



WWW! Asia and Europe in a Global Context. Fifth Annual Conference 2013. Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context”, University of Heidelberg, 09.10.2013-11.10.2013.

Reviewed by Rudolph Ng

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WWW! Asia and Europe in a Global Context. Fifth Annual Conference 2013

Over 200 scholars from Germany and abroad attended the fifth annual conference of the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” of the University of Heidelberg, which took place from October 9 to 11, 2013. For three days of scholarly exchanges, they focused on the conference’s theme of “Managing Empires. Cooperation, Competition, Conflict.” BARBARA MITTLER, the acting director of the Cluster, and DIAMANTIS PANAGIOTOPOULOS as head organizer welcomed all guests on October 9 in the Great Hall of the Old University, before the keynote lecture.

The speech “Nuestras Indias? The European Origins of European Colonialism” was delivered by MICHAEL BROERS (Oxford). He discussed the idea that the roots of European colonialism in Asia and other parts of the world can be found in the French attitudes towards the non-French peoples of Europe during the First Napoleonic Empire. Driven by a sense of cultural superiority and the desire to modernize the societies under their control, the French went beyond what was strictly necessary to establish an efficient administrative system. Not only did they prefer French over local staff for all levels of the administrative apparatus but they also strove to create a new legal culture and insisted on granting freedom of religion. These and similar policies alienated the local masses as well as the elite.

The panel “Imagining Administration” explored different ways in which administrative systems can be perceived and portrayed. ERK VOLKMAR HEYEN (Greif-

swald) discussed the artistic representation of administrative realities in modern European paintings and found them to be mainly self-representations of the ruling elites. WALTER DEMEL (Munich) described the image of dynastic China in early modern Europe and how it was slowly transformed from being seen as the prototype of a centralized to an example of a despotic state. FRITZ SAGER (Bern) finally showed how administrative ideas and concepts are reinterpreted and adjusted in the process of being transferred from one political system to another.

In the panel “Chinese Whispers,” SEBASTIAN MEURER (Heidelberg) reflected on T’ang Ssu-Y’ang’s viewpoint about the influence of the Chinese civil service system on the West, emphasizing the British genealogy of 19th century civil service reforms; RUI MAGONE (Berlin/Heidelberg) argued that the Chinese examination system tied distant regions to the political center in Beijing; KIRI PARAMORE (Leiden) posited that late Meiji Japan adopted an examination-based civil service system not seen in Western countries, but similar to the Chinese imperial bureaucracy instead.

The panel “Premodern Empires” sought a comparative perspective with regard to the extent the Chinese Southern Song Empire (MARTIN HOFMANN, Heidelberg), the Byzantine Empire (MICHAEL GRÄNBART, Münster) and the Roman-German Empire (CHRISTOPH MAUNTEL, Heidelberg) tried to implement their hegemonic claims by way of administrative

practices in the 12th to 15th centuries. In the respective time period, all of these empires suffered a state of crisis, the nature of which was outlined by all speakers. Next, the speakers addressed what claims to political supremacy were formulated. Furthermore, they focused on the geographical delimitations of these claims. Lastly, the ambivalence between these imperial claims and the (limited) possibilities of their implementation was examined.

In the panel "Administering Appearances," YAN HAIPING (Shanghai/Ithaca) introduced a Chinese art troupe of disabled people, whose performance, *Thousand Bodhisattva*, embodied universal ideals in contemporary China; AI QING (Shanghai) introduced a hybrid form of Shanghai architecture, *Shi Ku Men*, which represents "a sense of place" commonly seen in modern and contemporary Chinese films; DOROTHEA REDEPENNING (Heidelberg) used Rossini's new type of operas, *Maometto II* of 1822 and *Le siÃ"ge de Corinthe* of 1826, to discuss the relationship between music and nation; DIAMANTIS PANAGIOTOPOULOS (Heidelberg) discussed several types of images and their influences on the public sphere; BARBARA MITTLER (Heidelberg) introduced paintings of Mao Zedong that were neither officially commissioned nor sanctioned, in contrast to the official portraits.

In the session on "Shifting Notions of Guilt" the speakers were focusing on the influence of legal norms and actors on consolidating and challenging empires in a transcultural context. While SIMON CUBELIC (Heidelberg) discussed the interconnection of debt and guilt in Indian history and its interaction with legal concepts in 18th century British Bengal, AXEL MICHAELS (Heidelberg) and RAJAN KHATIWODA (Heidelberg) investigated the concept of guilt in the Nepalese *Muluki Ain* of 1856. MILINDA BANERJEE (Kolkata) elaborated on the moral theories of justice of Indian Judge Radhabinod Pal in consequence of the Tokyo Trials. The changes in Judge BVA RÃ"ling's ideas of culpability following his contact with Japan were depicted by LISETTE SCHOUTEN (Heidelberg). Finally, KERSTIN VON LINGEN (Heidelberg) introduced emerging concepts of seeking for forgiveness as political acts in international politics.

The panel "Managing Ancient Mediterranean Empires" comprised the talks of a scholarly group from Birmingham. ANDREW BAYLISS focused on the fourth century BC and the Hellenistic Seleucid Dynasty, whose empire straddled Europe as well as Asia. He examined the evolving status of royal "friends" to impor-

tant state officials and the types of loyalty towards their king. SIMON-ESMONDE CLEARY studied the role of local elites in the administration of the Roman Empire at the turn of the ages. By pointing out the benefits of bureaucracy in the late Roman Empire, MICHAEL WHITBY contradicted the common assumption that its vast bureaucracy inevitably led to the empire's decline and fall.

The second day closed with a keynote speech by CAROL GLUCK (Columbia) entitled "Modernity in Common: Japan and World History." The Japanese experience of modernity, so Gluck, has long been described as unique and therefore defying any form of comparison to other nations. Rejecting this approach she went on to argue that no country's experience can be meaningfully explained in complete isolation. At the same time much could be gained from studying a concept, such as modernity, from the vantage point of a particular country. In order to illustrate her point she chose to answer four commonly asked questions about the modern history of Japan. She first turned the audience's attention to the questions why Japan was able to modernize so remarkably quickly and develop into a powerful empire and explained these developments mainly in terms of preexisting favorable conditions. On the question of Japan's sensitive war time memory she pointed out that "amnesia of empire" had been granted during the early occupation period and Japan had suddenly lost its empire without ever being truly post-colonial. She finally portrayed the lost decade of the Japanese economy as an extended period of incremental change that she attributed to Japan's intense disinclination towards social disorder.

The panel on "Global Elites" began with a speech of MADELEINE HERREN-OESCH (Basel) on the work of Meir Birman, Edouard EglÃ© and Fritz Paravicini and their role as global actors. MARKUS POHLMANN's and VOLKER HELBIG's (both Heidelberg) research explained that, contrary to contemporary theories, international top-managers nowadays often stay with companies from their homelands. As their cultural attitudes stay intact, the idea of a modern global elite is challenged. JIVANTA SCHÄTTLI (Heidelberg) elaborated on the influence of the cultural background on Indian top-managers and their role as members of the international elite. SUBRATRA MITRA's (Heidelberg) comment on the session questioned the existing concepts of globalization.

A panel on "Agency in Modern Empires," chaired by MADELEINE HERREN-OESCH (Basel), started with a focus on the practical side of modern diplomacy. Consul-

General of Greece, PANAYOTIS PARTSOS (Stuttgart), explored the agency and responsibilities of members of international governmental organizations and their interaction with their respective governments. The political consequences of international loans were explained by the second speaker, MICHAEL IOANNIDIS (Heidelberg). He showed how granting funds was used to execute control over other states in 19th and 20th century.

The panel "Renegotiating Empire in East Asia through International Law and Extraterritorial Practices" reexamined how empires and their local representatives managed international and transcultural conflict and competition. Focusing on the period when East Asian actors turned the notions of international law to their own advantage, the panel speakers explored the entangled diplomatic and legal histories of the nineteenth century. Specifically, IOKIBE KAORU (Tokyo) explicated how Western consular jurisdiction played out in nineteenth-century Japan, and HARALD FUESS (Heidelberg) discussed the important role Europeans played in Japan's historical annexation of Korea, eventually giving up their special privileges. Finally, PÅR CASSEL (Ann Arbor) explained the Chinese experience with Western extraterritorial practices for a hundred years after the Opium Wars.

Due to unexpected circumstances, the panel "Negotiating Empire" had to get along with only one speaker, ROBERTA TONTINI (Heidelberg) and ROLAND WENZLHUEMER (Heidelberg/Basel) as a discussant. During her talk "Obeying Allah or Serving the Emperor? Islamic Scholars in the Qing Administrative Bureaucracy," Tontini explored the inherent diversity of empires leading to conflicts of authority and law, with the texts of Ma Weng, an Islamic scholar and Qing state officer.

In addition to regular panel discussions, two extra lunch sessions and the Heidelberg Digital Humanities Cafe reported on the latest Cluster's contributions to the scholarly exchanges, with in-house database and technological developments. For instance, in the lunch session "Heidelberg Research Architecture," JENS PETERSEN, ERIC DECKER, and CATHRINE BUBLATZKI (all Heidelberg) introduced the "Tamboti" metadata framework. "Tamboti" is a digital working environment developed at the Cluster which enables researchers to collaboratively collect and annotate research materials (texts, images, films, audio recordings). "The Digital Humanities Cafe" showcased the databases and digital research tools used for the cluster's project on subaltern diplomacy. With the team members available for advice and even attend-

ing to ad hoc research queries, these newly developed tools created a space for curiosity, communication as well as cooperation.

The "Concluding Round Table: Managing Empires" summarized the conference discussions with particular focus on the key terms such as "monitoring," "surveillance," and "control." In the studies of governance, many conference participants have studied and applied them in their own fields of study. As an expert on the Roman Empire, SIMON ESMONDE CLEARY (Birmingham) addressed the question why an ancient state would want to use an "intelligence system." In this regard he pointed out that there was a need to guard against existential threats and that nurturing local elites and the Church as a hierarchical organization was perceived to be useful in achieving this goal. MICHAEL BROERS (Oxford) pointed out that effective monitoring, surveillance and control was hardly achieved in pre-modern empires. He also highlighted the importance of organized religion for this task and concluded that the most secure form of imperialism did not rest on specific terms but on cultural identity and the alignment of the subject's personal interests with the imperial mission. CAROL GLUCK (Columbia) related these terms to the modern state by using the examples of the recent NSA espionage and the monitoring and surveillance of internet users by Google, Facebook and the like. She considered the nature of the modern state with its large-scale use of statistics, the potential of contemporary technology amplifying the possibilities for data mining and also talked about the politics and laws of surveillance, raising questions concerning the protection of privacy and the limits of state authority. PANAYOTIS PARTSOS (Stuttgart) depicted the monitoring practices in modern international institutions, which resemble those of the modern state. He suggested that intelligence is a very high commodity and that today's means of assuring its secrecy range from signed contracts and agreements of confidentiality to security clearances for individuals.

Through wide-ranging discussions on the issue of governance and administration, this conference has not only answered but also raised critical questions concerning the studies of empires – both historical and contemporary. The discussions at the annual conference ended with the round table, but will certainly continue in the coming months and years in Heidelberg and beyond.

Conference overview:

Welcome - Barbara Mittler, Acting Director of the Cluster "Asia and Europe in a Global Context"

Managing Empires à Introduction to the Conference
Diamantis Panagiotopoulos
Speaker Research Area A and Head Organiser

Keynote I: The European Origins of European Colonialism: Cultural Imperialism in the First Napoleonic Empire and the Subaltern Europe

Michael Broers (Oxford University), Chair: Diamantis Panagiotopoulos

Morning Panel I: Imagining Administration

Speakers: Susan Richter (Heidelberg), Fritz Sager (Berne), Erk Volkmar Heyen (Greifswald), Walter Demel (Munich). Chair: Susan Richter (Heidelberg)

Morning Panel II: Chinese Whispers: A Shared Eurasian Imaginaire of Professional Bureaucracy?

Speakers: Rui Magone (Berlin/Heidelberg), Kiri Paramore (Leiden), Sebastian Meurer (Heidelberg). Discussant: David Mervart (Heidelberg)

Lunch Session I: Tracing Travelling States. An Introduction to the Open Office Project

Presenters: Benjamin Auberer (Heidelberg), Timo Holste (Heidelberg), Carolin Liebisch (Heidelberg)

Afternoon Panel Ia: Premodern Empires between Universal Claims and Regional Administration

Speakers: Martin Hofmann (Heidelberg), Michael GrÃ¼nbart (MÃ¼nster), Christoph Mauntel (Heidelberg). Chair: Klaus Oschema (Heidelberg)

Afternoon Panel Ib: Administrating Appearances. Intermedial (Re)presentations of City, Nation, State and Empire

Speakers: Yan Haiping (Shanghai/Ithaca), Ai Qing (Shanghai), Discussants: Barbara Mittler (Heidelberg), Diamantis Panagiotopoulos (Heidelberg), Dorothea Reppenning (Heidelberg)

Afternoon Panel IIa: Shifting Notions of Guilt: Managing and Critiquing Empires through Law

Speakers: Simon Cubelic (Heidelberg), Axel Michaels/Rajan Khatiwoda (Heidelberg), Milinda Banerjee (Kolkata), Lisette Schouten (Heidelberg), Kerstin von Lingen (Heidelberg)

Afternoon Panel Iib: Managing Ancient Mediterranean Empires: Friends, Education, Bureaucracy

Speakers: Andrew Bayliss (Birmingham), Simon Esmonde-Cleary (Birmingham), Michael Whitby (Birmingham). Chair: Diamantis Panagiotopoulos (Heidelberg)

Keynote II: Modernity in Common: Japan and World History

Speaker: Carol Gluck (Columbia University), Chair: Harald Fuess (Heidelberg)

Morning Panel III: Global Elites. Rootless Cosmopolitans or Provincial Jet-Setters?

Speakers: Madeleine Herren-Oesch (Basel), Markus Pohlmann/Volker Helbig (Heidelberg), Jivanta SchÃ¤ttli (Heidelberg). Discussant: Subratra Mitra (Heidelberg)

Morning Panel IV: Agency in Modern "Empires"

Speakers: Panayotis Partos (Stuttgart), Michael Ioannidis (Heidelberg). Chair: Madeleine Herren-Oesch (Basel)

Lunch Session II: The Heidelberg Research Architecture. Digital Humanities at the Cluster Asia and Europe in a Global Context

Presenters: Eric Decker (Heidelberg), Jens Petersen (Heidelberg), Cathrine Bublitzky (Heidelberg)

Afternoon Panel IIIa: Renegotiating Empire in East Asia through International Law and Extraterritorial Practices

Speakers: Iokibe Kaoru (Tokyo), Harald Fuess (Heidelberg), PÃ©r Cassel (Ann Arbor). Discussant: Martin Dusinberre (Newcastle/Heidelberg)

Afternoon Panel IIIb: Negotiating Empire. Agency and Group Identity in Segmental Power Structures

Speaker: Roberta Tontini (Heidelberg), Chair: Roland Wenzlhuemer (Heidelberg/Basel)

Concluding Round Table: Managing Empires. Monitoring, Surveillance, Control

Participants: Michael Broers (Oxford), Carol Gluck (Columbia), Michael Whitby (Birmingham), Panayotis Partos (Stuttgart)

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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