



Itinérances des savoirs et des biens culturels. Pour une analyse spatiale des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale. Paris: Daniel Baloup, Casa de Velázquez, Madrid; Daniel König, Deutsches Historisches Institut, Paris, 09.03.2011-11.03.2011.

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Itinérances des savoirs et des biens culturels. Pour une analyse spatiale des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale

This conference on the spatial dimension of processes of cultural transfer was organized as a Franco-German cooperation between the Casa de Velázquez in Madrid and the German Historical Institute in Paris. On an institutional level, the conference aimed at bringing together scholars from different networks of international research to work on a topic that clearly transcends national borders. On a thematical level, the conference served the objective of juxtaposing twenty different cases of spatial analysis covering the period between Late Antiquity and the Late Middle Ages. Two round table discussions provided a forum for intensive debate.

The individual papers approached the topic from various regional angles spanning most areas centred around the Mediterranean: In the West, this included the mountainous regions of Morocco, the coastal towns of the medieval Maghreb, the Pyrenean frontier zone between Muslim al-Andalus and Christian Europe, the Crown of Aragon, the Provençal town of Marseille, central France as well as the island of Sicily. In the East, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian peninsula, Jerusalem, Iran, Anatolia, Constantinople, the Balkans and Russia were at the centre of attention. In this rich variety of contexts, various topics linked to spatial phenomena were addressed.

Geography as a branch of knowledge focusing on spatial phenomena was treated in a medieval context by PATRICK GAUTIER-DALCHÂ (Paris) who spoke on the transmission of geographical knowledge from the Arab-

Islamic to the Latin sphere. During the first round table session, NACIMA BARON-YELLÂS (Marne-la-Vallée) gave an introduction to the various fields of contemporary geographical research, the role they accord to spatial analysis as well as the methods and tools used to analyse spatial phenomena. In dialogue with STÂPHANE BOISSELLIER (Poitiers), she compared the challenges of spatial analysis in contemporary geography with those faced by medieval historians. Aside from discussing the concept of *âculture*, BOISSELLIER presented various methods of tracing the mobility of cultural phenomena and objects in text-based research, e. g. via the dating of texts, the analysis of manuscript traditions and the diffusion of literary motives, the juxtaposition of different levels of approach etc. to mentally map processes of transmission and reception. BARON-YELLÂS conceded that geographers dealing with contemporary phenomena had access to a larger quantity of data than medieval historians. However, they faced the challenge of placing and interpreting snapshots of the present within the framework of larger developments, analysing factors which were just beginning to become operative.

Geophysical conditions were intensively dealt with by ÂEVKET KÂÂÂKHÂSEYIN (Bamberg). Describing the factors that facilitated the immigration and settlement of Turkish groups in medieval Anatolia, he demonstrated that the landscape was more attractive to migrant groups from the Central Asian steppe than to Arab pastoralists. In his analysis of merchant cultures linking the

Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean, ERIC VALLET (Paris) evoked the role of specialized knowledge about winds and other maritime features.

The spatial impact of geopolitical constellations, events and developments was also treated. Discussing post-Pirennean hypotheses, DANIEL KÄNIG (Paris) evoked the repercussions of the Roman empire's fragmentation as well as of the Arab-Islamic expansion for the intensity of relations between the north-western and southeastern borders of the Mediterranean. KÄÄÄKHÄSEYIN described how constant Arab-Muslim raids on Byzantine Anatolia contributed to the economic and military transformation of a formerly flourishing region into an impoverished garrisoned frontier zone. DAN IOAN MUREÄAN (Paris) explained that the Mongol destruction of Moscow produced an intellectual vacuum that was then open to fresh theological influences of southern Slavic provenance. In turn, BIRGITTE HOFFMANN (Bamberg) and VALLET pointed to the fact that the *pax mongolica* opened up new horizons which connected the Mediterranean to the Far East.

Implicitly or explicitly, several papers opposed different kinds of centres to a multitude of peripheries. This concerns the paper of ELISABETH RUCHAUD (Paris) which focused on the Christian notion of Jerusalem as the *navel of the world* (*umbilicus mundi*) and provoked comparisons with Jewish and Muslim perceptions of this city as well as with other central places such as Rome and Mecca. HENRI BRESCHÄS (Paris) analysis of Sicily as a pluricultural centre of reception and transmission at the heart of the Mediterranean dealt with the mobility of scholars and other specialists to and from Sicily with special attention to the role of courts. Focusing on the city of Tabriz, HOFFMANN described the creation and function of a capital in Mongol Iran. MUREÄAN traced pathways of transmission emanating from the patriarchate of Constantinople and radiating via the Balkans to late medieval Moscow. JUAN VICENTE GARCÄA MARSILLA (ValÄncia) highlighted the efforts of the late medieval Aragonese court to become a centre of attraction to artists of various kinds. YASSIR BENHIMA (Paris), in turn, directed attention to the mountainous regions of Morocco. Among other things, he dealt with the curious fact that they seem to feature certain techniques not to be found in the surrounding plains despite various links between the inhabitants of both spheres, thus discussing the validity of the notion of geographical isolation.

Spatial phenomena seemingly propitious to processes of cultural exchange were dealt with as well: DO-

MINIQUE VALÄRIAN (Paris) analysed the role of late medieval Maghrebian ports in processes of exchange between the maritime powers of Latin Europe and the Islamic societies of North Africa. He explained that mutual efforts to limit and regulate the number and quality of contacts between representatives of both sides, e. g. by enclosing merchant communities behind the walls of the *funduq* or by creating and enforcing a corresponding legal and normative framework, had the effect of averting large-scale processes of cultural exchange without being able to prevent regular contacts and exchange on a personal level. The frontier zone, already treated by KÄÄÄKHÄSEYIN in his description of the defensive social structure of southern Anatolia under Byzantine dominion, was also addressed by PHILIPPE SÄNAC (Toulouse). In his analysis of certain families dominating the Iberian frontier society between Muslim al-Andalus and Christian Europe between the 8th and the 12th centuries, he sketched the evolution from a culturally permeable area not stable enough to promote profound processes of cultural exchange via an Islamicized outpost of Muslim al-Andalus in continuous contact with the northern Christian world to a zone of cultural transition which also facilitated the northern Christian principalities' advance to the south. Mixed communities were at the centre of the second round table discussion organized by CLAUDE DENJEAN (Toulouse) and JULIETTE SIBON (Albi) who dealt with the concept of *amicitia* as an important feature of Jewish-Christian relations in late medieval Aragon and southern France by presenting various cases of interaction between both groups in the fields of education, commerce, jurisprudence and medicine. These cases revealed the existence of a system of shared values, friendly relations, continuous exchange as well as the occasional convergence of both groups in spite of the fact that certain domains remained impermeable to a perceived *Other*.

Great attention was directed to social networks as infrastructures and channels of transmission. Political players featured in several papers: MARCO DI BRANCO (Rome) analysed diplomatic contacts linked to the exchange of books and intellectual knowledge between Constantinople and Cordoba during the 10th century, pleading for a favourable reconsideration of Arabic sources on the translation of Orseus' *Historiae adversos paganos*. Centred on the mobility of scholars and specialists to and from Sicily, BRESCHÄS highlighted the important role of this island at the centre of the Mediterranean and subject to Byzantine, Muslim and Latin-Christian domination for the transmission and reception of cul-

tural influences. The king and his courtiers were also at the centre of GARCÍA MARSILLA's analysis of the deliberate and large-scale importation of artistic novelties into the late-medieval crown of Aragon. HOFFMANN regarded the Mongols's hesitation to impose their own cultural traits on subdued populations as well as their wish to cater to their own needs by drawing back on the latter's cultural achievements as one reason for the intensity of cultural exchange under Mongol rule. Thus, astronomical knowledge was developed and later 'exported' to Europe whereas historiographical knowledge about various peoples including the Franks was 'imported'. Scholarly networks were also dealt with by PATRICH GAUTIER-DALCHÉ who provided several examples of how geographical, astronomical and toponymical data to be found in the works of Arab-Islamic scholars was received, adapted to existing knowledge and assimilated by scholars from Latin Europe. Economic and ecclesiastical networks connecting the pre-expansionist Arab world with Latin Europe were mentioned by KÄNIG. MATTHIAS TISCHLER (Dresden) focused on the contribution of Cluniac monasticism as a proto-type of the later monastic orders to acquiring and diffusing information about Islam in Latin Christendom. CLAIRE SOUSSEN (Cergy-Pontoise) traced the diffusion of Talmudic knowledge among Christian polemicists against Judaism in late medieval Aragon, differentiating between various written and oral types facilitated by personal encounters between Christians and Jews within the framework of scholarly disputes, Christian preaching but also cohabitation. MUREÄN, in turn, reconstructed the ecclesiastical networks which facilitated the diffusion of theological ideas, models of sainthood and literary formats from Constantinople to the Balkan peninsula and, via the latter, to late medieval Russia.

In the course of the conference, various methodological questions were also raised, among others the question of how to look behind the textual evidence: According to KÄNIG, the Latin depiction of 'Saracens' based on Roman ethnographical and biblical paradigms as well as the local and regional outlook of pre-Islamic Arab and early Arab-Islamic forms of historical memory tended to reinforce the idea of separation between the emerging societies of Latin-Christian Europe on the one side, the pre-expansionist Arab world of the 5th to 7th century on the other side. The paper of TISCHLER raised the question if the meagre amount of theological information on Islam up to the 12th century can be regarded as representative of common knowledge about the religion of the 'Saracens', especially in those parts of Latin-Christian

Europe which were in regular contact with the Islamic world. RAFAEL BELTRÁN LLAVADOR (Valencia) reconstructed the 'portable library' of travellers in the 15th century, discussing the relationship between travelling and the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge on the one hand, its literary elaboration on the other hand. Comparing the travel account of Marco Polo with the biography and itinerary of the Aleppine merchant 'Izz ad-Dīn al-Kāmil' reconstructed on the basis of archival material from the port of Aden as well as biographical dictionaries, VALLET discussed when and by whom which kind of knowledge was deemed worthy of being written out.

Another point of discussion concerned the definition of cultural transfer. Various levels of transfer were systematically listed by SIBON and DENJEAN who distinguished between a local, regional and supraregional approach. Since their presentation included many cases in which Jewish and Christian culture converged, the question was raised if the formal (in this case religious) distinction between two groups can be considered sufficient to speak of 'cultural transfer' in the case of exchange between members of the one and the other group. What can be regarded as 'cultural' was a further issue in discussions dealing with the question if the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student can also be regarded as 'cultural' even if it does not implicate traversing religious, ethnic or linguistic but only social, economic and/or age-related 'boundaries'. The paper of CLAIRE SOUSSEN provoked the question if conversion, as the movement from one religious status to the other, can also be regarded as a form of cultural transfer, given that a convert may enter a new network of social relations which then has access to the convert's pre-conversion knowledge. During the first round table discussion directed by BOISSELLIER and BARON-YELLÄS, the term 'mobility' was introduced as a multidimensional alternative concept to discuss the spatial dimension of transfer and exchange.

In this way, various spatial phenomena were treated from several regional, chronological, methodological and disciplinary perspectives. Being continuously confronted with a new set of geographical, chronological, political, linguistic and socio-cultural milieu in each new paper certainly constituted a challenge. Because of the wide range of topics, general discussions were largely of a conceptual nature while discussions focusing on details only involved small groups sharing common ground. In this way the conference 'because of its rich variety', also inspired reflection on how to successfully overcome obstacles of communication which arise in discussions

between researchers from different national, linguistic and scholarly backgrounds.

Konferenzübersicht:

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Daniel König (Deutsches Historisches Institut Paris): Deux mondes séparés ? Quelques hypothèses sur les relations entre l'Europe occidentale et la péninsule arabique du Ve au VIIe siècle

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Patrick Gautier-dalché (École pratique des hautes Études, Paris): Géographie arabe et géographie latine

Stéphane Boissellier (Université de Poitiers) & NACIMA BARON-YELLAS (Université de Marne-la-Vallée): La circulation des données immatérielles au Moyen Âge. Les transferts culturels sont-ils spatialisables?

Marco Di Branco (Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom): From Byzantium to al-Andalus. A History of Books and Diplomatic Missions

Henri Bresc (Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense): Les cours siciliens et la migration des techniciens et savants

Birgitt Hoffmann (Universität Bamberg): The Iranian City of Tabriz, a Hub of Cultural Exchange Between the Muslim East and Europe

Session 2: La Méditerranée orientale et ses périphéries

Eric Vallet (Université Paris I): Culture marchande et transmission des savoirs : le cas de l'océan Indien dans le savoir des Méditerranéens

Dan Ioan Muresan (École des hautes Études en sciences sociales, Paris): Sailing from Byzantium? Sources and Horizons of the «Second South-Slavic Influence» on the Medieval Russian Culture (14th-15th c.)

Áevket Kökcüseyin (Universität Bamberg): The Rise and Fall of Turcoman Tribes in Anatolia (11th-15th cent.). Spatial Conditions for the Successful Conquest and Establishment of Turco-Muslim Rule

Session 3: La Méditerranée occidentale et ses périphéries

Philippe Sémanc (Université Toulouse II): Entre Islam et chrétienté : les hommes de la frontière

JULIETTE SIBON (Centre universitaire d'Albi) & CLAUDE DENJEAN (Université Toulouse II): Une géographie de l'amicitia entre juifs et chrétiens est-elle possible? Réflexions sur la Méditerranée occidentale aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles

Matthias Tischler (Universität Dresden): La France bénédictine du XIe siècle. Espace de passages à « islamo-chrétiens »

Claire Soussen (Université de Cergy-Pontoise): Par les livres et par les routes: les voies de la transmission de la nouvelle polémique anti-juive dans l'espace catalano-aragonais

Dominique Valérian (Université Paris I): Les villes portuaires en tant qu'espaces de contacts et d'échange

Juan Vicente Garcia Marsilla (Universitat de València): La monarchie aragonaise et la diffusion des nouveautés artistiques au bas Moyen Âge

Rafael Beltrán Llavador (Universitat de València): La bibliothèque portative du chevalier errant au XVe siècle. Diplomatie et circulation de livres entre les cours de Bourgogne, d'Aragon et d'Italie

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