in particularly disruptive moments, the effigy I shatter because it represents a view of myself and my place in the world that no longer seems self-evident. When my individual narrative about who I am in relation to the world lines up with that of others, my narrative interweaves with

1 Jan Assmann, "Globalization, Universalism, and the Erosion of Cultural Memory," in Assmann and Conrad, *Memory in a Global Age*, 123.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111229591-009

theirs to a certain degree, adding knowledge about who we are in relation to one another.[2]

But there is another side to this story; memories are not born but made, and not only by body and mind that together form an "I" or a "you," but by conscious efforts of communicating knowledge about past experiences. These communicative efforts by individuals, the media, schools, or other actors influence the pattern that filters my perception of the world around us as well as my reaction to it, thus granting the shapers of perception the power to shape reactions as well. As an individual, I am not even able to access my own personal past in an unmediated manner,[3] even less so for the history that I share with others, which makes me part of a "we" that reaches back past my individual life span.[4]

In this chapter, I will put my focus on the meanings that a particular kind of memory has to a particular group or, to be more precise, the role that memories of empire play in constructing an alternative Iranian nation free from the ideological and political underpinnings of the Islamic Republic. I focus on empires instead of other, non-imperial, historical eras because people often draw on Iran's past encounters with empires when searching for alternative historical roots for the Iranian nation to emphasise. I call these searches "memories of empire" to draw attention to the fact that they are not – and cannot be – anything but recreations that base their conception of the past (and the future) on present hopes and fears. In attempting to find a new way to understand Iran's place in the world, and the individual's place in the nation, people reflect the knowledge they already possess about a past that no one has lived, but many relate to: Iran's memories of empire.

In particular, I will focus on three memories of empire that have proven influential since the latest cycle of unrest in Iran started in 2017/2018: the memory of Iran's mytho-historical past as expressed in the Shahnameh epos; the memory of Iran's Golden Age of empire beginning with the Great King Cyrus II (ruled 559–530 BCE); and the memory of Iran's conquest by the Muslim Arab armies (ca. 632–661 CE) and the following Islamisation of Iran. I am including the Shahnameh alongside two more historically verifiable cases on the one hand because, in spite

2 Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (München: C.H. Beck, 2006), 21–25; Adam B. Lerner, *From the ashes of history: Collective trauma and the making of international politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 66.

3 Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, "Memory and Political Change: Introduction," in *Memory and Political Change*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 3–5.

4 Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time maps: Collective memory and the social shape of the past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3.

of stylization, the text is based on historical writing, and on the other because, as we will see, it is often treated as an essential part of the story about how Iran came to be. In that way it is no different than the Persian imperial era and the Muslim Arab conquest.

I will analyse the views on these memories of empire that people express on Twitter/X[5] through the lens of three so-called "martyrs" of past protest movements: Navid Afkari, a professional wrestler who was executed in 2020 allegedly for murder, but more likely for participating in protests, after a more-than-dubious trial; Jina Mahsa Amini, a young Kurdish Iranian woman who died of her injuries in 2022 after she had been taken into custody and mistreated for a hijab violation; and Pouya Bakhtiari, a participant in the 2019 protests who was shot in the head while marching in the street. Martyrs and other heroized or exceptionalised figures provide a valuable lens on broader discourses including those on the intricate relations between past, present, and future because they serve as platforms to debate common values and group boundaries.[6] Regarding my method, I thus used their names as well as significant dates in their lives to scrape Twitter/X for tweets and then coded them for references to the three mentioned memories of empire. On this basis I will provide an answer to the question of how memories of empire are made in Iranian oppositional online spaces to form an alternative notion of the "Iranian nation" –and mobilise people to fight for it.

What's Past is Prologue: Collective Memory and Boundary Work

As a symbol, an institution etc. as well as a metaphor for (non-)belonging, collective memory shapes the way we perceive and think about the world as individuals born into a society. Maurice Halbwachs stated that "social thought is essentially a memory [whose] entire content consists only of collective recollections or remembrances. But it also follows that, among them, only those recollections subsist that

5 In July 2023, Twitter's new owner Elon Musk renamed the platform to X. I have nonetheless decided to keep the old name for this study for two reasons: first, because I find it nonsensical to ignore the lexical connection (in many languages) between the name Twitter, the verb to tweet, and the noun tweet, and while the name is easily replaced, the verb and the noun are not; and second, because the platform was named Twitter during the time that this study and its source material covers.

6 Johanna Pink, "National Hero," in Asch et al., *Compendium Heroicum*.

in every period society, working with its present-day frameworks, can reconstruct."[7] In other words, the past is woven into our every interaction with the world around us.

Collective memory and collective identity are thus interconnected in both directions, with the present influencing views of the past and the past shaping the community's wants and needs in the present. For when a group flees into the arms of an imagined Golden Age and turns the past into a reference point for a sacralised order, it usually does so in recognition of its wretched present and unstable future.[8] In Iran, the last half-decade has brought several protest waves that saw thousands killed by government forces, an ongoing economic crisis that pushed a third of the country's population into poverty,[9] a badly mismanaged response to the Covid-19 pandemic that cost another 145,000 lives,[10] and the death of the last semblance of political participation with the accession of Ebrahim Ra'isi to the presidency in 2021. I will demonstrate how all of these factors have contributed to an idealization of the past that in turn raises expectations for a better future which, since it is based on a state of affairs that the nation had attained once already, could be within reach if only enough people fight hard enough to establish it. Certain historical events, like the rule of Cyrus II, thereby transform into "*political myths* [. . .] [that] not only reflect the social and political needs of the group that contributed to their formation but also become active agents in molding [*sic*] the group's needs."[11]

What is more, refusing the interpretations of the present as guided by the past positions an individual outside the boundaries of their community; not sharing certain memories (including the conclusions drawn from them) means, in a very fundamental way, not belonging under the umbrella of a certain collective identity.[12] This is especially true when the memories, and the stories spun from them, concern a community's heroes, martyrs, and other highly affective figures.

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7 Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 189.

8 Bernhard Giesen and Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Triumph and Trauma* (Boulder, London: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 9–10.

9 Iran International, "Poverty Doubled in Iran in One Year - Welfare Ministry," *Iran International*, 2 January, 2023, accessed 28 July 2023, https://www.iranintl.com/en/202301025682.

10 These are just the official numbers that the Iranian government reported to the World Health Organization; the real number is probably much higher. See World Health Organization, accessed 13 April 2023, https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/ir.

11 Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*: *Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), 9. Emphasis in original.

12 Assmann, "Globalization, Universalism, and the Erosion of Cultural Memory," 123.

Telling triumphant and tragic stories about pasts and mythical personalities fulfils several functions. Casting the present as a reincarnation of the past might help give a sense of order to current events, enabling people to mourn their losses and mobilise for collective action.[13] Recounting stories of past sacrifice can grant some reassurance that the group has already survived hardship in the past and will do so again.[14] In addition, reminding each other of the group's foundational stories helps confirm group boundaries and one's own belonging as it is "easier for us to ignore the fragility of boundaries if we see others who demarcate them in the same way."[15]

Like other groups defining themselves through their allegiance to their nation, people claiming to speak for the Iranian nation often project their group's history to reach back to ancient times. This naturally leaves them with a rather overwhelming amount of history to choose from: an entire parade of triumphant battles and painful defeats, ground-breaking scientific discoveries and intricate court intrigues, devastating natural disasters, and the slow rhythms of everyday life, all waiting to be turned from tangles of cause and effect into a clear narrative where A must always lead to B. It is important to note that this does not happen on its own, however. As Susan Sontag reminds us, "[w]hat is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that this is important, and this is the story about how it happened."[16] Therefore, national(ist) narratives – or rather the powers that shape them – rely on "the exigencies of the present"[17] as well as the needs and expectations of their audience and transmitters to create order where there is none. This means that the stories that gain a certain prominence for explaining how the Iranian nation came to be usually take up a hegemonial position, at least in certain (more or less bounded) groups. The conflict between different national(ist) narratives, and the heroes, martyrs, and villains that populate them, thus mirrors the conflict between different political groupings in Iran who place more weight on either the Islamic or the pre-Islamic part of Iran's heritage.[18] Rejecting one narrative, one stipulation of what is important and how it

13 Samira Rajabi, "Political Memory and Social Media: The Case of Neda," in *Social Media in Iran: Politics and Society After 2009*, ed. David M. Faris and Babak Rahimi (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 240.

14 Lucia Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 31.

15 Giesen and Eisenstadt, *Triumph and Trauma*, 4.

16 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York, NY: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2003), 86.

17 Laleh Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5.

18 Georg Feitscher, "Erinnerung und Gedächtnis," in Asch et al., *Compendium Heroicum*.

happened, and embracing another is thus also a rejection or approval of the collective identity that the narrative undergirds.[19]

This is particularly relevant in situations where group boundaries are highly contentious, as is the case in Iran today; with both regime supporters and opponents claiming to represent the true Iranian nation and accusing the other side of treason, drawing some comfort from a community of like-minded people becomes ever more enticing, which in turn reinforces those boundaries. At the same time, as boundaries between groups become more impenetrable, those between past, present, and future turn more porous. Psychoanalytical research suggests that in these contexts "time collapse" sets in:

> "Time collapse typically occurs when a chosen trauma is reactivated. This term refers to the fears, expectations, fantasies, and defenses associated with a chosen trauma that reappear when both conscious and unconscious connections are made between the past trauma and a contemporary threat. [. . .] If the large group is in a powerless position, a current event may reactivate a sense of victimization."[20]

In such a state, the past is not only a memory that can be unpacked and then repacked at will, but also a filter that colours one's perception of events. This does not mean that some people do not manage to spin the narrative in a way that affords them greater power, but removing oneself from the impact of the past upon the present is a difficult thing indeed.

Iranian memories of empire are currently among the most important sites where past, present, and future blend together and the battle is being fought over who or what Iran is. Iran's mytho-historical past as well as its experience of conquest at the hands of Arab Muslim armies currently display a lot of "commemorative density" (and have for some time). Commemorative density, as theorized by Yael Zerubavel, characterizes periods or events that attract a considerable level of attention and discussion in commemorative acts, but also mundane entertainment or political debate.[21] One can cite historical reasons for this; whereas the Pahlavi Shahs (1925–1979) laid a lot of commemorative emphasis on Iran's pre-

19 Rosa de Jorio, "Politics of Remembering and Forgetting: The Struggle over Colonial Monuments in Mali," *Africa Today* 52, no. 4 (2006): 82.

20 Vamık D. Volkan, "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity," *Group Analysis* 34, no. 1 (2001). The term chosen trauma, coined by Volkan, signifies that historical events (or rather the stories based on them) are not created equal; whereas some potentially traumatic events are forgotten after a few decades, others are elevated to form what Assmann and Conrad call a group's "referential core" (Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad, "Introduction," in Assmann and Conrad, *Memory in a Global Age*, 8).

21 Zerubavel, *Recovered roots*, 8.

Islamic monarchies (and their literary incarnations like the Shahnameh epos) to loosen the Shi'a clergy's hold over the population, the Islamic Republic distanced itself from this narrative and instead focused on Iran's Islamic heritage. As will become clear, since one memory of empire was heavily favoured over the other by consecutive regimes with very different ideas about what an ideal society looks like, both narratives have become strongly politicized – the one lamenting Iran's decline from an early advanced civilization to barbarianism under Muslim rule, and the other praising the Arab Muslim conquest as a rescue from hedonistic decadence and inequality. These days, even many regime supporters would agree that something needs to be done about the interconnected crises the country is facing, but the respective Golden Ages that they raise up as models for the future could not be more different.[22]

It is in our Blood: Genealogy and the Question of the "We"

Navid Afkari and the Shahnameh

The first memory of empire I will discuss might as well be called a dream: the mythical fight of Kaveh the Blacksmith and Fereydun the Hidden Prince against the evil King Zahhak, which ended Zahhak's centuries-long rule and brought about the empire of the Kayanid kings. This story forms one of the central tales of the Shahnameh, an epic poem written in the eleventh and twelfth century by the Persian poet Abu al-Qasem Ferdowsi Tusi. In terms of content, the Shahnameh is based on historiographical writing available at the time of its composition and recounts the period from Iran's mythical origins until the Arab Muslim conquest. It therefore merges fiction and fact in "a manner of historiography that has successfully fused its own mythic and heroic dimensions into its historical conscious-

22 Compare, for instance, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's claim in his speech for the fortieth anniversary of the revolution that the Islamic Republic "seeks to follow the role model of the government founded by Imam Ali" with opposition figure Reza Pahlavi II's accusation that "this regime's medieval mindset is not compatible with governance in the twenty-first century." Ali Khamenei, "The 'Second Phase of the Revolution' Statement addressed to the Iranian nation," *Khamenei.ir*, 11 February 2019, accessed 28 July 2023, https://english.khamenei.ir/news/6415/The-Second-Phase-of-the-Revolution-Statement-addressed-to-the; Reza Pahlavi, "The Power of the People, United," *Kayhan Life*, 20 October 2022, accessed 28 July 2023, https://kayhanlife.com/news/kayhan/prince-reza-pahlavi-the-alternative-to-the-islamic-republic-is-the-iranian-nation/.

ness."[23] So whereas the Shahnameh, or rather its author, dramatized and to a certain extent romanticised the past as a time of great heroes, it would be wrong to say that it is "just" a myth.[24] Rather, it is treated today as a poetic expression of who and what Iran is.

The story of Zahhak is located early in the Shahnameh.[25] Zahhak, the son of an Arab ruler, makes a deal with the devil, who endows him with immortality and great power, but which also results in two voracious snakes growing out of his shoulders whom he feeds the brains of two youths every day to prevent that they eat him instead. Zahhak conquers Iran and rules it brutally for centuries, until one day it falls to the sons of a certain blacksmith named Kaveh to be sacrificed to Zahhak's snakes. Incensed, Kaveh goes to Zahhak to retrieve his sons and then leads a popular uprising against the King together with Fereydun, a scion of the last true Iranian King whose mother had hidden him away from court. Marching under Kaveh's apron, which serves them as a banner, and fighting behind Fereydun's ox-headed mace, the people manage to overthrow Zahhak and install Fereydun on the throne.

This specific memory of empire – wherein a common-born hero saves the ancient Iranian empire from a foreign-born tyrant and lays the foundations for a new Golden Age – features many links to Navid Afkari's story: his working-class background (Afkari worked as a plasterer besides wrestling), the importance of family as a catalyst (Afkari is said to have been a caring, family-minded person, and withstood his torturers' attempts to get him to implicate his brothers in his murder case), his physical strength, and the identity of his opponent, that is, an old man who kills his young subjects to stay in power. In a comment on a much-shared article by exile news organization Kayhan London, one person draws the same conclusions and writes:

> In Iranian mythology there is the story of a devilish ruler named Zahhak snake-shoulder, who came from a land of demons and fed the snakes growing out of his shoulders with young people's blood. Feeding his snakes the blood of young Iranians granted him immortality [. . .]. This mythological Iranian story has come true today, and the seed and legacy of this devilish foreign ruler [. . .] has come back to rule over Iran and the old men [executing this rule] have discovered their need for the blood of young Iranians. With the difference

23 Hamid Dabashi, *The Shahnameh*: *The Persian Epic in World Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 85.

24 Saghi Gazerani, *The Sistani Cycle of Epics and Iran's National History*: *On the Margins of Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 2.

25 For a good English translation see Abolqasem Ferdowsi and Dick Davis, *Shahnameh*: *The Persian Book of Kings*, with the assistance of Azar Nafisi (East Rutherford: Penguin Publishing Group, 2016).

> that today they spill the blood of young Iranians not for immortality in 'this world', but to please their made-up God.[26]

As this excerpt demonstrates, people do not only compare Afkari to Kaveh in order to make sense of the present, but draw direct lines connecting Iran's plight under Zahhak to its misery under the Islamic Republic. According to this view, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and his inner circle not only behave like Zahhak, but are his successors in spirit. Drawing a parallel between Khamenei and probably the most unequivocally evil figure in the entire Shahnameh serves to indict the Islamic Republic's ruling elite of regarding the country and its population as their personal property to exploit, sucking the Iranian nation dry and being in league with the devil.

Furthermore, it is also quite telling that (at least in my sample) the most popular reference point for Afkari is Kaveh the Blacksmith, as opposed to, for example, triumphant heroes of royal blood such as Fereydun or innocent and oppressed martyrs like Siyavash.[27] With Kaveh/Afkari representing the common people, distinguished not by divine grace but the courage of their hearts, it is the nation itself that defies and ultimately defeats its tyrant instead of waiting around for a saviour to show themself. This sentiment is expressed very well in a graffito painted onto Afkari's tombstone, photos of which circulated widely online. The graffito only quotes the first two lines of Kaveh's speech before Zahhak, but I will cite it in full for context:

> I'm Kaveh, and a blacksmith, sire,' he said,
> And as he spoke his clenched fists struck his head.
> It's you whom I accuse, you are the one
> Whose fire's destroyed all that I've ever done.
> A king then, or a monster? Which are you?
> Tell us, your majesty, which of the two?
> If you reign over seven kingdoms, why
> Must our fate be to suffer and to die?
> Acquit yourself then, let me weigh your worth
> And let your words astonish all the earth;

26 "Seda-ye azadi va dadkhahi-ye Navid resa-tar va boland-tar az parisal [The voice of freedom and justice for Navid rings louder than last year]," Kayhan London, 13 September 2021, accessed 27 April 2023, https://kayhan.london/1400/06/22/255933/. Original in Persian, my own translation.

27 The story of Siyavash, a descendant of Fereydun, is another well-known tale from the Shahnameh. It recounts Siyavash's expulsion from the Iranian court after falling prey to an intrigue by his stepmother the Queen and his subsequent betrayal and murder by the hands of Afrasiab, a rival king with whom Siyavash had sought asylum. Siyavash is thus a paradigmatic martyr figure, too virtuous to survive in a world filled with guile and deceit; in pre-modern times, he was even turned into the object of commemorative rituals to mourn his death.

> And when we've heard you out we'll see
> The evils that the world has done to me
> And why it is my son's brains have to feed
> Your snakes' insatiable and monstrous greed.[28]

It is predominantly the subject positions in this speech that I find instructive: there is an "I," i.e., Kaveh, whose personal suffering represents the entire population's suffering, but who also condemns his sovereign and demands accountability, thereby claiming agency on behalf of the voiceless; there is a "you," i.e., Zahhak, who has to sit wordlessly through Kaveh's accusations and have his humanity taken away; and there is a "we," i.e., the Iranian people with Kaveh as their spokesperson, who are entitled to have their oppressor account for his actions in front of them and then pass judgment on him in an act of collective sovereignty. Referencing this scene on Afkari's grave somewhat turns the tables in that it is not the singular, tortured individual speaking for the voiceless many, but the many giving a voice to an oppressed individual. Nonetheless, this act represents a reclamation of agency through denouncing an unjust ruler in what could be read as a home-grown conception of popular sovereignty.

Lastly, representing Afkari as a modern-day version of Kaveh also raises expectations concerning the future, specifically the fall of the Islamic Republic and the beginning of a new Golden Age. As one person writes on Twitter/X: "The #criminal_clique [meaning the ruling elite] kept everything away from the people's lives and culture and now is the time to return to honouring our great personalities. Navid = Kaveh the Blacksmith."[29] The tweet is illustrated with a painting of Kaveh in traditional miniature style which shows Kaveh standing on a ledge, raising his fist and holding his apron-turned-banner while addressing a group of smaller figures. Both Kaveh, whom the caption helpfully informs us is actually Afkari, as well as the group are armed, but Kaveh is much larger than the other men and visibly more muscular. Kaveh/Afkari says: "Until Zahhak is overthrown and the blood of Navid, Mostafa, Sattar, Neda etc. is avenged, we will not back down."[30] This statement is thus a promise to the opposition's martyrs that the blood ties between them and the community that remembers and mourns them are as strong as ever.

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28 Translation taken from Ferdowsi and Davis, *Shahnameh*, 19. You can see the photo on a website dedicated to Afkari's gravesite: https://navidafkari.info/%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C%D8%AE%DA%86%D9%87%E2%80%8C%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1, accessed 27 April 2023.

29 Twitter @fandoq [pseudonym], 18 September 2020.

30 Mostafa Karimbeigi and Neda Aqa Soltan are among the most prominent casualties of the Green Wave protests of 2009. They were both shot dead by security forces. Sattar Beheshti died in custody in 2012 after having been arrested for criticizing Khamenei and the Iranian judiciary online.

At this point, the metaphor starts breaking down – after all, Afkari is dead and cannot lead a movement – but the prediction of the future is clear. Just as Kaveh and the people that followed him did not back down until they had brought down the tyrant, today's Iranian nation will not stop until they have achieved the same result.

Jina Mahsa Amini and the Achaemenid Empire

While the Achaemenid Empire and its founder, Cyrus II (in Persian Kourosh, ca. 600–530 BCE) stand firmly in the realm of history, Cyrus' actual life and deeds leave much room for projection due to the scarcity of source material.[31] What we know about him today can be traced back to three kinds of sources, with their own inherent biases: Greek historiography, such as the Cyropaedia, a (partly fictionalied) biography by Greek philosopher and general Xenophon; the Bible, especially the books of Ezra and Isaiah, which praise Cyrus for liberating the Jews from captivity in Babylon; and archaeological finds such as the Cyrus cylinder, which was discovered by British archaeologists in the ruins of Babylon and declares Cyrus' kingship over the Babylonians.[32] From these sources, one can piece together some core dates of his life. Succeeding his father Cambyses, Cyrus became King of the local kingdom of Anshan (today in central/southern Iran) in 559 BCE and as such led a rebellion against the Median King Astyages. After taking over the Median throne, Cyrus kept expanding his rule until he had conquered Anatolia and the Levant to the West as well as the lands reaching up to the Indus River to the East, including Babylon in 539 BCE.[33] These sources agree that Cyrus displayed great religious tolerance, helping to rebuild the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.[34] However, it remains unclear which religion he practiced himself (if any).[35] He died on a military campaign in the Aral Sea region in 530 BCE and was buried in Pasargadae near today's Madar-e Soleyman in Iran.[36]

31 Ali Ansari, "A Royal Romance: The Cult of Cyrus the Great in Modern Iran," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 31, no. 3 (2021): 411.

32 A translation of the Cyrus cylinder by Irving Finkel of the British Museum, where the artefact is kept, can be found on the museum's website, accessed 27 October 2023, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1880-0617-1941.

33 Muhammad A. Dandamayev, "Cyrus II the Great," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 6, no. 5 (1993).

34 Ezra 1:1–4 (King James Bible).

35 Menahem Merhavy, *National Symbols in Modern Iran: Identity, Ethnicity, and Collective Memory* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2019), 73.

36 Dandamayev, "Cyrus II the Great."

Due to the nature of available sources about him, Cyrus the Great had been much more of a fascination for Western thinkers than for Iranians until the twentieth century CE.[37] This, in addition to the fact that there are no Persian-language sources about him, meant that turning Cyrus into an object of national identification required royal patronage, which he received under the Pahlavi Kings (1925–1979), as well as some creative interpretation. It was especially during the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1941–1979) that the Achaemenids, and Cyrus the Great in particular, were raised to be paragons of Iranian virtue.[38] Cyrus' acceptance among the population was helped along by propagating the belief that a Qur'anic figure called Zulqarnayn (literally "he who has two horns"), who is commonly identified as Alexander the Great, was actually a reference to Cyrus, which granted him a veneer of monotheism and thus greater acceptability among the Muslim public.[39] Pahlavi enthusiasm for Cyrus at first proved to be detrimental for commemoration after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 because the new political elite rejected anything with an ideological connection to the Pahlavi era (which included most of Iran's pre-Islamic history). However, due to ongoing popular fascination with Cyrus, they soon reversed course and even found ways of appropriating Iran's pre-Islamic heritage for their ideological purposes, as evidenced by former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad calling Cyrus "the godfather of all *basi-*

37 For an overview of Europe's fascination with Cyrus and his subsequent re-import to Iran see Josef Wiesehöfer, „Ein kühner Beschirmer der Rechte der Menschen, seiner Brüder: Das Bild des Kyros in den Herrscher- und Herrschaftsdiskursen von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit," in *Politische Kultur im frühneuzeitlichen Europa: Festschrift für Olaf Mörke zum 65. Geburtstag,* ed. Julia Ellermann, Dennis Hormuth, and Volker Seresse (Kiel: Ludwig, 2017), 179–97.

38 Technically, Cyrus II is not an Achaemenid but a Teispid in the sense that he (by his own testimony) did not descend from a person by the name of Achaemenes whom later Achaemenid Great Kings (starting with Darius I) claimed as a forebear, but a certain Teispes. The question of Teispid-Achaemenid dynastic coherence is murky because of contradictions in extant sources and the kind of ancestry-doctoring that many new rulers engaged in for the sake of legitimacy. However, these are discussions held among experts, while laypeople happily keep referring to Cyrus II as the founder of the Achaemenid Empire. Since I am interested in common perceptions, I will therefore follow the common nomenclature designating Cyrus II an Achaemenid and refer interested readers to Waters' breakdown of Teispid- Achaemenid geneaology: Matt Waters, *King of the World: The Life of Cyrus the Great* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), Appendix C.

39 Most commentators on the Qur'an believe this to be false; for an overview of the discussion see Menahem Merhavy, "Religious Appropriation of National Symbols in Iran: Searching for Cyrus the Great," *Iranian Studies* 48, no. 6 (2015).

jis."[40] In spite of this, and epitomising what Ansari calls the Iranian "romance of monarchy,"[41] Cyrus and the Achaemenids in general are proving ever more popular as a political myth among opposition-minded, nationalist Iranians searching for alternative sources of national identity.

One of the most popular commemoration events is Cyrus Day, held each year on 29 October on what is believed to be either his birthday or the day he entered a freshly conquered Babylon. In 2022, this day coincided with the most intense period of the Woman Life Freedom protests because the traditional fortieth-day mourning ceremonies (*Chehelom* in Persian) for Jina Mahsa Amini as well as for several (mostly young, female) protesters fell into the same time span. Using this fact as an incentive to mobilize their fellow citizens, people framed their calls to protest in nationalist language by drawing on Cyrus' example of resistance against violent and intolerant rulers.[42] The exile news agency Unika, for example, posted a video on Twitter/X and YouTube in which they praised people's courageous participation in Amini's *Chehelom* and called on them to participate in even higher numbers in the *Chehelom* of "our non-blossomed flower Nika Shakarami" because "as 29 October, the Day of Cyrus the Great, is drawing near, we descendants and heirs of Iran will come out into the streets stronger than ever."[43] This phrasing constructs a direct line between the figure of Cyrus, imagined here as a proud rebel against tyrannical rule, and modern-day Iranians, thereby comparing the Iranian people not with the chosen hero's followers as in Afkari/Kaveh's case, but with the hero himself. It thus draws two interconnected boundaries between and around the collective body of opposition-minded Iranians: one based on political persuasion, according to which only those people actively putting their lives on the line in protests are actual Irani-

40 Merhavy, "Religious Appropriation of National Symbols in Iran: Searching for Cyrus the Great," 944. Italics in original. *Basijis* are members of a volunteer militia affiliated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps.

41 Ansari, "A Royal Romance," 405.

42 The Median King Astyages and the Babylonian King Nabonidus, both of whom Cyrus deposed, are said to have been tyrants who exploited their subjects and imposed harsh regulations for religious minorities.

43 Twitter @unikador, 26 October 2022. Nika Shakarami died at 16 years of age sometime between 19 and 29 September 2022 after participating in a street protest in Tehran. The exact date is unclear because after her disappearance on 19 September, the Iranian authorities did not inform her family about her whereabouts or hand over her body for ten days even though her family was looking for her desperately. Officially, she died of a suicide attempt by jumping off a building, but most likely she was beaten to death by the security services after being arrested. After originally handing over Shakarami's body to her family, the authorities again abducted and secretly buried her in the village of Veysiyan in order to prevent the family from holding a public funeral.

ans, whereas those remaining on the side lines and those supporting the regime are equally excluded from the nation; and one based on ethnicity, since the Achaemenids were (most likely) among the forebears of ethnic Persians. This phrasing thus excludes all non-ethnically Persian Iranians, about half of the population.[44] Whereas the Woman Life Freedom protests were generally much more attentive towards the difficulties faced by ethnic and linguistic minorities, implicitly excluding language thus remains prevalent, especially in circles that like to trace back their lineage to the political myth of Cyrus the Great.

This attempt of defining "true Iranian-ness," that is, opposition to everything the Islamic Republic stands for, also has a religious component. Commenting on one of the countless videos showing protest scenes in the streets of Iran, one person applauds the depicted protesters by saying: "Peace be upon each and every one of these true descendants of Cyrus the Great. Iran really is the abode of lions. May Ahura Mazda [God] shield you."[45] Besides another claim to genealogical continuity between modern Iranians and Cyrus, the choice of word for God is interesting in this tweet. In Persian there are several options for invoking God, which carry different connotations. The most common term, "Khoda," derives from the Middle Persian word for "lord" and is used not only in Iran, but in the wider non-Arabic-speaking Muslim world. It does not carry a specific religious connotation since it is used by followers of different religions (and atheists) – as opposed to another term, "Allah," which is derived from Arabic and denotes (outside the Arabic-speaking world) specifically the Muslim version of God. In Iran, it carries the additional connotation of the speaker being somewhat Arabophile, potentially conservative, and a supporter of the Islamic Republic. The term used in the quoted tweet, Ahura Mazda, is specifically associated with Zoroastrianism, a pre-Islamic Iranian religion that several pre-Islamic empires are said to have followed, among them some Achaemenid Great Kings. Calling God "Ahura Mazda" thus makes a claim to authenticity in one's Iranian-ness that goes back to a time before the Muslim Arab conquest (in this worldview) deformed Iranians' religious sensibilities – when it was Kings and not Mullahs that ruled Iran, and its people were not sheep but lions. Consequently, now that Iranians have woken up to their heritage and rediscovered their courage, the future will bring a revival of the Achaemenid memory of empire and turn Iran into an abode of Kings once again.

44 Oubai Shahbandar, "No Country for Minorities: The Agony of Iran's Ethnic Arabs, Kurds, Balochis and Azeris," *Arab News*, 9 March 2021, accessed 27 April 2023, https://www.arabnews.com/node/1822151/middle-east.

45 Twitter @sarv [pseudonym], 26 October 2022.

The Islamic Republic, of course, will do anything to prevent that – including (again, in this worldview) murdering its own God-fearing citizens to distract the nation from its uprising. On 26 October 2022, three terrorists committed a mass shooting at Shiraz' Shah Cheragh mosque, killing at least 15 people. The attack was later claimed by ISIS, but on the internet, doubts soon appeared on whether it was just a ploy by the ruling elite to galvanize the population against an external enemy.[46] What made people especially suspicious was the timing of the attack, since it took place on the day of Amini's *Chehelom*, the day before Shakarami's *Chehelom*, and three days before Cyrus Day, in a city very close to Pasargadae.

It is to be understood in this vein when one person writes on Twitter/X: "This criminal gang [the Mullahs] started with the Rex cinema when ISIS wasn't fashionable yet, but our revolution won't be side-tracked under any circumstances and we will keep going until the fall of this devilish [*ahrimani*] regime and come out into the streets on Cyrus Day in Pasargadae and all over the country."[47] This person hereby ascribes the Achaemenid memory of empire transtemporal importance that is tied to both a time and a place. Cyrus Day, i.e., his birthday or the day of his greatest conquest, is understood to be a key date bringing with it the triumph of the Iranian nation's revolution against "this devilish regime," just as it did in the Achaemenid era. As such, it is strong enough to mobilise a critical mass of people to sweep away the "criminal gang" that started its rule by murdering its own citizens.

Furthermore, Pasargadae, the place where Cyrus is buried, serves as a physical space for the people to rally just as they did on the preceding days around Amini and Shakarami's graves – a place where they can feel their physical close-

46 See for example this video essay (in Persian), published by oppositional news channel AVATODAY on YouTube: Ali Javanmardi, "Barnāmeh-ye zendeh-ye vizheh-ye bamdad panjshanbeh 5 Aban-mah 1401," *AVATODAY (YouTube Channel)*, 26 October 2022, accessed 19 July 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QG1JvHQHeDs.

47 Twitter @siahleiz [pseudonym] 27th October 2022. "Ahriman" is another Zoroastrian term denoting the principle of Evil (≈ Satan). The burning of the Rex cinema in Abadan in 1978 is generally understood to be one of the catalysts of the Iranian Revolution. It claimed the lives of around 400 people (the exact numbers differ) who were locked into the cinema when terrorists doused the entrance area in flammables and set it aflame. Forty years later, theories as to the culprits abound; while some claim that the former king's secret police did it to scare people away from protesting, others lay the blame on the Islamist opposition and its hatred of Western culture (including cinemas). Neither theory has ever been conclusively proven, much like who really was behind the Shah Cheragh attack. See Sebastien Roblin, "A Brutal 1978 Terrorist Attack Changed Iran (And the World) Forever," *The National Interest*, 23 April 2020, accessed 27 April 2023, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/brutal-1978-terrorist-attack-changed-iran-and-world-forever-147381.

ness to Cyrus and the empire he created. Under the pressure of severe violence against protestors, this person thus actively collapses the millennia between Cyrus' time and today according to the present's needs. According to them, Shah Cheragh, which hosts the grave of an important Shia religious figure, is but a distraction without definitory power and will – with its reference point being the Arab conquerors instead of the Achaemenid emperors – play no role in the revolution that is sure to come.

Pouya Bakhtiari and the Arab Muslim Conquest

When the newly founded Muslim community, still under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdallah (ca. 570–632 CE), started expanding its sphere of influence beyond the areas surrounding Mecca and Medina in 629 CE, Iran was ruled by the Sasanian Kings. Priding themselves on continuing the Achaemenid legacy, the Sasanians had conquered lands reaching from Egypt to Pakistan and from the Caucasus to the Eastern shores of the Arabian Peninsula.[48] The Sasanian empire only reached its greatest territorial extent in the first decades of the seventh century, shortly before it fell to the Arab Muslim conquerors. However, the wars that its ruler Khosrow II fought against the Byzantine empire to achieve this also severely weakened the Sasanian treasury, population, and leadership, leading to crippling defeats in al-Qadisiyah (today's Iraq, 636/637 CE) and Nahavand (today's Iran, 642 CE). The last Sasanian emperor, Yazdagerd III, died in exile in 651 CE, but many elements of court life, administrative structures, as well as the Persian language and the main religion (Zoroastrianism) were carried over into Arab Muslim rule.[49]

On the Arab Muslim side, the expansion of their empire did not follow a central master plan, or even aim at converting large parts of the conquered populations to Islam. Rather, it consisted of separate raids organised and executed in a more or less autonomous fashion by individual tribes, mostly for economic gains and reputation, with the occasional larger battle for which the ruling Caliph would send trusted commanders.[50] In terms of religion, conversion to Islam seems to have taken place over the course of several centuries, with nobles converting earlier than peasants in order to secure their privileges and economic

48 Eberhard W. Sauer, "Introduction," in *Sasanian Persia: Between Rome and the Steppes of Eurasia*, ed. Eberhard W. Sauer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 10.
49 A. S. Shahbazi, "Sasanian Dynasty," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition.
50 Abd A.-H. Zarrinkub, "The Arab Conquest of Iran and Its Aftermath," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. R.N. Frye (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5.

weight. Those who did not wish to convert were usually left in peace (as long as they paid a special tax) and given protected status as followers of a monotheistic religion.[51]

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Islamist opposition-turned-elite propagated a very negative view of the Sasanian era (and pre-Islamic Iran in general). Ali Shari'ati, one of the Islamist opposition's most influential ideologues, argued that pre-Islamic Iran's civilisational glories had long fallen to ruin by the time the Arab Muslim armies faced a decaying Sasanian empire.[52] At the time, it was generally accepted that towards the end, the Sasanian court had been too occupied with internecine warfare to recognize the direness of the situation while its people were so overtaxed and exploited that they welcomed the Arab Muslim conquerors as liberators. While there is probably some kernel of truth to this, newer research suggests that this view of the conquest of Iran is overly simplistic.[53] This reductive view, however, does not stop either side – the Islamist regime or oppositional circles – from exploiting this memory of being integrated into a foreign empire for their own ideological objectives.

Therefore, while the Sasanian era still does not receive much (positive) attention from the side of the regime, in oppositional circles the end of the Sasanian empire and Iran's conquest by Muslim Arab armies is seen as a historical catastrophe that Iran has never really recovered from. In this view, the Islamic Republic, and the suffering it inflicts upon the Iranian nation, is a direct continuation of a conquest that took place 1,400 years ago, with the intervening centuries rhetorically collapsed into nothing. Explaining the woes of the present, the conquerors of old and their modern-day descendants are both constructed as essentially alien to Iran, external elements who subdued and continue to subdue true Iranians through violence. It is to be understood in this sense when Manouchehr Bakhtiari, Pouya Bakhtiari's father, states in a video message: "A government that shoots its own people is an enemy. They're people who came from outside and don't have Iranian blood in their veins. They're the enemy. They're transgressors/rapists [*motajavez*] who entered Iran."[54]

The idea that a ruler who uses lethal force against their own population cannot possibly be part of the Iranian nation appears time and again in my material, usually while using the vocabulary of ethnicity to express this outsider status. Explaining why they will participate in Pouya Bakhtiari's *Chehelom* rite despite the

51 Hamid Algar, "Islam in Iran: The Advent of Islam," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 13.

52 Menahem Merhavy, *National Symbols in Modern Iran*: *Identity, Ethnicity, and Collective Memory* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2019), 44.

53 Ansari, "A Royal Romance," 409.

54 Twitter @iranfarashgard, 6 December 2019. The term "*motajavez*" is used both for people who break a law or accord, as well as to signify rape.

danger of further violence, somebody writes on Twitter/X that the aim is "to bring about the immortal ideals of Pouya Bakhtiari and all the others who lost their lives protesting in 2019; to bring peace to the hearts of the grieving families; and to bring freedom from the claws of the tribe [*qowm*] of oppressors to beloved Iran."[55] The term *qowm*, which I have translated here as tribe, can also be used for the English words ethnicity and race. In combination with the previous quote from Manouchehr Bakhtiari talking about Iranian blood, it takes on a less-than-subtle racist quality. In essence, this view professes that true Iranians do not kill their compatriots. However, people of other ethnicities do engage in that habit and must thus be tainted on a fundamental level in comparison to Iranians' intrinsic purity.

One "symptom" of this tainted nature is duplicity, i.e., deceiving the nation about one's true origins and intentions. One person makes an interesting comparison with the Soviet Union:

> The leaders of the Islamic Republic, like the Russian communists, all came from abroad. #Pouya_Bakhtiari's father said correctly that they're not Iranians. A knife-wielding criminal called Djugashbari [Djugashvili] gave himself the name Stalin just like the Islamic Republic's President named himself Hassan Fereydun [*sic*].[56]

The tweet is accompanied by a video from a Persian-language exile radio station in which host Artin Partovian and his guest Dr. Zartosht Sotoudeh talk about how before the 1917 revolutions there were no communists in Russia because they all came from abroad, gave themselves made-up names, and killed anyone who disagreed with them, just like the Islamists in Iran.[57] Again, one key takeaway from this is the absolute conviction that a person so morally reprehensible that they would lie about their identity, enter another country, and kill its people must be a foreigner. It is debatable, but ultimately irrelevant, for the aim of this study whether Sotoudeh (or Manouchehr Bakhtiari) believe the clerical elite to truly originate from outside Iran in terms of genetics.[58] What matters is that to make sense of the present they construct the Islamic Republic's elites as (morally inferior) for-

55 Twitter @bumadaran [pseudonym], 26 December 2019.

56 Twitter @bakelan [pseudonym], 21 December 2019. Actually, this person has it backward; Hassan Fereydun is ex-Iranian president Hassan Rouhani's birth name, which he changed some time after the 1979 revolution, likely for ideological reasons since "Rouhani" means "cleric."

57 The full video can be watched (in Persian) on Radio Shemroon's YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzT3LFRZwPQ, accessed 27 April 2023.

58 Generally speaking, there has been a lot of movement of prominent Iranian clerical families between what is now Iran, Iraq and Lebanon (as well as Pakistan and India) in the past centuries for political as well as academic reasons, but it is certainly not true that every high-ranking cleric has roots outside Iran.

eigners who subjugated true Iranians for the sake of personal gain and the spread of their violent ideology, just like the Arab Muslims did 1,400 years ago.

The connection with the Arab ethnicity becomes even more obvious elsewhere, for example in edited photos that equate Khamenei with the second Umayyad Caliph Yazid ibn Mu'awiya, whose military campaign against the Prophet's grandson Husayn ibn Ali ultimately resulted in the schism between the Sunni and Shi'i branches of Islam.[59] Other examples include dubbing the Ayatollahs "Zahhakis" after the Arab tyrant who brutalised Iran in the Shahnameh[60] or calling the Islamic Republic's security forces "*Da'eshis*" (the Arabic and Persian term for ISIS members).[61] It is clear that people using this vocabulary implicitly blame Arabs for exporting their supposedly intrinsic violent nature to Iran, which is rather problematic since Iran is home to about four million Arab Iranians, many of whom live in poverty due to the southwestern provinces' systematic neglect by the central government, and thus harbour deep discontent with the state.[62] Mobilisation efforts across ethnic lines with an eye for intersectional oppression, as can be seen in the Woman Life Freedom protests, thus provide a valuable chance to broaden the resistance's base and raise its chances of success. Whether this will be enough to overcome this particular memory of empire remains to be seen.

Conclusion

This is one side of the story; collective memory, especially those parts of it characterized by high affective potential such as memories of empire, can be used to exclude and even physically harm those that are remembered – and thus constructed – as hostile outsiders. When the remembering group feels under pressure, as large parts of the Iranian population (and diaspora) do these days, it is possible to rhetorically collapse the boundaries between the past and the present, to weave past events into present occurrences as an explanation for the group's troubles. In this way, online actors layer their representations of the demon Zahhak or the Caliph Yazid onto Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, just as they enrich their vision of the nation with claims of descent from Cyrus the Great. Thus employed, memories of empire can be reassuring in that they bring some order to

59 You can find one such edit, which proved quite popular on the internet, here: https://www.balatarin.com/permlink/2021/7/21/5624474, accessed 27 April 2023.

60 Twitter @SaghiLaghaie, 30 November 2019.

61 Twitter @ghou [pseudonym], 1 December 2019.

62 Shahbandar, "No country for minorities."

the everyday struggle that is life in Iran; by painting their oppressors in the bloodiest colours and at the same time insisting that the enemy is ontologically different (and inferior) to them, it becomes easier to sort the world into black-and-white categories. Turned into political myths, these memories also facilitate mobilisation efforts by promising people a spot on the right side of history, but at the same time, their divisive and often racist undertones undermine true solidarity between all disaffected groups in- and outside Iran.

However, there is another side to this story; collective grief for Amini, for Afkari, for Bakhtiari, and for the countless others who lost their lives to the struggle against the Islamic Republic in recent years can be used as a unifying source beyond ethnic, linguistic, religious, or gender boundaries. Collective commemoration of the nation's dead can be an act of protest, a revolutionary symbol; it "introduces fellowship, consideration for vulnerability, and recognition of life as political values."[63] There is space here for political myths, such as the one epitomized by Kaveh the Blacksmith's speech before Zahhak, which counters the tyrant's disregard for human life with a powerful display of popular sovereignty. Employed in an inclusive way which elevates decency and solidarity over ethnic belonging, these memories can still provide hope that a better future is within reach – but only by divesting itself of the expectation that this better future brings a renaissance of Iran's supposedly golden imperial past. As a worldview, empire, with its primary mode of expansion being conquest and its main organizing principle being foreign rule by a superior people, is incompatible with the broad coalition that is needed to mount a successful resistance to the Islamic Republic's forces. Much as the past can instruct us on the paths the future might take, only time will tell whether this particular path can lead anywhere.

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63 Dorna Safaian, "Trauer Als Widerstand: Über Ein Symbol Der Revolutionären Bewegung "Frau Leben Freiheit"," *geschichte der gegenwart*, 22 January 2023, accessed 27 April 2023, https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/trauer-als-widerstand-ueber-ein-symbol-der-revolutionaeren-bewegung-frau-leben-freiheit/.

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Part III: **Breaches and Continuities**

Sebastian Fahner

Internationalist Conviction, National Narratives, and Imperial History. A Study of Socialist Commemorative Culture in Austria-Hungary and Spain, 1898-1911

Abstract: This chapter explores the connection between the engagement with (post-)imperial history and internationalism by the labour movement. By looking at the way socialist parties commemorated historical events and analysed imperial history, I explore the different ways in which the tensions between an internationalist creed and national identity was handled by two parties associated with the IInd International. The main argument is that the different ways in which national narratives were appropriated by socialist parties can partially be explained by their attitude to imperial history and their assessment of their (post-)imperial situation. The two case studies are the German-speaking section of the Austrian Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei (SDAP) and their commemoration of the 1848 revolution and the Spanish Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and its commemoration of the Commune of Paris and Dos de Mayo celebrations.

Introduction

> But what is the cause, what is the meaning of the state called 'Austria'? This state, this Austro-Hungarian realm exists because the Habsburg-Lorraine family rules and governs in all its parts; this state exists because of the dynasty and for it. In the face of the dynasty's means of power, that is of course enough to maintain this state for the dynasty; but God knows, there is little reason to be enthusiastic about this kind of state.[1]

1 Friedrich Austerlitz, *Von Schwarzrotgold zu Schwarzgelb. Was die Deutschnationalen waren und was sie sind!* (Wien: Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1911), 6: "Aber was ist die Ursache, was ist der Sinn *des* Staates, den man ‚Oesterreich' nennt? Dieser Staat, dieses österreichisch-ungarische Reich besteht, weil die Familie Habsburg-Lothringen in allen seinen Teilen herrscht und regiert; dieser Staat besteht *wegen der* der Dynastie und *für* sie. Das ist, angesichts der Machtmittel der Dynastie, natürlich genug, um diesen Staat für die Dynastie auch weiter zu erhalten; sich aber für diesen so gearteten Staat zu *begeistern*, dazu ist, weiß Gott, wenig Anlaß." All translations of non-English quotations by the author.

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This is how the social democratic journalist Friedrich Austerlitz described the cause and end of the Austrian monarchy: a state, not to unite one people under one banner as, in his words, the French Republic or the German Empire, but a Frankensteinian creature composed of different territories acquired at different points in history by a ruling dynasty that subjugated these territories to bolster its own power. The lack of enthusiasm that the population showed towards the monarchy therefore was absolutely justified in Austerlitz' view. The above-quoted paragraph was written as part of a booklet edited before the elections to the imperial diet of Cisleithania[2] in 1911, with its obvious aim to attract German nationalist voters to vote for the social democrats rather than the loyalist Christian Social party. Austerlitz heavily leaned into the notion that Austria-Hungary did not serve the need of its peoples but rather perpetuated an anachronistic form of rule that had been forged in a different era and that had become a roadblock for the welfare of its nations.

Austerlitz' attempt to attract voters who had previously sympathised with the German national movement in Austria points at two issues that this chapter seeks to address: first, even though socialists and social democrats presented themselves as internationalists, this did not stop them from trying to appeal to nationalist arguments and narratives. Second, appeals to the nation from the left were often rooted in a denouncement of imperial order and its history. It was often the supposed backwardness of empire that lead internationalists to a more nuanced, sometimes clearly affirmative view of the nation. There already is a wide array of scholarship on the contentious relationship between the internationalism of the labour movement and its integration into national societies.[3] Both parties under consideration in this chapter – the *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei* (SDAP) in Austria and the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) in Spain – were part of the Second International, a group of parties and labour unions that considered themselves to be socialist and internationalist. This did not mean, though, that they completely rejected nation-states as such or that nationality did not play a role in their self-image.[4]

2 This was a term commonly used to refer to the Austrian part of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire from 1867 to 1918.

3 For an overview: Stefan Berger and Angel Smith, eds., *Nationalism, Labour and Ethnicity, 1870-1939* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), and John Schwarzmantel, "Nationalism and Socialist Internationalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 635–54.

4 Georges Haupt, *Programm und Wirklichkeit: Die internationale Sozialdemokratie vor 1914* (Berlin/ Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1970), 21–44. Haupt sketches the main core ideas that the different parties could agree on, among them a rejection of anarchism and an acceptance of the federal nature of the International.

In general, recent years have seen a revived interest in the conflictive relationship between internationalism and national sentiment in the labour movement, which has been especially true for both cases under consideration here. The attitude of the Austrian social democrats to the so-called nationality question of the Habsburg monarchy has always attracted a lot of attention, partially because the Austromarxist reform proposals sometimes have been framed as a path not taken that could have stabilised the monarchy.[5] The organisational aspect of the nationality conflict within the party as well as the broader intellectual context of Marxist nationality debates have been a topic of much debate.[6] In recent years, the role of constructing a kind of "working-class nationalism"[7] through narrative strategies has been stressed by Jakub Beneš. He has also argued that while workers' nationalism didn't mean giving up on international solidarity and class consciousness, it would be a misnomer to label the social democratic labour movement as a "national indifferent"[8] agent, a concept proposed by Tara Zahra to capture the various version of non-national identities that still were pervasive in the early twentieth century.

In the Spanish case, the concept of "national indifference" has been taken up lately by Aurelio Martí Bataller to explore the perspective of Spanish socialists on their nation.[9] Discussions about the development of national consciousness in Spain were for a long time influenced by the hypothesis of a "weak nationalisa-

5 See also Helmut Konrad, "Österreichische Arbeiterbewegung und nationale Frage im 19. Jahrhundert", *Sozialdemokratie und Habsburgerstaat*, ed. Wolfgang Maderthaner (Wien: Löcker, 1998), 119–30. For a comprehensive discussion of different reform proposals, see Jana Osterkamp, *Vielfalt ordnen. Das föderale Europa der Habsburgermonarchie, Vormärz bis 1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020).

6 One of the earliest and still one of the best studies of the multi-national party structure is Hans Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage im habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat, vol. 1, Das Ringen um die supranationale Integration der zisleithanischen Arbeiterbewegung, 1867-1907* (Vienna: Europa-Verlag, 1963). See also Raimund Löw, *Der Zerfall der „Kleinen Internationalen": Nationalitätenkonflikte in der Arbeiterbewegung des alten Österreich, 1889-1914* (Wien: Europaverlag, 1984) and Wolfgang Maderthaner, "Austro-Marxism: Mass Culture and Anticipatory Socialism," in *Culture and Politics in Red Vienna*, ed. Judith Beniston and Robert Vilain (Leeds: Maney, 2006).

7 Jakub S. Beneš, *Workers and Nationalism: Czech and German Social Democracy in Habsburg Austria, 1890-1918* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3.

8 Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities. National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69 (2010): 93–119. For the problems of this concept regarding the labor movement, see Beneš, *Workers and Nationalism*, 54–55.

9 Aurelio Martí Bataller, *¿Una nación (in)diferente? Estudios sobre socialismo y nación en España* (Valencia: tirant humanidades, 2020), 11–22.

tion" of the country compared to other European cases, especially France.[10] In recent years, a new appraisal for the different ways in which patriotic or national sentiment could be expressed has led to a correction of this picture. In particular, there is a growing number of research done on the diverse ways of creating a kind of national self-consciousness on the political left.[11]

I want to add to these ongoing discussions the inclusion of an imperial perspective. The specific ways in which the tension between internationalism and nationalism played out in the labour movement was always prefigured by the engagement with empire and its legacy. For example, a common challenge that both sister parties had to face was the fact that in Austria-Hungary and in Spain national movements often were oppositional movements. They framed themselves as democratic and anti-imperial and used the supposedly imperial character of the state as an argument for their own claims to autonomy or even independence.[12] This illustrates the point that both Spain and Austria-Hungary were experiencing a series of imperial crisis around the year 1900 that made defining an internationalist attitude a complex problem. Following from this, I will argue that the multinational and (post-)imperial character of those polities can add to the understanding of the different ways in which an internationalist conviction could be expressed.

Looking at the engagement of socialist parties with history in general and with nationalist historical narratives is a useful way of exploring socialist attitudes toward nation and empire. The socialist and social democratic parties associated with the Second International shared a common commitment to a better future while at the same time presenting themselves as the most modern and appropriate flag-bearers of working-class interests. As Jakub Beneš has commented in his own study about workers' nationalism, the drive to bind "past beginnings, a transitional present, and a fulfilling future"[13] together was something that social

10 The term "weak nationalisation" was introduced by Borja de Riquer i Permanyer and meant to explain the strength of regional nationalisms in Spain as a consequence of the shortcomings of liberal nation-building in nineteenth century Spain; see Borja de Riquer y Permanyer, "La débil nacionalización española del siglo XIX," *Historia Social* 20 (1994): 97–114. Favourable discussion of this argument, see José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid:Taurus, 2001): 534–50; for a critique, see Ferran Archilés, "Una nacionalización no tan débil: Patriotismo local y republicanismo en Castellón, 1891-1910," *Ayer* 48 (2002): 283–312.

11 See for example the volume Javier Moreno Luzón, ed., *Izquierdas y nacionalismos en la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 2011).

12 Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, "Nation-Building and Regional Integration. The Case of the Spanish Empire, 1700-1914," in *Nationalizing Empires*, ed. Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest/New York: Central European University Press, 2015), 242.

13 Beneš, *Workers and nationalism*, 5.

democrats and nationalists had in common. Thus, the commemorative practices of the labour movement are a useful way to shed new light on the question where they stood regarding the nation.

On the following pages, I will discuss two local examples to show how the engagement with national and imperial narratives of history influenced the commemorative culture within the socialist/social democratic workers' movement. First, I will explore how Austrian social democrats used the commemoration of the 1848 revolution in Vienna to comment on questions of empire and nationality. Second, I will discuss how the socialists in the Basque province of Biscay changed their attitudes to patriotic commemorations over time. I will argue that both of these developments can only fully be understood by seeing them as a socialist way to grapple with the perceived apogee of the nation as a legitimate source of sovereignty in times of imperial crisis.

The Commemoration of the 1848 Revolution in Vienna

Since their foundation as a party, 13 March held a special place in the calendar of Viennese social democrats.[14] On this day in 1848, a crowd of Viennese citizens gathered in protest in front of the building where the so-called *Landstände* (representatives of aristocratic regional diets) were in session to discuss reform demands. When the cavalry was called in to disperse the crowd, the soldiers opened fire, leaving over a dozen people dead in the street. Hearing the news about this, people in working class quarters of Vienna started to construct barricades. The events caused the Austrian chancellor Prince Metternich to flee the city, making room for a new government that promised to deliver on at least some of the reform demands – it was the beginning of the revolution of 1848.[15]

The commemoration of those who died that day in 1848 became one of the most significant events organised by the social democrats in Vienna. At the fiftieth anniversary of the 1848 revolution in 1898 the commemorative services on Vienna's central cemetery attracted 200,000 people.[16] Not all of them were there

14 For a history of the social democratic commemoration of 1848 from a contemporary, see Franz Schuhmeier, "Aus vergangenen Jahren," *Verein für Geschichte der ArbeiterInnenbewegung* (VGA). Märzschriften. 1911: 3–4.

15 A great summary of the events can be found in Christopher Clark, *Revolutionary Spring: Fighting for a New World, 1848-1849* (London: Penguin Books, 2023), 295–306.

16 "Der Gedenktag der Revolution", *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 14 March 1898, 1–3.

to express their adherence to social democracy; the Viennese *Arbeiter-Zeitung* reported that among the people with their red carnations some participants were seen wearing blue cornflowers – the symbol of German nationalism in Austria. The socialist newspaper was proud to note that the red carnations had outnumbered the corn flower by far.[17] This points to one of the contentious points of the 1848-remembrance. The uprising was appropriated by different political movements and the monument on the central cemetery specifically had been put there by a liberal-dominated city council in the 1864.[18] Therefore, the social democrats had to deal with the fact that the event that they celebrated carried different meanings for other political groups who celebrated it. While the SDAP stressed the importance of working-class agency and class conflict in 1848, the German nationalist movement in Austria saw in 1848 a failed attempt to create a German nation-state that would have included the German-speaking parts of the Austrian empire.[19]

The way that social democrats presented the events of 1848 also aimed at bolstering their claim to be the legitimate heirs of the revolutionaries. Starting in 1898, the party published an annual booklet meant to discuss the historical significance of the 1848-revolution from a social democratic perspective which also contained poems, drawings, and short stories on social issues. In these booklets journalists and intellectuals close to the party outlined their interpretation of 1848 as a social upheaval of the lower classes that ended in the betrayal of the insurgents by a cowardly bourgeoisie that eventually welcomed the imperial forces back into the city.[20] The Austrian empire was clearly the villain in this version of the story and anything connected to the black-and-yellow colours of the monarchy was written about in a clearly derogatory tone.[21]

The SDAP also used the ceremony to show its own multi-national character. The speakers at the monument on the central cemetery represented the different national branches of Austrian social democracy. In 1898, German, Czech, Polish, Slovenian, and Italian social democrats each held speeches in their own lan-

17 Ibid.

18 "Urkunde des Grabes der Märzgefallenen," *Die Presse*, 29 October 1864, 3. For the history of the commemoration see also Wolfgang Häusler, "Noch sind nicht alle Märzen vorbei . . . : Zur politischen Tradition der Wiener Revolution von 1848," *Politik und Gesellschaft im alten und neuen Österreich: Festschrift für Rudolf Neck zum 60. Geburtstag*, vol 1, ed. Isabella Ackerl, Walter Hummelberger and Hans Mommsen (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1981), 93–101.

19 For the various connotations of the 1848 commemorations see James Kaye and Isabella Matauschek, "A problematic obligation. Commemorating the 1848 revolution in Austria," in *1848. Memory and oblivion in Europe*, ed. Charlotte Tacke (Brüssel et al.: Peter Lang, 2000), 99–122.

20 All of those booklets can be found in VGA. Märzschriften.

21 J.K., "Zwei Generationen Klerikalismus in Oesterreich," *VGA. Märzschriften*. 1905: 2.

guage.[22] In the days and weeks before the anniversary, social democratic groups in other towns expressed their support for the commemoration, many of them sending delegates to Vienna. In the party newspaper of the bi-national Moravian town Brünn/Brno, the Viennese social democrat Eduard Rieger proclaimed the week before the event that "not only the Viennese, but the whole Austrian proletariat prepares for the holy celebration."[23] The anniversary was to be an all-Austrian celebration. The kind of internationalism presented here was not meant to be anti-national; instead, the party organised commemorative events explicitly to celebrate its peaceful multi-national character and contrasted this with the chaos and violence that the social democratic press associated with the competing nationalist movements that created violent riots. Specifically, party leaders used the occasion of the anniversary of 1898 to present the social democratic party as an alternative to an empire that was not able to provide a functional framework for multiple nationalities to coexist. Ignacy Daszyński, member of Parliament for the Polish section of the SDAP, said in a speech that year "that this revolutionary party that we are is almost the only state-conserving party with regard to a rational organisation of Austria."[24] He went even further, declaring that "if Austria had one historical mission, then it would be the foundation of a federation of free and equal nations."[25] Claims like this were sometimes interpreted as an offer to the state that the social democratic party could actually become a loyalist party as soon as its political demands would be listened to by the crown.[26]

Statements like this must be contextualised in the contemporary political situation, however. The year of the fiftieth anniversary was also the year after the Badeni crisis, a conflict about the status of the Czech language in the Bohemian provinces that had led to the demission of Austrian prime minister Count Kasimir Badeni in November 1897 and caused a high level of street violence between German and Czech nationalists well into 1898.[27] The social democratic party press

22 "Der Gedenktag der Revolution," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 14 March 1898, 2.

23 Eduard Rieger, "Die Todten von 1848," *Volksfreund*, 11 March 1898, 2: "Nicht nur das Wiener, nein, das gesamte österreichische Proletariat rüstet zu einer heiligen Feier."

24 Ignacy Daszyński, *Oesterreich im Gedächtnisjahre der Revolution: Rede von Ignaz Daszynski, gehalten in der Reichsratssitzung vom 29. März 1898* (Wien: Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1898), 3: "daß eben diese revolutionäre Partei, die wir sind, in Bezug auf eine vernünftige Organisation von Oesterreich fast die einzige staatserhaltende Partei ist."

25 Ibid., "Wenn Oesterreich eine geschichtliche Aufgabe hat, so ist es eben die der Gründung eines Föderativbundes der freien und gleichberechtigten Völker."

26 For example Konrad, "Arbeiterbewegung," 128.

27 John W. Boyer, "Badeni and the Revolution of 1897," in *Bananen, Cola, Zeitgeschichte: Oliver Rathkolb und das lange 20. Jahrhundert*, vol. 1., ed. Lucile Dreidemy (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2015), 69–84.

consistently tried to present social democracy as the responsible force in this conflict, arguing that its members were more able than the middle class to live by civic values such as level-headedness and restraint.[28] The self-description as "state-conserving"[29] therefore was meant as an attack on nationalists on both sides of the Czech-German conflict and on the imperial institutions that were unfit to provide a framework for peace between the nationalities. It was a critique of the dynasty and nationalists alike and not meant to convey sympathy for imperial institutions.

Another aspect of social democratic 1848 commemorations in Vienna was the tension between the emphasis on the social aspect of the revolution and the prominent role that a German national revolutionary tradition continued to play, especially for the German-speaking section of the SDAP. Songs and poems that referenced 1848 regularly referenced the German framework of the revolution; for example, a famous poem of the German 1848-revolutionary and poet Georg Herwegh became one of the most popular songs on social democratic commemorative services.[30] The way in which the history of the 1848 revolution was told repeatedly relied on a narrative that centred German and Hungarian revolutionaries fighting against an anachronistic dynasty that relied on the reactionary impulses of the Slavic rural population to stay in power. For example, the German Bohemian social democrat Josef Hannich wrote in 1898 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of 1848: "The resistance of Germans and Hungarians was broken by that of the Slavs."[31] This interpretation of 1848 drew on some already established narratives pushed for example by Friedrich Engels in his writings about 1848. He had argued that a successful revolution should have had the aim of establishing both a German and a Hungarian republic at the expense of the Austrian empire and that this aim was thwarted by the uneducated Slavic peasant population that had let itself become instruments of the Austrian dynasty.[32] This narrative showed up frequently in the commemorative booklets of the Viennese social democrats, including by rather famous authors such as Karl Kautsky, who wrote in 1902 that the Slavic people of Austria had behaved as a "reactionary

28 For examples from 1898, see their reactions to nationalist street brawls in "Palacky-Feier," *Volksfreund*, 17 June 1898, 3–4.

29 See footnote no. 23.

30 For example "Der Gang zum Grabe der Märzgefallenen," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 12 March 1900, 1–2.

31 Josef Hannich, "Die Autonomie der Nationen, nicht die der Königreiche und Länder", *Volksfreund*, 11 March 1898, 7: "Die Widerstandskraft der Deutschen und Ungarn wurde durch die der Slaven gebrochen."

32 For a discussion of this see Roman Rosdolsky, *Zur nationalen Frage: Friedrich Engels und das Problem der ‚geschichtslosen' Völker* (Berlin: Olle und Wolter, 1974).

mass"[33] in 1848. This sentiment was even echoed by a Czech-language social democratic newspaper, the Vienna-based *Dělnické Listy*; after offering a concise description of the events of 13 March 1848 the paper added a short remark on the history of 1848 in the Bohemian lands that read: "It was the Czechs and the Croats who helped to suppress the revolution in Austria, and the Young Czech democrats still boast about it today. That is why it is difficult to write about the revolution in Bohemia, which was nothing but a counter-revolution."[34]

This shows that even in the Czech section of Viennese social democracy accepted the German-centred narrative of the 1848-revolution denouncing the events in the Bohemian lands as counter-revolutionary. In this specific instance, they used this assessment of history to distance themselves from the liberal nationalist Young Czech party. By writing about the 1848 revolution in the Austrian empire in a way as if it had only taken place in Vienna and Hungary and as if the Slavic-majority provinces had been a hotbed of pro-dynastic reaction, the social democratic authors reinforced the notion that there was something inherently progressive to German nationalism in 1848 while the national demands of Slavic people were inherently pro-imperial and therefore historically backward. This aspect of historical writing about 1848 counteracted the intended message that Daszyński tried to convey in his above-quoted speech. The alleged backwardness of the Habsburg monarchy was projected onto its supposedly less-developed nationalities. The German people, according to this interpretation, had been victimised by the empire because their own historical development could have been more progressive if the empire had fallen. This line of interpretation can be found in contributions by a variety of authors over the time under consideration. Karl Höger, one of the most prolific social democrat writers on this topic, considered the Austrian defeat in the German War of 1866 a blessing because it had at least led to some constitutional reforms.[35] Austria was also sometimes unfavourably compared to the German empire that despite its authoritarian characteristics was interpreted as the more modern polity.[36] The negative assessment of the empire was grounded in the expectation that the German nation, including the German-Austrian working-class, would be better off without the empire. This was also the view of Ludo Moritz Hartmann, a social democrat from Vienna who played an important role in the parties' efforts for establishing an adult education system in

33 Karl Kautsky, "Die Slaven und die Revolution," VGA. Märzschriften. 1902, 2.

34 "13. březen 1848," *Dělnické Listy*, 10 March 1898, 1: "A Češi to byli s Chorváty, kteří revoluci v Rakousku utloukat pomohli a ještě podnes se tím mladočeští demokraté chlubí. Proto také je těžko psáti o revoluci v Chechách, která nebyla ničím jiným nez protirevoluci."

35 Karl Höger, "Was haben wir erreicht?," *VGA. Märzschriften*. 1908, 2–3.

36 "Dem Andenken der Revolution," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 12 March 1911, 2–3.

Vienna. In a 1908 talk held in Brünn/Brno he lamented that 1848 had not led to German unification. He explained that the violent suppression of the revolution in Vienna in October 1848 had "severed the thread that still connected Germany with Austria."[37]

A more optimistic view of what Austria-Hungary could be for its nations was presented by Otto Bauer in 1907. In the year of the first election to the Imperial diet under equal and general male suffrage, one of the party's most important intellectuals at that time expressed his conviction that the expansion of voting rights would be followed by a solution to the nationality problem. Bauer claimed that the nationality programme of his party was modelled after the so-called constitution of Kremsier, a constitutional draft made by the imperial diet of 1848 that never had been put into practice. He viewed the revolution as an alternative historical path that could have led to a federation of free nations, a road which was open again, now, in 1907: "Before a decade goes by, our nationality program will be realised and, if not the wording, then at least the idea of the Kremsier draft constitution will be law in Austria."[38]

Just as his comrade Hartmann, Bauer tried to present 1848 as a missed opportunity. But contrary to Hartmann, Bauer assumed that the social democrats would have a shot at trying to reform the empire in a way that would make it more appealing to its nations after the suffrage reform. While Hartmann saw a missed chance for a Greater German nation-state in 1848, Otto Bauer stressed the possibility of a reformed multi-national empire. It is difficult to assess which of those interpretations was more popular among the membership at any given time, but it can be established that Bauer had some influence over the way in which the party presented history to its followers. When the social democratic educational journal *Bildungsarbeit* provided a handout for the organisation of 1848-remembrance events in 1910, they recommended one of his articles and listed the constitutional draft of Kremsier as one of the talking points that should be part of a commemorative speech.[39] Again, it is interesting to look at a view from the Czech party branch. In the same year Otto Bauer imagined a multinational feature for Austria, his Czech comrade Antonín Němec contributed an article about the relationship of Czech social democracy with the Czech nation to the social democratic theoretical journal *Der Kampf*. In his contribution, he

37 Ludo Moritz Hartmann, "Das Jahr 1848 und die neue Generation," *Beilage zu Nr. 99 des Volksfreund vom 11. Dezember 1908*, 1.

38 Otto Bauer, 1848, in *VGA. Märzschriften*. 1907, 7: "Ehe ein Jahrzehnt vergeht, ist unser Nationalitätenprogramm verwirklicht, ist, wenn auch nicht der Wortlaut, so doch die Idee des Kremsierer Verfassungsentwurfes in Oesterreich Gesetz."

39 See "Arbeiterfeste. Märzfeier," *Bildungsarbeit* 5 (February 1910): 1.

painted a darker picture of the Austrian empire, claiming that in its younger history, it had acted as a German empire that sought to suppress Czech revolutionary aspirations: "Austria wanted to be and remain a unified German state. [. . .] The fury of persecution was increased to the point of madness."[40] Therefore, the Czech nation had, in his view, a natural inclination towards socialism and democracy. This assessment of one of the most important leaders of Czech social democracy in Austria shows very clearly that the growing confidence of the Czech party branch vis-à-vis their German Austrian comrades went hand in hand with a new interpretation of history and that stressed the national victimisation of Czechs by the Austrian empire.

The way social democrats interpreted imperial history clearly had an impact on their opinion about what internationalism had to mean. The connections they drew between internationalism and empire were also highly situational. Both Daszyński in 1898 and Bauer in 1907 used references to the perceived state of the empire as arguments for their vision of a multi-national federation, just as Hartmann and Němec used their more pessimistic assessment of Austrian imperial viability to argue for a more nationally centred version of internationalism.

The PSOE in Bilbao between Commune Day and Dos de Mayo

Considering the Spanish case, we see a fundamentally different commemorative calendar. Contrary to their Austrian comrades, the Spanish socialists rejected the participation in celebrations that referenced national revolutionary traditions or the different anniversaries of the Spanish War of Independence.[41] They did not try to give these commemorations a socialist spin like the social democrats of Vienna did with the commemoration of 1848, and also refused to participate in celebrations of Spain's short-lived First Republic. The two main festivities of the Spanish socialist year were the First of May and the proclamation of the Commune of Paris on 18 March 1871. Commemorating the uprising of the Parisian lower classes in the wake of the Franco-Prussian war became an important occa-

40 Antonín Němec, "Proletariat, Demokratie und die tschechische Nation," *Der Kampf*, 1 (October 1907): 21: "Oesterreich wollte ein deutscher Einheitsstaat sein und bleiben. [. . .] Die Verfolgungswut wurde bis zum Wahnwitze gesteigert."

41 Javier Moreno Luzón, "Fighting for National Memory. The Commemoration of the Spanish 'War of Independence' in 1908-1912," *History and Memory* 19 (2007): 68–94.

sion for PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*) chapters to convey their internationalist message.

To see how the view on national history developed over time, it is especially instructive to look at the PSOE chapter in Bilbao, the biggest city in the Basque province of Biscay and an early stronghold of Spanish socialism.[42] Bilbao is also a very fitting example because there, the PSOE had to engage with different options of national identification as the city was also the nucleus of the emerging Basque national movement. Looking at the socialists in Bilbao and the surrounding area, it is clear that the celebration of Commune Day was already a well-established occasion in socialist party chapters by the 1890s.[43] In 1905, the Bilbao-based newspaper *La lucha de clases* proudly wrote that each socialist group even in smaller towns spread the knowledge about the Commune: "Every year the number of those in favour of a social regime of justice has increased so considerably [. . .] that today there are thousands in this province, and there are few, very few towns of any working-class importance in which the commemoration of the Commune does not take place."[44]

With statements like this, the party press treated the spread of Commune Day celebrations as a symbol for the advancement of socialism in general. The commemoration of this historical event was perceived as a duty for local chapters. The typical Commune-celebration consisted of a banquet, a speech explaining the meaning of the event and a couple of performances by socialist choirs, theatre groups, or orchestras.[45] In their speeches on the subject, the speakers usually removed the Commune of Paris completely from its French context and built it up as a universalist example of working-class revolution. At one of these occasions, the Bilbao-born philosopher Miguel de Unamuno explicitly claimed that the Commune was a legend for the proletariat in all countries and that it was not even important that it had taken place in France.[46] The celebration of Commune Day became an occasion to convey a type of internationalism that deliberately rejected nationality as a meaningful category and positioned Spanish socialism in an international tradition of working-class uprisings.

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42 See Juan Pablo Fusi, "El socialismo vasco, 1886-1984," in *El socialismo en las nacionalidades y regiones*, ed. Albert Balcells and Santos Juliá (Madrid: Fundación Pablo Iglesias, 1988), 41–46.

43 "El Aniversario de la Commune," *La lucha de clases*, 25 March 1899, 2.

44 "La Commune," *La lucha de clases*, 18 March 1905, 1: "cada año ha ido en tan considerable aumento el número de los partidarios de un régimen social de justicia [. . .] que hoy se cuentan por millares en esta provincia, y son pocos, muy pocos sus pueblos de alguna importancia obrera en que no tenga lugar la conmemoración de la Commune."

45 For an example, see "Conmemoración de la 'Commune'," *La lucha de clases*, 24 March 1900, 2 and "Velada Teatral. Conmemoración de la Commune," *La lucha de clases*, 10 March 1906, 4.

46 "La Conmemoración de la Commune," *La lucha de clases*, 26 March 1904, 1.

Interestingly, the very same year that Unamuno gave this speech at Commune Day, the local PSOE chapter also started to participate in a local patriotic commemorative event, a procession on 2 May known under the name of *Dos de Mayo*. This was remarkable because the participation in a patriotic event not only ran counter to the anti-national internationalism expressed in the Commune celebration, but also contradicted earlier statements of the party regarding Dos de Mayo festivities. Dos de Mayo was – and still is – known in Spain as the day of the Madrid uprising against Napoleon in 1808 and therefore an important patriotic celebration date in Madrid. The date also had a specific local significance in Bilbao because the liberal and republican political groups in the city used it primarily to commemorate the liberal victory in Spain's civil war of 1872–1876, the so-called Third Carlist War. In this war, traditionalist monarchists called Carlists had sought to install their pretender, Prince Carlos, to the throne. The Carlists, which continued to play a role in local politics in the time under consideration, rejected constitutionalism and favoured absolute monarchical rule while also upholding privileges of autonomy in the Basque provinces and Catalonia. Fighting during the Third Carlist War was especially severe around Bilbao and the city had suffered a devastating siege in 1874 until it had been relieved by forces of the liberal government on 2 May 1874. Since then, the more liberal leaning political forces of the city commemorated the Dos de Mayo as the day in which the city had been saved and also to connect their local pride with what one Bilbao city council member called "the most glorious memories in the history of the fatherland"[47] that had taken place on that day, by which he meant the 1808 uprising against Napoleon in Madrid and the bombardment of the Peruvian city Callao by the Spanish Navy in 1866.

The initial socialist attitude towards this celebration consisted of flat-out rejection, as the prevailing view on the Third Carlist War was that it had been a struggle between two factions of the bourgeoisie and that socialists had no business in picking a side in it. The working class, a socialist city council member explained in 1895, would rather celebrate the First of May as the Day of the international solidarity than commemorate "the bloody and futile struggles sustained in the name of a deceitful liberty."[48] Both the celebration of Commune Day and the rejection of patriotic Dos de Mayo celebrations were meant to show a brand of internationalism that rejected national historical narratives altogether and insisted on a non-national

47 "Acuerdo por el que se aprueba la celebración, 4 April 1894," ES 48020. Archivo Municipal de Bilbao (AMB), document no. 499221: "recuerdos gloriosísimos de la historia patria."

48 "Acuerdo por el que se rechaza tomar en consideración una moción presentada por el Sr. Orte," 3 April 1895. ES 48020 AMB, document no. 500795: "las cruentas é inútiles luchas sostenidas en nombre de una libertad mentida."

universalist socialist identity, rooted in the admiration of working uprisings exemplified by the Parisian Commune.

The socialist attitude to Dos de Mayo changed significantly, though, after the annual processions became more and more a political rally of liberal and republican forces that, in their own view, defended the democratic traditions of Bilbao against the reactionary threat embodied by Basque nationalism and Spanish conservatism. In 1904, the Bilbao socialists participated in the commemorative service for the defenders of the city, even contributing a wreath dedicated "to the glorious memory of the martyrs who fell fighting for liberty."[49] Emilio Felipe, who spoke on behalf of the PSOE chapter of Bilbao, made it clear that the growing threat posed to individual liberty by conservative forces was the main reason why they thought it appropriate to do so.[50] The Bilbao PSOE chapter participated again in 1905, this time contributing a speech that stressed the common push for laicism that united liberals, republicans, and socialists.[51] In the autumn of the same year, the national congress of the party accepted a proposal that forced local chapters to stop cooperating with republicans and liberals, which is why the Bilbao chapter paused its participation.[52] In 1910, socialists and republicans resumed their cooperation, this time in concurrence with the nationwide attitude of the PSOE which had entered in an electoral alliance with the republicans.[53] How can this changing attitude toward a celebration of the Spanish nation be explained? Why did a party that so fervently insisted on its anti-nationalist stance eventually embrace a form of historical commemoration that clearly celebrated the Spanish nation?

One part to the answer is a common hostility that Spanish republicans and socialists felt towards the growing influence of the Basque nationalist movement. The Basque National Party (*Partido Nacional Vasco*, PNV) emerged as a political contender in the 1890s, claiming to defend the historic freedoms of the Basque country, the so-called *fueros* against the unitarian Spanish state. Its founder Sabino Arana saw the Basque provinces as a territory once conquered by the Spanish crown that had to fight for its independence to keep its national character.[54]

49 "La procesión cívica," *El Liberal (Bilbao)*, 3 May 1904, 1–2: "á la memoria gloriosa de los mártires que sucumbieron luchando por la libertad."

50 Ibid.

51 "La fiesta de la libertad," *El Liberal (Bilbao)*, 2 May 1905, Edición de la tarde, 5.

52 "VII Congreso del Partido Socialista Obrero Español," in *El Socialista*, 20 Octobre 1905, 1.

53 "La Fiesta del Trabajo y la liberación de Bilbao," *El Liberal (Bilbao)*, 23 April 1910, 1. For the electoral alliance see Antonio Robles Egea, "La conjunción republicano-socialista. Una síntesis de liberalismo y socialismo," *Ayer* 54 (2004): 97–127.

54 Félix Luengo Teixidor, "Restauración. Identidad, fueros y autonomía: Liberales, republicanos y carlistas en la construcción de la identidad vasca, 1876-1923," in *La autonomía vasca en la Es-*

The socialist party in Biscay soon became the main antagonist of the Basque National movement. Basque nationalists accused workers who had moved to Bilbao from other parts of Spain of contributing to the destruction of the Basque national character.[55] The dislike was mutual because the socialist groups in Bilbao frequently ridiculed the Basque nationalists [called "bizcaitarras"] for being backward examples of a property-holding class that depended on the labour of the workers they despised. This created a situation in which the rejection of separatist nationalism became essential for the socialists up to a point where they were eager to embrace Spanish nationalist rhetoric. The historian Antonio Riviera Blanco has pointed out that the signs of identity of Biscayan socialism were Spanish even if they rejected Spanish patriotism.[56] Identifying with the culture and language of the central state could become a means of distancing oneself from a political movement that was conceived to be oppressive to workers. The growing influence of Basque nationalism on a local level therefore made a rapprochement between liberals, republicans, and socialists around their opposition to regional nationalism more likely. But this is not sufficient to explain the co-existence of a clearly anti-nationalist commemorative culture and the participation in patriotic events. After all, the PSOE's hostility against Basque nationalism had not led them to embrace this kind of progressive Spanish nationalism in the 1890s.

The decision of the local PSOE to contribute to an important local event of Spanish nationalism has also to be contextualised within the so-called "regenerationist" debates in Spain after 1898. In that year, after suffering a major defeat in the Spanish-American War, Spain lost control of the last parts of its former Asian and American empire: Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The end of the Spanish empire, and especially the loss of Cuba, which had been seen as integral part of Spain to that point, led to a heated debate about the supposed decline of Spain and how to repair it. Differing and often conflicting ideas about modernising Spain began to change the political landscape,[57] while Dos de Mayo celebrations in Bilbao also started to exhibit typical language of regenerationist ideas. In 1903, a contribution in *El Liberal* explained that the defenders of Bilbao in 1874

paña contemporánea, 1808-2008, ed. Luis Castells and Arturo Cajal (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2009), 144–45. Núñez Seixas, Nation-Building, 242.

55 Ludger Mees, *The Basque Contention. Ethnicity, Politics, Violence* (London/New York: Routledge, 2020), 52–55.

56 Antonio Rivera Blanco, "La Izquierda y la cuestión vasca. Primera parte. 1880-1923. Distancia y confrontación," *La autonomía vasca en la España contemporánea: 1808-2008*, ed. Luis Castells and Arturo Cajal (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2009), 160–64.

57 José Álvarez Junco, "Historia y mitos nacionales," in *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX*, ed. Javier Moreno Luzón and Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas (Barcelona: RBA, 2013), 21–56.

had not only fought for Spain but "for liberty, for justice, for progress, for all what the new Spain represents and even for the aspirations of all the civilised world."[58] The Dos de Mayo celebrations became an occasion to express a type of post-imperial progressive nationalism aimed at creating a new Spain and insisting that the nation had to be civilised in order to become part of a family of modern European nation-states. Bilbao, as one author in *El Liberal* put it, "was called to nothing less than [to] be the importer of European progress to Spain"[59] due to its liberal tradition.

At the same time, we also see a new development in Biscayan socialism that has been described by Sara Hidalgo García de Orellán as a change in the "emotional regime" expressed by PSOE members.[60] She argues that there was a shift in tone among socialists that moved toward seeing the participation in the democratic process as a positive way to push for reform, with the appropriation of regenerationist language used to broaden the socialist agenda. By embracing causes like secular education, laicism, and civic and political rights the PSOE in Bilbao transcended the strictly working-class focused attitude of the first generation of Bilbao socialists during the 1890s.[61] Both of these developments, the shift in Dos de Mayo celebrations towards a very combative liberal nationalism and the shift of the local PSOE towards a broader progressive agenda, were part of a broader discussion of creating a new Spain after the end of empire. The participation in celebrations that centred this kind of view on the nation heavily implied that while the more anti-national stance conveyed in Commune Day celebrations and on First of May continued to be important, at least the Biscay socialists had accepted the Spanish nation as a framework for their political agenda.

The implications of this for the self-image of socialists was significant. The Bilbao socialists took the lead in opening the party up to cooperation with the Republicans and the way they did this also meant adopting a different view of younger Spanish history. Treating the volunteers that had defended Bilbao in 1874 until the army of the central government arrived as heroes meant giving up on

58 Antonio Zozaya, "La mejor grandeza," *El Liberal (Bilbao)*, 2 May 1903, 1: "por la Libertad, por la Justicia, por el Progreso, por todo lo que representa á la España nueva y aun la aspiración de todo el mundo civilizado."

59 Antonio Viérgol, "Las cosas en su sitio," *El Liberal (Bilbao)*, 2 May 1902, 1: "llamada nada menos que á ser la importadora en España del progreso europeo."

60 Sara Hidalgo García de Orellán, "The Roots 1909 Republican-Socialist Alliance. Changes in the Class Emotional Regime in 1903 in Biscay," *Revista de Estudios Sociales* 62 (2017): 21–23. For an in-depth discussion of the two emotional regimes that underpinned the different attitudes in Biscay socialism, see Sara Hidalgo García de Orellán, *Emociones obreras, política socialista: Movimiento obrero vizcaíno, 1886-1915* (Madrid: Tecnos, 2018), ch. 3 and 4.

61 Ibid., 265–70.

the earlier interpretation of the Third Carlist War as a conflict between bourgeois elites. Celebrating the liberal victory of 1876 also opened the party up to a view of Spanish history where the vital conflicts were fought between the *Dos Españas*, the two Spains, one progressive and secular and the other conservative and clerical, as opposed to the view that the only conflict that mattered was between the proletariat and all other social classes.[62] The socialists' animosity towards Basque nationalism and their openness to cooperate within a broader secular left-wing coalition led Miguel de Unamuno to insist that they were, in practice, a Spanish patriotic movement. After writing about some of the problems he saw in the "simplistic internationalism" the socialists sometimes expressed, he went on to argue: "But the socialist movement obeys, under teachings that better or worse reflect them, intimate national and local impulses. And here, in Spain, far from being a purely economic movement, it is a cultural movement, anti-catholic, and in Bilbao anti-*bizkaitarra* [against the Basque national movement], that means, Spanish-patriotic."[63]

What Unamuno argues here was pretty similar to the sentiment expressed by some Austrian socialists like Ignacy Daszyński and Otto Bauer who claimed they could be considered a "state-conserving" power, precisely because of their opposition to radical nationalism. Unamuno saw the internationalist stance of the Bilbao labour movement that was directed against the Basque national movement as a potential force that could keep Spain together, meaning their internationalism could be patriotic in the sense that it could act as an antidote to separatist aspirations. This assertion is not exactly new, as scholars like Antonio Riviera Blanco have already pointed out that the identity of Basque socialist workers was shaped by markers that were heavily *españolista*.[64] But the Bilbao case shows that this was more than just a cultural preference born out of disdain for the romantic elitist nationalism of the Basque National Party; it was a convergence between two political forces that had previously despised each other on the ground of a common push to regenerate Spain after the end of empire. The discourses surrounding the decline of Spanish imperial might have contributed to the rap-

62 A comprehensive overview of the concept of Two Spains can be found in Santos Juliá: *Historias de las dos Españas* (Madrid: Taurus, 2004).

63 "Conferencia de Unamuno. Aspecto local del Socialismo," *El Liberal (Bilbao)*, 22 September 1908, 1: "Pero el movimiento socialista obedece, por debajo de doctrinas que le reflejan mejor ó peor, á impulses íntimos nacionales y locales. Y aquí, en España, lejos de ser un movimiento puramente económico, es un movimiento cultural, anti-católica, y en Bilbao anti-bizcaitarra, es decir, patriótico español."

64 Antonio Rivera Blanco, "Identidad nacional y obrerismo en España y el País Vasco, 1900-1923," in *Proletarios de todos los países. Socialismo, clase y nación en Europa y España, 1880-1940*, ed. Aurelio Martí Bataller (Granada: Editorial Comares, 2019), 169–83.

prochement between socialists and republicans in two ways: first, indirectly, by invigorating regional nationalisms that in turn made the PSOE with its staunch anti-nationalist stance a potential ally for Spanish republicans and liberals; and second, by creating an intellectual environment where reform movements could come together on the common ground of modernising Spain and turning it in a more modern European nation.

Conclusion

The comparison between the two case studies shows that the connection between the nation and empire is crucial to understand the different ways in which internationalism was put into practice by socialist parties of that time. What internationalism could mean exactly was not only dependent on how socialists in that time approached the phenomenon of the nation but also on how they assessed the viability of a nation-based political order as opposed to supposedly anachronistic empires. A comparative analysis like the one above can therefore help to illuminate the following three aspects.

First, in order to explain the different ways in which the relationship between internationalism and national self-perception was conceptualised in the socialist labour movement, the attitude towards empire and imperial history always has to be considered. The internationalism of Austrian social democrats, while being a sincerely held belief and tradition of the labour movement in Austria, also served as a reaction toward the problems of the Austrian empire. Professing their internationalism also meant presenting an alternative order to the perceived chaos of Austrian political life and the inability of Austrian imperial institutions to deal with them. In the Spanish case, the imperial layer of the national question is less pronounced than in Austria and therefore easier to overlook. The special case of the socialists of Bilbao and their decision to express their adherence to the liberal-progressive kind of Spanish nationalism can only be properly understood if we consider the influence of narratives of imperial decline that were abundant in Spain after 1898.

Second, one of the main reasons that socialist writers, intellectuals, and party officials started to embrace the concept of the nation was the favourable juxtaposition with the perceived decline of an older political order that was associated with empire. The projects of reform and regeneration that the SDAP and the PSOE began to support in the early 1900s had in common a reliance on the nation as source of political legitimacy. In the Austrian case, the way the younger history of Austria was remembered at their commemorative occasions showed a willingness of social democrats to re-formulate the Austrian imperial project on the

basis of its nations as opposed to the principle of dynastical rule and loyalty. In the Spanish case, the different liberal versions of *regeneracionismo*, especially the ones stressing secularism and Europeanisation, became an opportunity for socialists to broaden their own political brand and presenting themselves as the party of a renewed Spain.

Third, the interpretations of history associated with the different views on nation and empire were always connected tightly to expectations of the future. The different views on the correct relationship between socialism and the nation that Otto Bauer, Antonín Němec, and Ludo Moritz Hartmann held can partly be explained by their different assessments about the character and viability of the Austrian empire. In the Spanish case, we see that a genuine engagement with national historical narratives on the part of the socialists began as part of a greater movement to search for the potential historical foundation of a reformed Spain after 1898. This connection between historical interpretation and expected future can help to explain some important differences in the way national narratives were incorporated by the labour movement. For the German-Austrian social democracy, presenting itself as the true heir of a German revolutionary and cultural tradition was an effective way of positioning itself against both imperial rule and radical nationalism, thereby bolstering their project of a multi-national federation as a potential future for Austria-Hungary. For the Spanish socialists on the other hand, it became more important to stress the modernising potential of a Europeanised nation-state to justify their always internally contested alliance with republican parties. In both cases, it was the perceived necessity to transition from an old, backward imperial order to a still uncertain future that led members of the socialist labour movement to embrace and appropriate national historical narratives and made it attractive to frame their own socialist programme in a national framework.

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Oliver Pejić

Contesting the Habsburg Empire in Everyday Life: The Habsburg Legacy as a Source of Everyday Conflict in Interwar Yugoslav Society

Abstract: In the aftermath of the First Word War, a sizable part of the former Habsburg Empire ended up within the borders of the newly established Yugoslav nation-state. While the zeitgeist of the new "national" world demanded that Yugoslavia's population should unanimously reject the defunct empire's legacy, popular attitudes towards the previous regime among the state's diverse inhabitants were more ambivalent. Employing archival records from the Regional Courts of Maribor (Slovenia) and Sombor (Serbia), this chapter explores how discussions of the Habsburg Empire functioned as a source of everyday conflict between predominantly non-elite actors in interwar Yugoslav society. In such interpersonal clashes, references to the bygone empire served a diverse array of discursive functions. The characterization of people or institutions as "Habsburg" functioned as a form of boundary-drawing and othering within Yugoslav society, and nostalgic references to the imperial past figured as conscious polemical counterpoints in critical discussions of the national present. While comparisons between Habsburg and Yugoslav rule remained frequent in discussions throughout the interwar period, non-elite actors rarely reflected on the differences between empire and nation-state on an abstract level. Instead, their attitudes towards either regime were typically rooted in their subjective experiences within very local contexts.

Introduction

By this point, it can hardly be considered a methodological rarity for historians to use court documents, police records, and denunciations as sources for gaining insight into the mental worlds of less visible historical actors who have otherwise

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left behind few written traces in the archival records.[1] While such documents have been employed to tackle a wide range of research topics, they have also seen productive use in the historical study of nationalism and nationhood from below.[2] Within the wider context of Central and Eastern Europe, one of the most consequential turning points for the historical development of nationalism was by all means the conclusion of the Great War in 1918. Europe's old contiguous empires under Habsburg, Ottoman, Romanov, and Hohenzollern rule collapsed, and their authority abruptly came to be replaced by that of newly established or expanded nation-states. The wider repercussions of this political transformation were immense; in the words of Natasha Wheatley, "[t]here was no international handbook for unmaking imperial sovereignty. That project – of forging and then managing sovereignty after empire – turned Central Europe into the ground zero of the new international order."[3]

One representative post-imperial polity that had made its first appearance on the European political map around this time was the Yugoslav nation-state. Established on 1 December 1918 as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and officially renamed as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia roughly ten years later, it included within its borders territories that had historically belonged to both Austrian and Hungarian halves of the Habsburg Monarchy as well as to the Ottoman Empire.[4] While South Slavic nationalist activists in the state's formerly Habsburg northern territories celebrated the collapse of the preceding imperial order as a moment of national liberation, it was not always easy for them to "unmake imperial sovereignty" in the hearts and minds of the state's wider population. With political and economic instability strongly shaping people's lived experiences in the immediate post-war years, a considerable number of the state's inhabitants began to look back at life under the preceding imperial regime as a time of stability and relative prosperity.

1 For in-depth theoretical and methodological reflections on this topic, see Ilya Gerasimov, *Plebeian Modernity: Social Practices, Illegality, and the Urban Poor in Russia, 1906-1916* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2018), 1–54.

2 An exhaustive methodological and historiographical overview was most recently provided by Ágoston Berecz in his article "How to Study Early Popular Engagement with Nationalism: Sources, Strategies, Research Traditions," *Hungarian Historical Review* 12, no. 1 (2023): 3–36.

3 Natasha Wheatley, "Central Europe as Ground Zero of the New International Order," *Slavic Review* 78, no. 4 (2019): 901.

4 Interwar Yugoslavia's formerly Ottoman territories had already been conquered by the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro during the First Balkan War in 1912–13. The two kingdoms themselves had formally gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. See Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, trans. Dona Geyer, Central European Studies (West Lafayette, ID: Purdue University Press, 2019), 51–54.

Given that Yugoslavia's inhabitants had conflicting emotional investments in the new state, it is thus hardly surprising that their interactions sometimes escalated into open conflict, ultimately leading to denunciation and legal persecution. Fortunately for the historian, when such conflicts did reach the courts, they would also leave behind useful archival traces. While court records demand a cautious and contextualized reading as much as any other source and were necessarily shaped by the wider institutional and social contexts in which they were produced, denunciations and court proceedings nevertheless recorded first-person utterances and the political self-positioning of lower- or middle-class actors at a level of detail provided by few other contemporary sources.[5] This chapter draws from such court cases in order to explore how the post-imperial transition was understood and contested by predominantly non-elite actors in Lower Styria and the Bačka – two former Habsburg territories of the interwar Yugoslav state. Primarily employing criminal cases from the Regional Courts of Maribor/Marburg an der Drau (today in Slovenia) and Sombor/Zombor (today in Serbia), it shows how references to the bygone Habsburg Empire served a diverse array of discursive functions within contemporary conflicts in two formerly Austrian and Hungarian provinces during the first ten years of Yugoslav rule.

While the history of nationalism and political loyalty in a wider sense has remained a leitmotif in the historiography on interwar Yugoslavia, relatively few researchers have approached this topic by looking beyond the sphere of organized party politics, with studies thus remaining methodologically conservative and often replicating essentialist notions of groupness.[6] As has already been men-

5 Like any other source, interrogations and testimonies ought to be interpreted with "caution and must be read in context, since people, especially peasants, could go to great lengths to dissimulate, feign ignorance, and find out what the interviewer wanted to hear." See Berecz, "Early Popular Engagement with Nationalism," 12. At the same time, interpretive obstacles are inherent to all source types. In the words of Maarten Van Ginderachter, "[s]ources produced by commoners are certainly not unmediated voices. Yet neither are they more problematic than sources from other social circles. . . . Source criticism and a clear contextualization of one's records within their historic background are a must in every case." See "Nationhood from Below: Some Historiographic Notes on Great Britain, France and Germany in the Long Nineteenth Century," in *Nationhood from below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Maarten Van Ginderachter and Marnix Beyen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 123.

6 To quote Filip Erdeljac, "[t]he historical literature on twentieth century Yugoslavia has, with a few notable exceptions, remained immune to the contributions of scholars of 'national indifference' who have exposed the inadequacy of oversimplified dichotomies in which supposed 'national prisons' generated widespread resistance from full nationalized subjects." See Filip Erdeljac, "Between Nationalism and Indifference: The Gradual Elimination of Indifference in Interwar Yugoslavia," in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, ed. Maarten Van Ginderachter and Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019), 107.

tioned, however, historians of nationalism have increasingly been writing the history of nationalist mobilization from below, i.e., by shifting their attention towards non-elite actors.[7] Their analyses typically understand nationhood not as a stable and consistent form of identity, but rather as a functionalist, pragmatic, or situational phenomenon.[8] Even if this chapter is not primarily focused on nationhood, its interpretative framework remains strongly informed by methodological insights from the previously described tradition in nationalism studies. With the source material itself largely narrating tales of situational encounters, it appears only logical that a similar perspective should prove just as useful for the study of imperial loyalty as another context-dependent form of groupness.

The Transition from "Imperial" to "National" Rule in Post-Habsburg Yugoslavia

Military defeats, coupled with widespread hunger and instability, eventually led to the Habsburg Monarchy's final collapse in late October 1918. As this process was unfolding, politicians throughout the monarchy's former territories established unelected "national councils" to overtake the state functions of the dying empire.[9] On 29 October 1918, most of the Empire's majority-South-Slav provinces thus became part of an independent State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, with this short-lived polity eventually merging with the Kingdom of Serbia on 1 December to form the

7 According to one definition, this category includes "those people who are usually not actively or consciously engaged in concerted, organized nation-building strategies, or who are supposed to play a rather executory role (e.g., lower middle-class bureaucrats) in nationalizing policies designed by others." See Marnix Beyen and Maarten Van Ginderachter, "General Introduction: Writing the Mass into a Mass Phenomenon," in *Nationhood from below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Maarten Van Ginderachter and Marnix Beyen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 9–10.

8 A situationist approach to the study of nationhood and/or ethnicity has been most clearly formulated by historian Gábor Egry. Proposing the concept of "everyday ethnicity," he describes it as a "phenomenon connected to the "people" and to contexts that are rarely associated with nationalist politics. However, quite often the trigger of ethnicity is a politicized understanding of an event or an interaction, but this politicization is not the revelation of an already existing, latent national identity but rather a momentary occurrence that could just as easily disappear as it could remain." See Gábor Egry, "Beyond Politics: National Indifference as Everyday Ethnicity," in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, ed. Maarten Van Ginderachter and Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019), 148–49.

9 Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 431–41.

Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.[10] While a new state may have thus been established, widespread political insecurity did not cease until years later. The state's northern border with German-Austrian Styria was secured early on through a daring military operation, but it only became permanent with the signing of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Leye on 10 September 1919. In nearby Carinthia, however, violent clashes between Yugoslav and Austrian troops persisted until the region's fate was decided via plebiscite in 1920. In the same year, the borders with Hungary and Italy were finally settled with the Treaties of Trianon and Rapallo.[11]

The courts in Maribor/Marburg an der Drau and Sombor/Zombor were regional courts, and their jurisdiction covered territories that had been part of the historic Austrian crownland of Styria and the Hungarian Bács-Bodrog County.[12] Both these territories were characterised by considerable linguistic and, in the case of the Bács-Bodrog County, also confessional diversity.[13] More importantly, however, their populations had been accustomed to divergent top-down approaches towards the question of nationality. In the Empire's Austrian half, multinationalism was officially acknowledged and constitutionally projected, but administrative practices often fell short in practically protecting non-dominant linguistic rights and pre-

10 For English-language overviews of this process, see e.g. Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 127–40; Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, 65–67.

11 On the border settlements between Yugoslavia and its neighbours, see Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, 72; Oto Luthar, ed., *The Land between: A History of Slovenia*, second, revised edition (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 378–79.

12 The official terms for these courts were *okrožno sodišče* in Slovene, *okružni sud* in Serbian and Croatian, *Kreisgericht* in German, and *kerületi bíróság* (*királyi törvényszék*) in Hungarian. Occupying the middle level on the judicial hierarchy, they stood between the district courts and the courts of appeal. During Habsburg times, the Regional Court of Maribor covered eight district courts in historical Styria. After the establishment of Yugoslavia, its judicial authority was extended over Yugoslav Carinthia in its varying borders and to formerly Hungarian Prekmurje/Muravidék. The Regional Court of Sombor would also experience a similar expansion of judicial authority in the aftermath of the war. It had initially covered four district courts in Bačka, but between 1919 and 1930, it was also competent for courts in the formerly Hungarian region of Međimurje/Muraköz in modern-day Croatia. See Gordana Drakić, "Sudska vlast i stanje u sudovima na području Vojvodine 1920-1921. godine," *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta, Novi Sad* 43, no. 1 (2009): 189–202.

13 According to the 1921 Yugoslav population census, the provinces of Bačka and Baranja had a combined population of 784.569 people. The largest religious communities included Roman Catholics (61,75%), Orthodox Christians (21,25%), Evangelical Christians (13,45%), Jews (1,84%) and Greek Catholics (1,56%). The most commonly declared mother languages were Serbian or Croatian (44,42%), Hungarian (35,39%), German (24,22%), and Czechoslovak (3,96%). See *Definitivni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 31 januara 1921 god.* (Sarajevo: Državna štamparija, 1932), 354–55.

venting nationalist discrimination.[14] Conversely, Hungarian elites understood their kingdom as a Hungarian nation-state housing one unitary civic Hungarian political nation. While the law offered limited protection for the protection of minority languages, it did not question the ascendancy and dominant status of the Hungarian language. The state saw its spread as politically desirable and openly pursued policies aimed at cultural homogenisation.[15]

In both Lower Styria and the Bačka, the majority population had spoken South Slavic languages and would have been recognised by contemporaries as belonging to the titular Yugoslav nationality. However, "objective" ethnolinguistic belonging did not necessarily teleologically translate into a corresponding nationalist worldview. In late Habsburg Lower Styria, German-nationalist parties retained their power for longer compared to neighbouring Carniola and were also successful at keeping part of the local Slovene-speaking population indifferent towards the goals of mainstream Slovene nationalist activism.[16] In the Bačka, and especially among the region's non-Serbian population, an underdeveloped native-language educational system combined with an almost complete absence of minority-nationalist political mobilisation contributed to the fact that local society was not particularly antagonistic towards Hungarian cultural homogenisation.[17] As these territories came under Yugoslav rule, many of their inhabitants found it difficult to see the intrinsic worth of their own purported national liberation. With the previous Habsburg regime appearing as a natural frame of reference, it was rather typical that the imperial past should often arise as a point of comparison in contemporary discussions and assessments of life in the new, national present.

14 On the legal protection of national and linguistic rights in Austria, see Hannelore Burger, *Sprachenrecht und Sprachgerechtigkeit im österreichischen Unterrichtswesen 1867-1918* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995); Gerald Stourzh, *Die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in der Verfassung und Verwaltung Österreichs, 1848-1918* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985).

15 For a recent survey on the principles and practical implementation of Hungarian minority legislation, see Ágoston Berecz, "The Hungarian Nationalities Act of 1868 in Operation (1868–1914)," *Slavic Review* 81, no. 4 (2022): 994–1015.

16 For a German-language overview of Lower Styrian political history under late Habsburg rule, see Janez Cvirn, *Das 'Festungsdreieck': zur politischen Orientierung der Deutschen in der Untersteiermark (1861-1914)*, Forschungen zur geschichtlichen Landeskunde der Steiermark, Band 76 (Wien: LIT, 2016).

17 High illiteracy rates among the Roman Catholic South Slavs, i.e., the Bunjevac and Šokac communities, made modern nationalist mobilization even more difficult. The 1921 census in Subotica/Szabadka, Bačka's largest city, revealed a meagre 38.8% literacy rate among those inhabitants who had declared Bunjevac as their native language. See Đorđe Popović Munjatović, *Subotica 1922* (Subotica: Knjižara "Jedinstvo," 1922), 5.

Habsburg Nostalgia between Contemporary Discontent and Civilizational Prejudice

Perhaps one of the most palpable ways in which Yugoslavia's population felt the presence of the new Yugoslav state was through the institution of military service. Given the wider geopolitical context of the immediate post-war period, the fact that the state's population was not always particularly keen on fulfilling this civic duty can hardly come as a surprise. The traumatic experience of the First World War lowered morale significantly, and the Yugoslav army was engaged in an ongoing pacification campaign in its southern provinces. In Lower Styria and Carinthia, the prospects of dying in battle against Albanian insurgents seemed all the less appealing when people were aware that the republican government in neighbouring German Austria had freed its citizens of obligatory service.[18]

The preserved records from the Regional Court of Maribor show that 1921 was a year in which an extraordinary number of people had been tried for making remarks of anti-state character that were indirectly related to military service. As can be discerned from the cases themselves, the trigger for such incriminating statements were rumours of incoming mobilisation. One representative example of such an interaction involved two hired hands in the village of Limbuš near Ruše in the Maribor district. The denunciator, a 38-year-old farmworker named Simon Kovačič, had explained in his interrogation that his co-worker Franc Verdnik/Franz Vernik[19] had returned one night from Maribor with the following news:

> [He was] telling me that Yugoslav lads are going to have to be drafted to the army. I told him that this is no big deal because they used to be drafted back when we weren't even around; we were also drafted; and they're going to be drafted when we'll be long gone. Verdnik replied to this that it used to be different when we had our own emperor but now, we don't have him anymore. I then answered him by saying that we now have our Slovene king, to which Franc Vednik said: What's this Serbian king good for, he's a cunt [*to je pizda*]![20]

18 Indeed, Ivo Banac has argued that Austria's lack of obligatory military service had been one of the key factors that had swayed Slovene speakers in Carinthia to vote for Austrian rule in the 1920 plebiscite. See Ivo Banac, "Was the Albanian Opposition to the Serb Kingdom's Annexation in 1912 without Justification?," in *The Case for Kosova: Passage to Independence*, ed. Anna Di Lellio (London: Anthem Press, 2006), 56.

19 In line with contemporary practice, courts often translated or orthographically Slavicized non-Slavic names and, at times, even surnames without taking individual preferences or practices into consideration. If the sources contain multiple versions of an individual's name, I make sure to include all of them in the text.

20 Interrogation of Simon Kovačič, 3 May 1921, document 5, folder Vr VII 1091/21, box 75, Okrožno sodišče Maribor (1898-1941), Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor, Maribor, Slovenia (= PAM). All translations are my own.

Kovačič reported that this was not the first time that he had heard Verdnik making questionable statements. At a later point, he had heard him saying that "things are slowly going to get better and the scarcity [*draginja*] will end, but by that point there's also not going to be a Yugoslavia anymore."[21] He had also made similar remarks when Charles I of Austria had travelled to Hungary to attempt a restoration of the throne, saying that "[w]e, too, are now going to come under Charles, and the scarcity will pass."[22] In Kovačič's own words, the reason why he had decided to denounce Verdnik was because he was a "Germanophile [*nemškutar*] by conviction and has always teased me because of my national consciousness."[23]

The court eventually summoned the farm owner Feliks/Srečko Robič for testimony. The latter had characterized Kovačič as "a very hardworking person, but with very bad hearing. However, he has been interested in the new state of things in the country and reads newspapers every Sunday."[24] While Robič claimed that Verdnik "had certainly suffered during the war," he had also never heard him make any subversive remarks against the state.[25] Indeed, the court appears to have gained a similar impression of Verdnik's political record, and concluded that "[t]he accused does not belong to any political party and never dabbles with politics, does not go to political meetings, and is always home on Sundays. The witness has never heard the accused express himself against the state or against the dynasty. He does not read newspapers. If anything, he may be considered [nationally] unconscious."[26] Since Kovačič suffered from hearing issues and had denounced his coworker only months later, the court understood this as an act of revenge and ultimately pardoned Verdnik of all accusations.

While both Verdnik and Kovačič shared similar social backgrounds, their interaction offers an illustrative example of conflicting value judgments regarding the post-imperial transition during early Yugoslav rule. Unlike his disillusioned coworker, Kovačič attempted to stay in touch with contemporary political developments and appears to have also internalized the basic tenet that hardship and sacrifice under the new Yugoslav regime was justified out of national considerations. It is worth noting here that these hardships were hardly miniscule as crip-

21 Interrogation of Simon Kovačič.

22 Interrogation of Simon Kovačič.

23 Interrogation of Simon Kovačič. "Germanophile" was a pejorative term used to refer to pro-German people of Slovene ethnic background.

24 Main discussion, 24 June 1921, document 15, folder Vr VII 1091/21, box 75, Okrožno sodišče Maribor (1898-1941), PAM.

25 Main discussion, 24 June 1921.

26 Main discussion, 2 December 1921, document 32, folder Vr VII 1091/21, box 75, Okrožno sodišče Maribor (1898-1941), PAM.

pling inflation and material shortages would characterise life in Yugoslavia until as late as 1923.[27] Taking this into account, it is hardly surprising that many people such as Verdnik remained unconvinced that having a "national" regime should outweigh the existential issues which they had been facing in everyday life. Furthermore, in denying his coworker's characterisation of the new ruler as "our Slovene king," he was also directly subverting Yugoslavia's claim towards his loyalty as member of the titular nationality.

A further court case from the same year that was likewise triggered by rumours of mobilisation took place in one of Maribor's pubs and involved Franc Krajnc/Franz Kreinz, a 47-year-old wall painter and veteran from Krčevina near Ptuj. One of the patrons had denounced Kreinz for saying that "[w]e have no business in Albania, we don't give a damn about Serbs, we're Styrians . . . *Wenn einzurücken sein wird, werden wir hinauf einrücken, nicht hinunter* [pointing with his finger towards the south]."[28] The innkeeper testified to hearing Kreinz say that Serbs were uncultured and that "you should go up (to Austria) if you'd like to see culture. If you didn't also know German, you'd be just as much of a cretin as the Serbs down there."[29] When the gendarmes apprehended him following the denunciation and asked whether the accusations were true, he replied straightforwardly that "[t]his may indeed be the case – *es wird ja allgemein so gesprochen*!"[30]

Like Verdnik and many other contemporaries, Krainz was evidently unwilling to fulfil his civic duties to the new Yugoslav nation-state. At the same time, his comments regarding the civilising quality of the German language also reveal an interesting cultural-civilizational dimension. Indeed, the use of the Habsburg legacy as a form of civilizational-boundary drawing and Othering had been a ubiquitous feature of interwar Yugoslav political discourse and may be encountered in numerous other contemporary cases in both territories under consideration. People and institutions were characterized as "being" Habsburg in contemporary discourse for the purposes of both positive and negative forms of boundary drawing. When used in a positive sense, such characterisations established an in-group identity among Yugoslavia's former Habsburg inhabitants in opposition to the state's post-Ottoman

27 According to one state-wide estimate, "in 1923 prices were almost twenty times higher compared to 1913. While in 1913 the dinar was equal in worth to the Swiss franc in Zurich, ten years later, in January 1923, it was 27 times less worth than the Swiss franc[.]" See Dragana Gnjatović, "Evolution of Economic Thought on Monetary Reform in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after the Great War," *Balcanica*, no. 51 (2020): 185.

28 Report no. 978, 30 October 1921, document 4, folder Vr IX 2202/21, box 83, Okrožno sodišče Maribor 1898-1941, PAM.

29 Interrogation of witnesses, 11 November 1921, document Vr IX 2202/21–9.

30 Interrogation of Ivan Vrečko, 26 November 1921, document Vr IX 2202/21–12.

core. Quite predictably, this binary opposition necessarily relied on contemporary Orientalist notions of Serbian backwardness and civilisational inferiority.

> A typical example of such perceptions may be discerned from the case against Franjo/Franz Ciber, who had been prosecuted by the Regional Court of Sombor in 1925. A 29-year-old labourer from Slovenia who was now working in the village of Bogojevo in the Bačka, he had been engaged in a discussion with locals regarding the state of military barracks throughout the country. Upon hearing someone say that the military barracks in Slovenia were in better shape, he replied that "[u]under Austria, these lands used to be one cultured state, but now they're a Gypsy state; Gypsies live in this current state of ours."[31] On a different occasion, he also reacted upon the news that supporters of Stjepan Radić had been arrested in nearby Senta by saying that he wished he could have joined them "so that we could jointly proclaim a republic and shake off the shackles of the Serbian state from the necks of the Slovene and Croat nations!"[32]

In his defence, Ciber did not deny the accusations that he had made civilizational comments against Yugoslav rule. Quite tellingly, however, he claimed that his volatile remarks were triggered by his meagre living standards under the current regime. According to his testimony, he had been "outraged because of my frequent and pointless transfers, as well as because of the high living costs and low salaries."[33] A further aspect to consider when interpreting Ciber's statements against Serbs and Serbian rule was also his support for Stjepan Radić's Croatian Peasant Party.[34] Known for its republican opposition against the centralist monarchy, the party's critical discourse oftentimes took the form of civilisational chauvinism against Serbs in its more vulgar forms.

Cases from the Regional Court of Sombor make clear that Croatian Peasant Party activists at times attempted to mobilize local non-Slavic minorities by framing Serbians as a common enemy for the indigenous population regardless of their ethnic background. In 1927, the party had held a rally in a Hungarian-speaking village in the region of Baranja. The speaker, Matija Kolar, addressed the crowd in Hungarian and told it that "Vojvodina [the formerly Hungarian regions in today's northern Serbia, O.P.] is ours and Serbs have nothing to look for in it, and if they want to live in Serbia, then let them go to Serbia."[35] Quite predict-

31 Sentence against Franjo Ciber, 31 July 1925, document 428/25, folder 73.113 K.428/1925, F. 73, Okružni sud Sombor (1919-1941), Istorijski arhiv Sombor (= IASo), Sombor, Serbia.

32 Sentence against Franjo Ciber.

33 Protocol with Franjo Ciber, 17 February 1925, document 27, folder 73.113 K.428/1925, F. 73, Okružni sud Sombor (1919-1941), IASo.

34 On Stjepan Radić, see e.g. Mark Biondich, "Stjepan Radić, Yugoslavism, and the Habsburg Monarchy," *Austrian History Yearbook* 27 (January 1996): 109–31.

35 Indictment no. 6617/1927, document 207/2, folder 73.113 K. 2466/1927, F. 73, Okružni sud Sombor (1919-1941), IASo.

ably, the accused claimed in his appeal that his words did not refer to all Serbs, but rather just to the corrupt Serbian officials whom the government had sent to Vojvodina.[36] In Lower Styria, it was even common to see contemporaries speak of a pipeline leading from Germanophile sentiment in the late Habsburg period to support for Radić's party in the interwar years. In the same year, an innkeeper from Makole in Lower Styria had been heard "complaining about our high taxes, finally saying that today's government and kings aren't worth anything. He also added that it would be best if we'd belong to where we used to. . . . He is of German conviction and has always publicly displayed this. But after the overthrow [in 1918], he changed seats and became a supporter of Radić's party."[37]

While the accused in the aforementioned cases criticized the new state on an abstract level, many other contemporary conflicts pitted locals against recent settlers whose arrival was tied to the policies of the new Yugoslav state. A typical example of such interactions was a case against Branko Cvejić, a Serb labourer from Sombor who had been tried by the local Regional Court in 1924. While drunk in an inn, he had exclaimed that "[y]ou *Srbijanci* [= Serbs from Serbia] would not even be here had this [land] not been betrayed, and it's not certain that you'll be staying for long either."[38] He concluded by saying that he, too, was a Serb, but that he used to be a "great Hungarian" before the war and remained one today. While Cvejić's nationally ambivalent behaviour was by no means exceptional for the time, it is evident that he was also keenly aware of its somewhat paradoxical nature considering his Serbian ethnic background. Claiming drunkenness during his defence, he asserted that he "could not have spoken the incriminating words because I, as a Yugoslav and Serbian patriot, was oppressed together with my family by the Hungarians back in in 1914."[39]

While Cvejić's words were directed against *Srbijanci*, we notice that many of his contemporaries verbally attacked newcomers whose presence was seen as a part of the new Yugoslav order in a wider sense. In the Bačka, it was particularly common to see conflicts between natives and *dobrovoljci*, i.e., wartime volunteers to the Serbian army. As a reward for their service, the latter received land expropriated in the post-war agrarian reform and participated in a form of internal

36 Matija Kolar's appeal, document 207/10.

37 Interrogation of witnesses, 17 August 1927, document Z 88/27–7, folder Vr VIII 1265/27 Okrožno sodišče Maribor 1898-1941, PAM.

38 Sentence against Branko Cvejić, 2 June 1925, document K.651/11.1924, folder 73.76 K.651/1924, F. 73, Okružni sud Sombor (1919-1941), IASo.

39 Protocol with Branko Cvejić, 2 June 1925, document K.651/11.1924, folder 73.76 K.651/1924, F. 73, Okružni sud Sombor (1919-1941), IASo.

colonisation.[40] Since the Yugoslav agrarian reform had disproportionately favoured military volunteers and people from Serbia proper, a dividing line was drawn between them and the oftentimes excluded native population. In the village of Petlovac, the 66-year-old Andrija/Andreas Rupl was accused of offending his *dobrovoljac* neighbour when he had asked him why he had to come "here" if Serbia was the country for which he had sacrificed his life during the war: "[T]his is not Serbia, Serbia is in Albania. You've brought shame upon Hungary and come here, you *rac* [= Serbian][41] trash. . . . If you had put your head on the line for Serbia, then go to Serbia, not over here to Yugoslavia!"[42]

Rupl appears to have used the word "Yugoslavia" to refer exclusively to the state's former Habsburg territories, again implying their cultural cohesion vis-a-vis the old Serbian kingdom. At the same time, his main frame of reference for the pre-Yugoslav past was not the wider empire, but rather Hungary itself. Much like in the previously discussed case involving Cvejić, pro-Hungarian exclamations or historically revisionist statements make regular appearances in conflicts with new arrivals in local environments. Quite predictably, one possible channel for the latter's frustrations with the current order was Hungarian revisionism and Habsburg legitimism. In 1922, a conversation between two women in the Baranja village of Laško escalated into a conflict when Stanka Marinac expressed outrage at the fact that her neighbour, Berta Korlatović, had recently received government land together with her husband through the agrarian reform. Reprimanding her for marrying a "stinking *Srbijanac*," she exclaimed that "[t]his land is going to be Hungarian, it won't stay Serbian."[43] Her neighbour responded by saying that "king Alexander walks this soil" and that he will keep on doing so, to which Marinac retorted that "it's not he who's going to be here, but Charles's son[.]"[44]

If being Habsburg amounted to a positive frame of reference for some Yugoslavs, this form of discourse also had its South Slavic nationalist flipside. It was thus not uncommon to see people ideologically aligned with Yugoslav nationalism accuse others of being Austrian or Habsburg to imply that their behaviour was un-

40 On the agrarian reform in Central and Eastern Europe, see Dietmar Müller, *Bodeneigentum und Nation: Rumänien, Jugoslawien und Polen im Europäischen Vergleich: 1918-1948*, Moderne Europäische Geschichte 17 (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2020).

41 *Rac* was an exonym traditionally used to refer to Orthodox (and occasionally Catholic) South Slavs in the Kingdom of Hungary. By the interwar period, it came to be seen as a pejorative term.

42 Sentence against Andrija Rupl, 14 December 1927, document K.926–6-1926, folder 73.155 K.926/1926, F. 73, Okružni sud Sombor (1919-1941), IASo.

43 Criminal charge against Franja Taraj and Stanka Marinac, document 494, 30 April 1922, folder 73.31 779/1922, F. 73 Okružni sud Sombor (1919-1941), IASo.

44 Criminal charge against Franja Taraj and Stanka Marinac.

patriotic or in line with the practices of the old regime. One such representative interaction took place in 1919 in the Styrian town of Ptuj, where two merchants from Ljubljana had the police called on them for causing a ruckus in one of the local hotels. A policeman involved in the arrest testified that the merchants "insulted us saying that we still have the Austrian system, that we only act against Slovenes, but never against Germans, that we favour the Germans, etc."[45] Unsurprisingly, this was also a discourse that was sometimes employed by Serbs and other South Slav newcomers in the Styrian environment. When Peter/Petar Mijović, a 40-year-old landowner from Drniš in Dalmatia, experienced a legal investigation in relation to a recent purchase of property in Maribor, he snapped at the gendarme who had come to interrogate him with the following words: "You know that I'm a Serb and that it's wrong to write and report falsehoods in a democratic state . . . [y]ou still operate as if you were in Old Austria, I'm going to destroy you, if not in some other way, then with the help of the deputies and ministers."[46]

Finally, it is hardly surprising that the most rhetorically gifted outbursts of anti-Habsburg slander usually came from members of contemporary radical-right groups such as the Organization of Yugoslav Nationalists, i.e., the ORJUNA.[47] When its members were assembled in a Maribor inn in 1923, they had spouted the following abuse in the presence of the local police chief commissioner: "Who is this Kerševan? He's a zero; he's shit; he's less than shit; he's a do-no-good; he's an *avstrijakant* ["Austrophile"], an anti-national element; a Germanophile; we'll show him, etc."[48] In this case, too, presumed Austrophile or Germanophile sympathies signalled that the accused was working against the interests of the national present. Since keeping order also necessarily involved the repression of excessively rowdy nationalist activists, it comes to no surprise that the latter should accuse the local police commissioner of Habsburg sympathies and a lacking national consciousness.

45 Protocol with Valentin Jelušič, 14 October 1919, folder 14/518, box 240, Mestna občina Ptuj, 1864–1941, Zgodovinski arhiv Ptuj (= ZAP), Ptuj, Slovenia.

46 Report to the public prosecutor in Maribor, 19 April 1921, document 1835/21, folder Vr VII 1109/21, box 75, Okrožno sodišče Maribor 1898–1941, PAM.

47 On the ORJUNA, see e.g. Boris Mlakar, "Radical Nationalism and Fascist Elements in Political Movements in Slovenia between the World Wars," *Slovene Studies* 31, no. 1 (2009): 3–19.

48 Indictment against Ivan Škerjanc et al., 19 July 1923, document 1864/23, folder Vr VII 848/23, box 103, Okrožno sodišče Maribor 1898–1941, PAM.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a limited selection of court cases in which references to the Habsburg Empire eventually led to the interpersonal conflict and subsequent legal action. Spatial constraints prevent an exhaustive discussion of this phenomenon as the number of cases from the two regional courts that involved such references during the first ten years of Yugoslav rule runs into the dozens. This notwithstanding, the discussed examples allow for some wider conclusions regarding the discursive instrumentalization and contestation of the Habsburg past in interwar Yugoslav society and its relevance for understanding the wider post-imperial transition in Central and Eastern Europe.

When considering the contexts in which interwar Yugoslavs argued over the Habsburg past, one may notice that such references almost never appeared in a vacuum. From contemporary economic troubles to the unpleasant prospects of military service and feelings of disadvantage compared to the supposed benefactors of the new regime, the court cases demonstrate that invocations of the Habsburg Empire were usually triggered by some form of contemporary grievance and tended to perform a clear context-dependent rhetorical function. While pro-Habsburg sentiment was not a form of ethnicity or nationhood, the cases in question show that non-national forms of political loyalty can also be productively studied using an interpretative lens that approaches it from a situational perspective.

For some historians, imperial nostalgia seems to have appeared as a sign of resistance towards nationalist mobilization, i.e., as behaviour subsumable under the controversial category of "national indifference."[49] In his study of anti-state attitudes in interwar Croatia, Filip Erdeljac found that "many peasants expressed their opposition to the interwar state in non-national ways, whether by simply directing their anger against the state or by nostalgically reminiscing about the days of Austro-Hungarian rule."[50] Furthermore, his sources supposedly "partially affirm the findings of scholars who have presented indifference as a form of resistance to modern mass politics that persisted in spite of the resources that nationalist activists devoted to eliminating the phenomenon."[51] But just as more recent scholarship on nationalism from below seriously complicates attempts to interpret national identity as a stable and coherent form of belonging, we arguably face similarly contingent and unexpected forms of behaviour when trying to analyse contemporary exclamations of imperial (dis)loyalty.

49 Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93–119, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0037677900016715.
50 Erdeljac, "Between Nationalism and Indifference," 125.
51 Erdeljac, 125.

Most of the accused featured in the present study would have likely been recognized by contemporaries as members of the titular Yugoslav nationality. Their life-stories obviously complicate simplistic teleological narratives of national liberation and loyalty derived from "objective" national belonging. As the discussed examples have shown, non-elite actors tended to combine their pro-Habsburg or revisionist sentiment with various forms of regionalism and civilisational chauvinism in rather eclectic ways. While such cases show that declarations of imperial nostalgia could prove subversive to contemporary hegemonic nationalist narratives, we should be careful to interpret non-compliance with canonical nationalism as resistance towards nationalization or even as an explicit longing for a multinational imperial world. After all, what dissatisfied people were typically missing from the past regime were not its specific national policies or lack thereof; instead, they had primarily looked back at the Habsburg age for its sense of material stability, a fact all the less surprising considering the economic and political uncertainties that had troubled Yugoslavia during its first ten years of existence.

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Jialin Christina Wu

Curating Indigeneity: Imperial Pasts and the Shaping of Communal Identities in the Malay Archipelago (Nineteenth–Twentieth Centuries)

Abstract: This paper seeks to unravel how the imperial past of British Malaya has served as a political tool to ascribe and shape the identity politics of diverse ethnic groups in Malaysia and Singapore over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In particular, it concentrates on how this imperial past has been instrumentalised to construct and perpetuate preconceived notions of ethnic communities. It demonstrates how communal identities in British Malaya underwent a transformation in this era as the irruption of colonial capitalism reconfigured local economies, social dynamics, and political cultures. It is argued that these developments contributed towards social schisms between indigenous and allochthone societies in the colonial era. In uncovering how the imperial past has been instrumentalised in the formation and shaping of communal identities and politics in post-colonial Malaysia and Singapore, this paper seeks to draw attention to the concrete ways in which imperial histories have played a role in constructing images of alterity and indigeneity. While extant literature on communal identities have mainly focused on the post-colonial era, this essay further argues for the importance of understanding how the imperial past has been instrumentalised to perpetuate these images of the "other" and to justify political ideologies.

On 20 December 1958, the Singapore Malay-language newspaper, *Berita Harian*, published a damning front page article against the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.[1] Criticising the *Encyclopaedia* for its "biased and unscientific" perspective on Malays, it took particular offense at the following passage, published under the *Encyclopaedia's* heading, "Malays":

1 "Berita Harian bertindak na'melenyapkan penghinaan ini," *Berita Harian*, 20 December 1958, 1. The passage cited above can be found in this article. The original citation on "Malays" can be found in the revised fourteenth edition of the fourteenth volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1958), page 722. The *Berita Harian* (The Daily News) was a Romanized Malay edition of the leading English-language newspaper, the Singaporean *The Straits Times.* Its criticism of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* was also published by other newspapers, notably the leading English newspaper, *The Straits Times*. See "Berita tackles Encyclopaedia – 'a gross libel'", *The Straits Times*, 21 December 1958, 9.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111229591-012

> The Malays are indolent, pleasure loving, improvident, fond of bright clothing, of comfort, of ease, and dislike toil exceedingly. They have no idea of the value of money, and little notion of honesty where money is concerned. They borrow rather than earn money. They frequently refuse to work for a wage though in sore need of cash, and yet at the invitation of one who is their friend they will toil unremittingly without any thought of reward. They are addicted to gambling, and formerly were much given to fighting, but their courage on the whole is not high if judged by European standards. The sexual morality of the Malays is very lax, but prostitution is not common. [. . .]

Asserting that such statements were tantamount to "a great insult" and "a libel to an entire race," the *Berita Harian* urged the editors of the *Encyclopaedia* to remedy the situation. Pointing out that "objections had been raised previously" to no avail, the newspaper insisted on the necessity of revising the article, especially in light of Malaya's recent independence from British colonial rule in August 1957. "The Malays now stand tall and are today senior partners in the democratic government of independent Malaya," declared the *Berita Harian*. "If the *Encyclopaedia*'s description were true, then independence (*merdeka*), which had been achieved by the Malays, would have been a failure," reasoned the newspaper.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s response was swift. Within a week, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s managing editor, John Vilas Dodge (1909–1991), addressed a letter expressing his commitment to rewrite the offending passage "immediately [. . .] at our earliest opportunity."[2] Admitting that his editorial team had been "embarrassed by the paragraph," Dodge revealed that they had "been bombarded with criticism" and that they "would have been anxious to change the article" even if the story had not received such wide notice."[3] Adding that "a noted Malay scholar" and former colonial administrator, Sir Richard Olaf Winstedt (1878–1966), had since been "commissioned to revise the offensive passage in the encyclopaedia," Dodge assured the *Berita Harian* that the revision would be handled "as an assignment of the first priority."[4]

Many leaders and members of the Malay community both welcomed and celebrated *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s decision to correct the article. One Singapore reader of the *Berita Harian*, who addressed a forum letter to the newspaper under the pseudonym *Anak Melayu* (Malay child), wrote to express satisfaction at the outcome of its initiative, explaining that the correction of such erroneous

2 "Winstedt menulis renchana Baharu," *Berita Harian*, 30 December 1958, 1. Also see: "Berita Harian protest forces a change," *The Straits Times*, 30 December 1958, 1. The *Berita Harian*'s story had drawn greater international attention, and it had been circulated by Reuters.

3 Ibid.

4 "Winsted Denial on 'Lazy Malays'", *The Straits Times*, 3 January 1959, 2.

views on the Malays was necessary to dismantle the long-standing stereotype that the Malays were "lazy."[5] "As long as this information in the *Encyclopaedia* is not scraped," wrote *Anak Melayu*, "people in the world who do not understand the Malays well will think that we are lazy and that we do not know how to earn money."[6] Concurrently, other Malay readers, such as Mohamad bin Harun of Taiping, Perak (Northwest Malaysia), wrote to the *Berita Harian* to express an alternative perspective of such long-standing stereotypes. Whilst affirming that he did not subscribe to the *Encyclopaedia*'s views on Malays, he nonetheless added: "Some aspects of [the article] on the characteristics of the Malays really hit the spot. Some of the weaknesses of the Malays, as underlined by the *Encyclopaedia* article, are still found to this day. Can it be said that Malays are more diligent than other races?"[7] Arguing that *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s article had in fact served "as a mirror for us all," Mohamad bin Harun thus asserted: "If you want to change it [the article], then let it be about the traits that have been eroded or that are no longer present in the Malays. As regards the characteristics which have become our flesh and blood, let them be maintained in the article as a mirror for us all."[8] Another perspective on the revision of the article was submitted by the State Councillor of Selangor (West Coast Malaysia) and Chairman of the Selangor Muslim Welfare Committee, Inche Abdullah Yassin. In his interview with *The Straits Budget*, he insisted that *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s description of Malays should take into consideration "the Malays' gentleness, sincerity and straightforwardness" as it was "mainly" because of these attributes "that the British colonial power was able to introduce its open-door policy of bringing cheap

5 "Kerajaan di-minta bantah penghinaan dlm [dalam] Encyclopaedia – Anak Melayu, Singapura," *Berita Harian*, 27 December 1958, 4.

6 Ibid. "Sa-lagi keterangan2 dalam buku yng di-chachi ramai itu tidak di-kikiskan maka sa-lama itu-lah pendudok2 di dunia yang tidak mengetahui bangsa Melayu dari dekat menganggap kita pemalas dan tidak tahu menggungakan wang ringgit dan lain2nnya [sic]."

7 "Orang Melayu suka pinjam, boros. . . - Mohamad bin Harun, Taiping," *Berita Harrian*, 3 January 1959, 4.

8 Ibid. The original citation in Malay is as follows: "Saya tidak setuju dengan keselurohan pendapat dalam renchana itu. Tetapi pada sa-tengah2 bahagian-nya tentang sifat2 orang Melayu memang kena pada tempat-nya. Sa-tengah2 kelemahan orang2 Melayu saperti yang di-terangkan oleh rencana *Encyclopaedia* itu maseh di-dapati hingga hari ini. Dapat-kah ita katakan orang2 Melayu lebeh rajin daripada bangsa2 lain? [...] Saya baca *Encyclopaedia* itu akan mengubah, renchana itu akibat bantahan dari *Berita Harian*. Tetapi apa-kah yang akan di-ubah? Kalau hendak di-ubah pun biar-lah tentang sifat2 yang sudah terkikis atau yang tidak ada pada pribadi orang2 Melayu. Tentang sifat2 yang memang sudah menjadi darrah daging kita itu, biar-lah di-kekalkan dalam rencana itu untok menjadi cermin kita semua. Shukor-lah ada *Encyclopaedia* itu untok memberi peluang kapada kita melihat diri kita sendiri."

labour from overseas, making Malaya's racial problem what it is now."[9] In that regard, he was suggesting that these "positive" characteristics of Malays had been exploited by the British, who in his opinion were responsible for having introduced non-Malay immigrants (Chinese and Indians, amongst others) to the colony and for sowing the seeds of racial tensions in Malaya.

Although the public outcry and subsequent revision of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s article on Malays has since been forgotten, the letters addressed to the *Berita Harian,* as well as the opinions expressed by members of Malay community, offer us key insights on their views and understanding of their community or "race" (*bangsa*) at the dawn of Malayan independence from British colonial rule. Of particular interest is the manner in which Malay self-representation was (and arguably, is) constantly expressed and framed within a comparative perspective in which Malays are considered and judged with respect to other communities, such as the Chinese and Indians. Furthermore, Malays are identified within this comparative framework as being "lazy" and lacking in "economic sense" with regards to the other allochthonous ethnic communities of Malaya. Apart from this, Inche Abdullah Yassin's assertion about the consequences of the arrival of other immigrants ("cheap labour from overseas") to British Malaya during the colonial period is useful in understanding the tensions which existed between the different ethnic communities in Malaya at the moment of self-determination. Indeed, his statement is reminiscent of the oft-cited view that the socio-economic condition of Malays had progressively declined during the colonial period. Coupled along with this belief was the long-standing claim that the disparity in economic development between Malays and other ethnic communities was due to British colonial policies, which had favored immigrants to the detriment of Malays.[10] At the same time, underlying these assumptions was the enduring cliché that "Malay indolence" was a marker of difference between Malays and other ethnicities, constituting an immutable attribute which, to borrow Mohamad bin Harun's expression, was a "characteristic which [has] become our flesh and blood."

Given that such racial stereotypes and beliefs on the consequences of British colonial rule have since been challenged by social commentators and scholars alike,[11] it would be unsurprising if such ideas no longer held currency in contempo-

9 "Malays happy over Britannica correction," *The Straits Budget*, 7 January 1959, 8.

10 For an overview of these long-standing beliefs, see the following article: Charles Hirschman, "The making of race in colonial Malaya: Political economy and racial ideology," *Sociological Forum* 1 (2): 330–61.

11 Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and Its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism* (London: F. Cass, 1977).

rary Malaysian and Singaporean (post-colonial British Malaya) societies. Indeed, much of the racial (or racist) statements on Malays cited in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article can be attributed to the beliefs British colonials had of Malays during the colonial era. As a case in point, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article had been penned by Sir Hugh Clifford (1866–1941),[12] an "old Malaya hand" who had resided in the colony for more than 20 years during his years of service in the colonial civil service. A keen observer and prolific novelist, he had occupied the position of Governor of the Straits Settlements and British High Commissioner in Malaya (1927–1929).[13] However, comments akin to that of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article remain rampant. For instance, as recently as in March 2019, Malaysia's long-serving Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (b. 1925) publicly lamented that Malays were still "not business oriented, while the other communities are very business oriented."[14] Explaining that Malays "still do not know how to handle or manage money" and that they engaged in "frivolous spending," Mahathir echoed colonial-era clichés of Malays and cited them as justification for the implementation of affirmative action policies in favour of Malays, adding that "the existing 30 percent *Bumiputera* [Malays and indigenous peoples] shareholding quota in listed companies is necessary."[15] When questioned about the validity of his opinions on "Malay indolence," Mahathir conceded that it was a "generalisation," but reiterated that "people should not be offended over it."[16] These recent statements suggest that the Prime Minister has not wavered in his long-standing conviction that his compatriots were "lazy,"[17] and that they had not succeeded in adopting the "working cultures of more successful races."[18] On a related note, Mahathir has also spoken categorically on how it was "the Chinese and Indians [who] worked as labourers when they first came to this country, doing the dangerous, dirty and difficult jobs."[19] Reiterating a statement rem-

12 "Winsted Denial on 'Lazy Malays'", *The Straits Times*, 3 January 1959, 2.

13 J. de V. Allen, "Two Imperialists: A Study of Sir Frank Swettenham and Sir Hugh Clifford," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 37, no. 1 (1964): 41–73.

14 "Dr M: Bumiputeras don't know how to handle money, spend frivolously," by Yiswaree Palansamy, 30 March 2019, *The Malay Mail*. Mahathir held the office of Prime Minister for two periods: 1981 to 2003 and 2018 to 2020.

15 Ibid.

16 "Dr M: Brits' assumption that Malays are lazy not necessarily the truth," 17 June 2019, *The Malay Mail*.

17 "Dr M: I failed to change lazy Malays," *The Star*, by Rahimy Rahim, 11 September 2014.

18 "Mahathir defends 'Lazy Malays' remarks," *Today*, 15 September 2014. These statements were originally produced in the *Utusan Malaysa,* a newspaper under the control of the political party UMNO (United Malays National Organisation).

19 "A chat with Dr M: Work hard, don't rely on aid," by Khaidir A Majid, Kadir Djkoh and Adha Ghazali, *New Straits Times*, 5 December 2019.

iniscent of colonialist discourse, he emphasised: "Now, their descendants are billionaires because they work."

In retrospect, the longevity of these colonial perspectives on "the Malay character" and the unabating comparisons drawn between Malays and other ethnic communities merit greater scholarly attention. On the one hand, this is because such issues remain pertinent if we seek to understand contemporary politics and society in post-colonial Malaysia. As scholars have under-lined, recent developments in Malaysian politics, namely Mahathir's re-appointment as Prime Minister, have been "accompanied by a resurgence of public discourse concerning the stereotype of laziness applied to the Malay community."[20] How can we account for this? On the other hand, while scholars can trace the origins of such stereotypes and racialist comparisons to the colonial period, there is far less information available on the mechanisms and reasons for which these stereotypes or colonial perspectives continue to endure (and arguably, even thrive) in the post-independent era. Yet, these identity politics, which are rooted in discourses dating to the colonial era, continue to significantly impact post-colonial societies. Mahathir's 2019 justification of the implementation of affirmative action policies, designed to favour *Bumiputeras* (Malays and other indigenous ethnic communities), which account for 70% of the population,[21] is a case in point.

In seeking to address these issues, it bears reminding that the issues of race and ethnicity remain challenging (not to mention incendiary) in multi-ethnic Singapore and Malaysia. Indeed, as scholars have argued, racial categorisation has been used "as a technology of governance for differential control and rewards."[22] As previously alluded to, the consequences of this colonial-era form of racial categorisation "is especially evident in Malaysia today where racial politics has become not only inflammatory but also 'normalised' to implant the logic of 'originary justice', or the *Melayu* as first among equals." At other junctures, specific identities, such as "Malayness," have also been "often employed as cultural capital by minorities to lay claim to indigeneity, and therefore protection from the state."[23] In hindsight, the complexity of these issues over ethnicity, racial categorisation, and the ways in

20 Jonathan Yong Tienxhi, "The Image of Laziness and the Malaysian Middle Class: Unpacking the Politics of Indolence," in *Minorities Matter: Malaysian Politics and People Volume III*, ed. Sophie Lemiere (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2019), 108. See: "Dr M takes jab at 'lazy, untrustworthy' Malays," by Rafidah Mat Ruzki and Dawn Chan, *New Straits Times*, 8 September 2018.

21 "Malays" account for 57.9% of the population (30.4 million) with "Other Bumiputera" at 12.2%. Demographic Statistics Malaysia (Second Quarter 2023), Ministry of Economy, Malaysia, https://www.dosm.gov.my/.

22 Maznah Mohamad and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, eds., *Melayu. The Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011), xvi.

23 Ibid., xi. Here, the authors refer to the case of modern-day Singapore.

which "race" has been utilised to serve different political or socio-economic agendas can also be gleaned from the fact that who or what constitutes a "Malay" or "Malayness" defies any easy definition. As scholars have demonstrated over the past decades, the very "nature of essence of 'Malayness' remains problematic – one of the most challenging and confusing terms in the world of Southeast Asia."[24] In addition, its significance as "more than just a civilisational notion but a living reality; a signifier that persists and thrives,"[25] is useful in reminding us of the importance of understanding how such racial categories and understandings have been shaped in the long run. In this sense, if we are to gain a better comprehension of these issues, a thorough historical contextualisation of the myriad ways in which racial categories have been used and understood is necessary.

In light of the above, this chapter seeks to unravel how the imperial past of British Malaya has served as a political tool for different interest groups to ascribe and shape the identity politics of diverse ethnic groups (Chinese, Malay, Indian . . .) over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In particular, it concentrates on how this imperial past has been instrumentalised to construct and perpetuate stereotypes and preconceived notions of ethnic communities and their (self-)identities. It seeks to address the following questions: (1) in what concrete ways has Malaya's colonial past shaped the perspectives that different ethnic communities have of each other? By the same token, how has this shared colonial experience shaped the comparative framework in which Malay self-representation is expressed and considered with regard to other ethnicities? In addition, (2) how has Malaya's imperial past and its impact upon colonial society been recounted and transmitted over time? Indeed, what are the narrative structures, tropes, or metaphors used in communicating this shared history? Finally, (3) why do these tropes (and colonial stereotypes) of different ethnic communities in British Malaya (e.g., clichés of the "lazy Malay", the "business-oriented Chinese" or the "industrious Indians" to cite Mahathir) continue to endure after independence? What are the mechanisms perpetuating these colonial stereotypes in the post-colonial present?

Given the vast scope and breadth of these questions, this chapter addresses these issues by focusing the analysis upon the example raised previously – that is,

24 Timothy P. Barnard and Hendrik M.J. Maier, "Melayu, Malay, Malais: Journeys through the Identity of a Collection," in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity Across Boundaries*, ed. Timothy P. Barnard (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), xiii. Also see the work of Joel S. Kahn, *Other Malays. Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Malay World* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2006); Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree. Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Singapore: NUS Press 2010); and Anthony Milner, *The Malays* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).

25 Mohamad and Aljunied, eds., *Melayu*, xx.

the trope of the "lazy" Malay supposedly "lacking in business acumen," as opposed to other "more industrious" and "business oriented" communities in British Malaya. It demonstrates that these colonial stereotypes emerged as communal identities and underwent a transformation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Malaya. In particular, this chapter argues that the irruption of colonial capitalism in the Malay Archipelago reconfigured local economies, social dynamics, and political cultures, forming the basis in which colonial perceptions of the different ethnic communities (Malays, Chinese, Indians, and others) emerged. Building upon the pioneering work of Syed Hussein Alatas, who has contributed much to this area of analysis,[26] this chapter demonstrates how this economic transformation of the region led British colonials to not only develop the stereotype that Malays were "lazy," but also the idea that they were "economically irrational," violent, ungovernable,[27] and even potentially dangerous. It analyses print source material (newspapers, colonial writings, amongst others) of the colonial era to gain a better understanding of the narratives, tropes, and mechanisms used in perpetuating these perspectives. In providing a concrete case study and analysis of how key concepts such as indigeneity were thoroughly constructed within and by Malaya's imperial past, this chapter aims to contribute towards extant historiography on the impact and consequences of imperial pasts in the "post" colonial present.

The Colonial Past and the Origins of the "Lazy" and "Ungovernable" Native

For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the irruption of colonial capitalism in colonies throughout maritime Southeast Asia reconfigured local economies, social dynamics, and the political cultures of diverse peoples and communities. As a case in point, the population of this region was thoroughly transformed as colonials actively recruited immigrant labourers from East and South Asia in a bid to exploit the resources of the region. In some territories such as British Malaya, the number of immigrant labourers escalated to staggering heights, reaching between 85% and 100% of the total population in new urban centres.[28] Between 1800 and 1911, the pop-

26 Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native.*

27 See the analysis of Eddie Tay, *Colony, Nation, and Globalisation: Not at Home in Singaporean and Malaysian Literature* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 26.

28 Anthony Reid, "Malaysia/Singapore as Immigrant Societies," *Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series* 141 (2010): 6–7. Also see Amarjit Kaur, "Indian Labour, Labour Standards and Workers' Health in Burma and Malaya, 1900-1940," *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2006): 425–75.

ulation quadrupled, increasing from 500,000 to 2,300,000 around the turn of the century.[29] Malaya was not unique in this; in the Philippines, an "unparalleled influx of Chinese labourers" during much of the nineteenth century altered the fabric of society in enduring ways.[30] In providing us with a global view of these migration patterns, scholars have also estimated that between 1846 and 1940, approximately 48–52 million people from India and southeast China found their way into parts of Southeast Asia, the South Pacific, and the Indian Ocean between 1846 and 1940.[31]

In British Malaya, this spectacular increase in immigrant laborers was directly related to the demand for workers in lucrative industries such as tin mining, rubber cultivation, and others. As many local Malays had refused to work under perilous conditions for the benefit of colonial capitalism, colonials actively encouraged the mass immigration of Chinese and Indian laborers (as well as unfree, convict laborers from British India) to exploit the region's resources.[32] This, in turn, contributed to colonial stereotypes of Malays as "lazy natives" who were "economically irrational" since they did not partake in the enterprise of colonial capitalism. This cliché was reinforced when colonials turned to increasing numbers of Chinese and Indian immigrants willing to work under perilous conditions.[33] In contrast, these immigrants were typecast as being "industrious" or "vigorous" since they had supported the economic success of the plantations and mining industries under imperial rule. Such stereotypes of the different ethnic groups in Malaya soon gained currency; as Lynn Lees Hollen has argued, "[s]tereotypes of each ethnic group that linked culture, character, and capacity circulated widely within the European community in Malaya" and "[e]ach race was fitted by character and temperament into an appropriate place."[34] The following article published in 1890 by *The Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle* on the "Labour Question" in Malaya typifies these assessments:

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29 See *Report of the Labour Commission of 1890*, 68, cited in Lynn Hollen Lees, *Planting Empire, Cultivating Subjects. British Malaya, 1786-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 52. Also see John H. Drabble, *An Economic History of Malaysia, c. 1800-1990: The Transition to Modern Economic Growth* (London: MacMillan Press, 2000), 91.

30 Mònica Ginés-Blasi, "A Philippine 'Coolie Trade': Trade and Exploitation of Chinese Labour in Spanish Colonial Philippines, 1850-98," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,* 51, no. 3 (2020): 467–83.

31 Adam McKeown, "Global Migration, 1846-1940," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 32 (June 2004): 155–89 and Adam McKeown, "Conceptualising Chinese Diasporas, 1842-1949," *Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 2 (May 1999).

32 Anand A. Yang, "Indian Convict Workers in Southeast Asia in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of World History* 14, no. 2 (2003): 179–208.

33 See the analysis of Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native.*

34 Lees, *Planting Empire*, 58.

> The usefulness of the Indian labourers is confined to certain special work only; nor can we depend on the lazy Malays as a source of cooly [sic] labour. The prosperity of the colony has hitherto been dependent mainly, if not entirely, on the large influx of Chinese coolies, and it is incumbent on all employers of Chinese labour, as well as the Government, to do their utmost in order to encourage Chinese immigration to the colony and the Protected Native States.[35]

As the above indicates, Malays were frequently compared to other ethnic communities in Malaya, often in an unflattering light. The opinion that Malays were "indolent" was accompanied by the colonial assessment that it was thus Malaya's other ethnic communities, and not the Malays, who were working towards the progress and economic development of the colony. These perspectives were articulated by British writers such as Walter Alleyne Ireland, who remarked in 1905: "The Malay of the Peninsula is the most steadfast loafer on the face of this earth [. . .] for nine tenths of his waking hours, year in and year out, he sits on a wooden bench in the shade and watches the Chinaman and the Tamil build roads and railways, work the mines, cultivate the soil, raise cattle, and pay the taxes."[36] Such opinions were not mere empty chatter; as scholars have demonstrated, these assessments on racial characteristics played significant roles in influencing British colonial policies, contributing towards the "division between natives and non-natives in the country."[37]

Other than contributing towards colonial stereotypes on "racial composition" in Malaya, the demographic and economic development of the region had further destabilized Malay society, leading to what some sociologists have termed "social déclassement" or a loss in social position. Indeed, the idea that Malays were "lazy" was followed by the belief that they would stagnate and even regress. By the turn of the twentieth century, such widely held assumptions of Malays led colonials and observers to assert with confidence: "Malays are too indolent by nature [. . .] their doom is sealed, that as time progresses, they must go to the wall [. . .] they will survive only as objects of scientific interest to the ethnologist and the historian."[38] The following view expressed by "Bangkor" (Penang, Straits Set-

35 "The Labour Question," *Straits Independent and Penang Chronicle*, 16 August 1890, 2.

36 Walter Alleyne Ireland, *The Far Eastern Tropics* (London: Archibald Constable, 1905): 115–16. The many reviews of Alleyne Ireland's book (published in the local newspapers and elsewhere) indicate the wide-spread interest and impact of his book.

37 Rusaslina Idrus, "Malays and Orang Asli: Contesting Indigeneity," in *Melayu. The Politics, Poetics and Paradoxes of Malayness*, ed. Maznah Mohamad and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011).

38 Colonial opinions, cited in B. Stoney, "The Malays of British Malaya," in *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources*, ed. H. Cartwright and Arnold Wright (London, Lloyd's Greater Britain Publishing Company, Ltd., 1908), 227–28.

tlements) to the *Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle* in 1904 exemplifies this perspective. Drawing upon Alleyne Ireland's opinions, "Bangkor" affirmed:

> Mr. Alleyne Ireland's estimation of the Malay that he is 'the most steadfast loafer on the face of the earth . . . you can make no appeal to him for industry', though ludicrous, would, it is hoped, bring home to mind what he is, and what he should be. [. . .] In spite of the many advantages and facilities afforded by the British rule, the Malay has lagged behind [. . .] Now that there is a tendency all over the world to advance in every way, initiated by the excellent example set by Japan, the Malay should not stagnate as hitherto. He will probably retrogress. His days as a nation are numbered. He belongs to the rubbish-heap of the world.[39]

Apart from these opinions related to "Malay indolence," a third prevailing stereotype on Malay "nature" was to be found in the idea that an innate, violent streak was inherent to Malays. This aspect of the Malay "character" was derived from colonial perceptions of indigenous acts of violence which came to be known as "running amok." In the realm of literature, "running amok" has had an impact on novelists and travel-writers such as Isabella Bird, W. Somerset Maugham, and Joseph Conrad.[40] Non-Anglophone novelists, such as Stefan Zweig (*Der Amokläufer*, 1922) and Henri Fauconnier (*Malaisie*, 1930) to name but a few, have equally been fascinated by amok and its connotations of an exclusively "native" or "primitive" example of violence in Malaya. Indeed, these writers have brought some of the more sensational and dramatic aspects of amok to a wider audience by using it as a key theme in their writing. In the colonial era, the phenomenon of "running amok" similarly left an indelible impression on colonials, an example of which can be found in the writings of Sir Frank Swettenham (1850–1946), who had served in the Malayan civil service in various capacities for more than 30 years. In his 1899 book, *The Real Malay*, Swettenham dedicated a chapter on amok, entitled "Faulty Composition":

> The nature of the Malays of our island is not unlike their clime. Beneath their civil and apparently gentle surface fierce passions smoulder, which require but a spark to kindle into a devastating flame. Maddened by jealousy, or some real or fancied wrong, the ordinary mild Malay becomes a demon. Then his eyes glare like those of a wild beast, out leaps his *kris* (ceremonial knife) or *parang*, and he rushes on the amok, smiting every-one he meets.[41]

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39 "Our Mail Bag: The Lazy Malay (To the Editor. 'Pinang Gazette')," *Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle*, 6 May 1904, 2. This letter was signed: "By Bangkor, Penang, 6–5-04."

40 For more information on travel writing and imperial expansion, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

41 Frank Swettenham, *The Real Malay* (London: John Lane, 1899). Swetttenham had notably served as Governor of the Straits Settlements and Resident-General of the Federated Malay States.

Although these colonial stereotypes have often been examined separately, studying them in relation with one another can allow us to gain a better understanding of how these perspectives were articulated and perpetuated in the colonial era. As a case in point, while the stereotype of the "lazy" Malay and the trope of the "violent" amok-running Malay have attracted equal attention, scholars have not attempted to make connections between them. Yet, the roots of these colonial views on the "Malay nature" can be found in a common background – that of the economic and demographic transformation of the region. In this regard, little attention has been paid to the way in which this economic transformation, as well as the social déclassement alluded to prior, could have been a source of frustration for Malays, driving some to commit violent acts later identified as "amok." Indeed, as the numerous colonial police reports and coroner records suggest,[42] cases of violence identified as "amok" systematically started as cases of dementia violence committed by male perpetrators within the framework of their family unit before spilling into the public spaces. These sources indicate that the origins of the domestic disputes which provided the initial spark of violence could be found in the incapacity of the (male) head of the household to bear the responsibility of guaranteeing a suitable standard of living for his own family. Such disputes and sense of impotency would then overwhelm the individual, leading him to execute sudden, violent acts. Seen from this point of view, colonial representations of "amok" and stereotypes on the "violent" nature of Malays are thus much more closely linked to the economic transformation of the Malay Archipelago than previously imagined.

Having identified these colonial tropes and the historical context in which they arose, it is useful to examine the reasons for which they took on such a hold in the colonial period. Amongst the different rationales which may account for this, scientific (and pseudoscientific) explanations proved to be one of the most important and pervasive, which was especially so because they provided a sense of objectivity in their assertions about Malaya and its peoples. Indeed, science, medicine, and other "scientific" concepts, such as environmentally deterministic theories, played key roles in buttressing the colonial stereotypes which persisted into the twentieth century. Apart from this, scientific knowledge was also em-

42 J. Christina Wu, "Disciplining Native Masculinities: Colonial Violence in Malaya, 'Land of the Pirate and the Amok'", in *Violence Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World*, ed. Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 186.

ployed as tools of imperialism in facilitating colonial rule,[43] constituting both "the ambitions and the methods of an encompassing imperialism."[44]

One example of how such "scientific knowledge" was developed was as follows. In Malaya, colonial opinions on the way in which the warm equatorial climate rendered Malays "lethargic," "lazy," and potentially violent were rife. "The East," wrote one *Straits Times* reporter in 1911, "is remarkable for certain forms of crime which hardly find any parallel in other parts of the world [. . .] the hot weather, the ascending climax of heat, tedium and discomfort brings with it an out-burst of homicidal crimes distinguished generally by their suddenness and the slightness of the provocation."[45] According to colonials, the climate's impact on Malays was permanent as "Malays have been here so long [in the Peninsula] that the climate has by this time done its worst [. . .] their doom is sealed."[46] Others, such as the educationalist and biologist Leonard Richmond Wheeler (1888–1948), who had served in the Malayan Civil Service, asserted that the "lassitude and passivity" of Malays were "partly climatic, partly born of Islam."[47] This connection between Malaya's equatorial climate and the poor mental (as well as physical) condition of its inhabitants was emphasized by colonial medical professionals. As a case in point, Singapore Colonial Surgeon Wellington blamed the equatorial climate of Malaya for the ill mental health of its inhabitants.[48] In 1923, he posited that Malaya's "continual summer" was "enervating and bad for the nervous system," underlining that the "tissues become lethargic, and muscles and brain refuse to act with the vigour natural in a temperate climate." In a similar vein, Kenneth Black, Professor of Surgery at Singapore's King Edward VII College of Medicine, warned in 1933 that the "noxious stimuli" in Malaya could potentially "culminate in irritability, memory loss, poor concentration, impaired self-control, alcohol abuse, mental breakdown, insanity, and suicide."[49]

Colonial science and medicine also helped to perpetuate the comparative framework in which Malays and other ethnic communities were evaluated. According to colonial doctors, other Asian communities in Malaya were of a differ-

43 Richard Keller, "Madness and Colonization: Psychiatry in the British and French Empires, 1800–1962," *Journal of Social History* 35, no. 2 (2001): 296–97.

44 David Arnold, *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 2.

45 "Running Amok," *The Straits Times*, 22 July 1911, 12.

46 Colonial opinions, cited in B. Stoney, "The Malays of British Malaya," in *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya*, ed. H. Cartwright and Arnold Wright, 227–28.

47 Leonard Richmond Wheeler, *The Modern Malay* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1928), 23.

48 Ng Beng Yeong, *Till the Break of Day. A History of Mental Health Services in Singapore 1841 – 1993* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2016), 60.

49 Ibid.

ent "temperament" from Malays. As such, Dr. Johnston Abraham opined in a 1912 article of the *British Medical Journal*: "Temperamentally all the Malay races are exceedingly highly strung and nervous."[50] He suggested that "the enervating climate of the Malay Peninsula" was thus "responsible for the condition" and, emphasising upon the inevitable impact of the Malayan climate, he warned readers: "Even Europeans get 'jumpy' and intensely irritable after a few years there." Other medical professionals, such as the psychologist F.H. Van Loon, also postulated that the supposed difference between Malays and other ethnicities could be linked to the fact that "all primitive races resemble very much the psyche of children." Indeed, noted Van Loon, the "higher a people (or individual) is civilised, the better it learns to control its affective reaction."[51] The similarities drawn between the "psyche of children" and that of Malays persisted for much of the colonial period; as late as 1958, in the post-independent era, colonials such as Sir Richard Winsted continued to be of the opinion that "The Malay is still a child of nature in a sophisticated world that awaits his exploration."[52] Building on these clichés concerning the "child-like" nature of Malays, colonials perpetuated the idea that Malays did not (or could not) be counted upon for Malaya's economic development; rather, other ethnic groups, under the guidance of colonial tutelage, were responsible for the colony's economic development. This colonial view was notably expressed in a self-congratulatory tone in the following article of *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* in 1924.[53] Written by Philip Coote, author of *The Malay States* (1923), it declared: "There is probably no country in the world which has made such rapid social and industrial progress during the last half century as British Malaya [. . .] in an incredibly short time Malaya has been transformed from a land of impenetrable jungle peopled with ferocious savages into a prosperous country of rubber, tin, coconuts and other products." Speaking of Malays, Coote credited the colonial presence with having "tamed the indomitable spirit of the Malay" and for having successfully "transformed a land of virgin jungle into a wealthy and productive country." "The metamorphosis has been extraordinary," recounted Coote, "for in the place of the wild, uncontrolled savage there is now the lazy, listless Malay who seeks only to live a quiet life with as little trouble as is possible." Echoing these views, Malay politicians such as Mahathir

50 Cited in "Latah and Amok," *Straits Echo*, 16 April 1912, 7.

51 F.H.G. Van Loon "Amok and Lattah," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 21, no. 4 (1927): 434.

52 Richard Winsted, *A History of Classical Malay Literature* (Monograph of Malay Subjects), JMBRAS 31, no. 5 (1958): 5.

53 "Malaya of Yesterday and To-Day," *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 10 March 1924, 3.

have claimed that "Civilisation has subdued the Malay."[54] The fact that such colonial discourses continued to have such a hold in the post-independent era illustrate the enduring impact of the colonial past in the post-colonial present.

Conclusion

Colonial discourses and stereotypes on Malays and other ethnic communities in Malaya shaped colonial policies and formed the basis by which the socio-economic policies of the post-colonial state came to be structured. In that regard, post-independent Malaysia's New Economic Policy (henceforth NEP) is an example of how the colonial past, as discussed above, continues to exert an influence on the present. Introduced in 1971, NEP was first presented as the solution "to correct economic imbalance, so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic functions."[55] Its key elements included quotas for Bumiputera (Malays and other indigenous peoples) to secure admission to universities, schools, public sector employment, and a statutory share of 30% corporate equity, as well as preferential treatment in applying for public housing, amongst others. As Kenzo Horii has summarised succinctly, NEP was also planned with the idea of rectifying "the fundamental contradiction of Malaysian society" – the concentration of economic wealth in the hands of the rich Chinese and monopoly of political power by the Malay ruling groups"[56] – which constituted the "skewed social structure formed in the eighty-four years of colonial rule." However, since 1971, Malaysia has "increasingly become an ethnic hegemonic state as a result of a shift in political and economic resources to the state and the Bumiputera."[57]

Furthermore, the colonial past continues to weigh upon the present through its impact on how ethnicity is conceived in contemporary Malaysian society. As this chapter has demonstrated, colonial knowledges such as science and medicine played key roles in perpetuating opinions on the "characteristics" of different ethnic groups in Malaya, thus constructing and codifying what each ethnicity "was" while attributing the roles that each of them had to play in the colonial era.[58] The

54 Mahathir bin Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 151–52. First edition 1970.

55 See Article 153 of the Malaysian Constitution.

56 Kenzo Horii, "Disintegration of the Colonial Economic Legacies and Social Restructuring in Malaysia," *The Developing Economies* 39, no. 4 (December 1991): 281–313.

57 Ibid.

58 Also see Sarah A. Radcliffe, "Geography and indigeneity I: Indigeneity, coloniality and knowledge," *Progress in Human Geography* 41, no. 2 (2015): 1–10.

extent of their impact is also evident in post-independent Malaysia; indeed, scholars have shown how stereotypes such as "the myth of the lazy Malay has helped to legitimise intra- and inter-ethnic inequality, and establish new notions of 'deservedness' and 'undeservedness' within neo-liberal capitalism." In these ways and more, the colonial past continues to have "important political implications in contemporary Malaysian democracy."[59]

By analysing the ways in which Malaya's colonial past has shaped its present, it is hoped that this chapter has contributed to a better understanding of how colonial intervention and its impact – such as the economic and demographic transformation of the region – has played key roles in its past and present. Future work could also delve into other aspects of this economic transformation. Building on the argument that colonial powers produced knowledges in their bid to assess and ultimately justify and concretise their rule over colonised peoples,[60] an avenue for more research might lie in the study of the production and circulation of new knowledges and practices brought on by colonial interactions with local populations.[61] The long-term repercussions of these new knowledges and historical developments on the social structures, economic systems, and political cultures of this region stretched well into the post-colonial era, and recent work has allowed us to understand how this constituted a "permanent invasion upon the minds of the Malays," arguably serving as "the most lasting legacy of British colonial rule."[62] Nonetheless, the socio-economic context in which this knowledge arose requires greater attention if we seek to obtain a fuller and better comprehension of the enduring impact of the colonial past in human societies.

59 Yong, "The Image of Laziness and the Malaysian Middle Class," 108.

60 Ricardo Roque and Kim A. Wagner, eds., *Engaging Colonial Knowledge. Reading European Archives in World History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

61 Sandra Khor Manickam, *Taming the Wild. Aborigines and Racial Knowledge in Colonial Malaya* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015).

62 Paula Pannu, "The Production and Transmission of Knowledge in Colonial Malaya," *Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 37, no. 3 (2009): 427. Also see A.B. Shamsul, "History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Practice of 'Malay-ness' in Malaysia Reconsidered," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, no. 3 (2001): 355–66.

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