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Kristin Buchinger, Claire Gantet, Jakob Vogel. *Europäische Erinnerungsräume.* Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2009. 311 S. ISBN 978-3-593-38865-6.

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K. Buchinger u.a. (Hrsg.): Europäische Erinnerungsräume

"It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize and, localize their memories." Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, edited by Lewis A. Coser, Chicago 1992. Maurice Halbwachsâ conclusion that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory in which the individual thought places itself and is enriched by a plurality of references, marked the beginning of linking remembrance to geographical spheres. The first big research projects 'lieux de mÃ©moire' (1984-1992) by Pierre Nora and 'Deutsche Erinnerungsorte' (2001) by Etienne FranÃ§ois and Hagen Schulze focused rather on nations as geographical reference and barely touched upon interactions and transitions of memories between different countries. Even projects on European level such as 'Mythen der Nationen' (2005) proved to be more of an enumerative than of a transnational character.

In the course of the discussions about the spatial turn, led by historians and cultural scientists, research was pushed into another direction and raised critical questions about the geographical reference of collective memories. National borders as predominant reference framework were pushed increasingly aside for studies like mental maps that showed how historical memories were evoked in order to construct specific pictures of certain regions such as âthe Eastâ, âthe Westâ or âthe Balkansâ. The renouncing of nations as reference framework was further promoted by the approaches of the histoire croisÃ©e that explored transitions and circulations between societies. In line with the genesis of a transnational and global historiography, Buchinger takes the next step and uses a new spatial dimension. European remembrance areas, a possible translation of the title, tries to look at collective memories beyond the concept of remembrance sites.

The first of the three chapters deals with the localization of memories in Europe and how the topographies of these memories developed. The objective is to take a closer look at the relations between the location and the superordinate geographical frames of memories and remembrance sites.

The next chapter focuses on the change of memories caused by violent adjustments of borders and circulation processes such as migration whereas the third chapter

opens up to an even broader perspective: âtransnational and global memory landscapesâ.

Following the logic of crossing geographical and temporal boundaries, the essays in the first chapter cover among other topics the tomb of the holy Roman Emperor Frederick II in Palermo, the French cartography from the late 17th to the middle of the 18th century and Jerusalem as European-Christian site of remembrance in the 19th century. In the essay about the tomb, the author Olaf B. Rader explains why it became so famous and how this is related to the material of which this sarcophagus is made. The material used is called porphyry which is Greek and means purple. Purple was the color of royalty and the mineral had the byname âimperial porphyryâ. Porphyry was first discovered and used in Egypt and became a much sought-after mineral in Rome, Byzantium and in the Holy Roman Empire. Nero, Charles the Great, Otto the Great, Pope Innocent II, the Medici and Napoleon to name just a few, were fascinated by the materialâs connotation of big sovereignty and power and used it for monuments or sarcophaguses. This mineral left clear marks throughout the centuries and throughout Europe and whenever it was used the intention was to evoke the memories that were attached to it. Initially built as a site of remembrance for the dynasty, the tomb of Frederick II was embedded in German and Italian history and therewith became a shared memory. Rader states that the circulation of these memories, the increasing local and regional contexts as well as changes and adoptions of German and Italian pictures of Frederick II led to a creation of a transnational area of remembrance. This example is taken pars pro toto to illustrate what according to the purpose of this book is an example of a European remembrance area.

The book elaborates these remembrance areas in a multi-faceted and intriguing way. For those being interested in the construction of European identity on the basis of shared history the book could serve as an omnium-gatherum full of astonishing references: the Rhine, BresÅaw, the city of Chernivtsi, Napoleonâs hat or global gates like the city of Hamburg. The different disciplines, from which these topics derive, architecture, film, literature, religion or public administration, make the essays even more interesting and a fascinating memory itself.

Nonetheless some of the essays might not fully meet the readerâs expectations. They seem to lack a European reference, which is with regard to the title unsuitable. The authors of these essays find out that the memories attached to the topics have a spatial reference, but this reference is either entirely national or international. The reader might find it also hard sometimes to assign spatial reference to intangible remembrance areas such as literature in which is referred to remembrance areas or knowledge that is exchanged between societies. However, reconsidering that imagined remembrance areas are also valid, the criticism appears to be rather weak.

What is striking though is the easiness with which the compilation of essays bridges Europeâs divided memory. Aleida Assmann, Auf dem Weg zu einer europÃ¤ischen GedÃ¤chtniskultur, in: Recherche, Zeitung fÃ¼r Wissenschaft, 2 (2009), Wien. S. 9. Emmanuel Droit describes in his essay âShoah: from west-European to trans-European site of remembrance?â (p. 257) the problem of hot and cold memories in âWesternâ and âEasternâ Europe, recommends mutual respect and calls for a common European remembrance culture. Unfortunately, the reader will not find an essay in this book covering the communist dictatorship in Europe as a remembrance area.

Readers should not be surprised to find French paragraphs in the essays since the purpose of the book is to honor one of the big pioneers in this field of research, Etienne FranÃ§ois. The French embassy in Germany, the Centre Marc Bloch, the Mission Historique FranÃ§aise in Germany and the Frankreichzentrum der Freien UniversitÃ¤t Berlin supported this book which is not supposed to be a usual *Festschrift*. The intention is not to look back, but to look ahead and develop further the milestones set by him.

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