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Transition as a historiographical issue. The crucial phases in the development of 'modernity' (1494-1973). Trento: Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Universität Bielefeld; Paolo Pombeni, FBK-Istituto storico italo-germanico / Università di Bologna;, 11.09.2012-14.09.2012.

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Transition as a historiographical issue. The crucial phases in the development of 'modernity' (1494-1973)

The 54th Study Week of the Italian-German Historical Institute in Trento focused on the concept of transition within 'modernity'. The central theme was the idea of the modern age (16th-20th centuries) as 'axial' (K. Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*). The theory of historical transition was thus conceived not just as a 'passage' but as a historiographical issue arising given three conditions: perception by contemporaries of a change that "renders the 'after' not just different from the 'before', but uninterpretable in its light"; change in the various 'circles of self' in which human beings are inscribed due to the disappearance of certain tools for giving meaning to the place of each person in 'history'; an 'undeniable' and 'fatal' transformation of 'social texture' and 'structure' (PAOLO POMBENI, Trento).

MARCELLO VERGA (Florence) examined the complexity of this debate, underlining how the Middle Ages appear ever more modern to historians while the modern age shows ever more links to the past, in accordance with the principle of continuity rather than rupture. Post-Renaissance Italy would be an example, emblematic of an incomplete transition hampered by the 'betrayal of the bourgeoisie': the presence, in other words, of a regressive elite opposed to a non-bourgeois progressive society. The case studies by CARLO TAVIANI (Trento) and KATIA OCCHI (Trento) focused on the economic-financial side of this 'transition' at the outset of modernity. Taviani illustrated the development of the territorial power of 'corporations' by following the fortunes of Genoa's Bank of Saint George (1407) through the modern age and showing the long genealogy of financial concepts such as 'public debt', 'bank' and 'joint-stock company'. Occhi dealt with the development of rural industry in the old County of Tyrol and its commercial relations with the Italian lowlands, especially the Republic of Venice, ranging from the macroeconomic to the micro-historical within the context of the Italian crisis of the *ancien regime*. This long-term perspective showed how the transformations wrought by industrial production greatly intensified the problems of an area disadvantaged by its natural habitat, further delaying modern economic development and resulting in marginalisation and regionalisation. The important role played by 'family' in Italian commercial and industrial development emerged in the discussion that followed: the close connection between family and state produced a dense network of cooperation and exchange based on broad mutual trust, until the 16th century when the 'family' system itself suffered its first crisis.

In his historiographical introduction, REINHARD STAUBER (Klagenfurt) suggested why in the debate on the beginnings of the modern age the concept of a 'wide' epochal threshold has prevailed, with its 'multiple and staggered transitions'. The year 1500 as the traditional division between ages (largely owing to teaching needs) is relativised by the tendency to view the Reformation as a mere stage within a longer process of transformation; the roots of this process are to be found in the 13th century. The model of the old Europe (*Alteuropa*) thus configures an age stretching from the 11th to the 18th century. Stauber therefore proposed an analysis of models of perception and interpretation that remains close to the sources and is based on the history of concepts and discourses. Determination of a change in paradigms would require examination of the sources - even where they are very different one from another - to check for new conceptual content. Two case studies followed. STEFAN BAUER (Trento) looked at transition in terms of 16th century communication, redefined by the advent of printing and the struggle by Catholics and Protestants for self-definition. The writings of Onofrio Panvinio crystallise this difficult century of transition from a unitary history of the European Church to a history taking in Reformation and Counterreformation. Panvinio's research ranges from ancient Rome to ecclesiastical history, right

through to the story of Roman families, displaying both freedom and self-definition and evincing a tension between humanistic science and the confessional that is typical of religious communication in the 16th century. MASSIMO ROSPOCHER (Trento) took a historical approach to a very contemporary question: the role of the 'media' in society in the early modern age. In particular, the author explored an element of communication typical of the *ancien regime* that has received little attention to date: orality. The works of 16th-century ballad singers were used to shed light on the link between orality and print and the complicated and often conflictive relationship between governments and public opinion in the 16th century, a delicate moment of transition. There followed a discussion of the difficulty of accepting the notion of the great rupture of the modern age at a historiographical level. The term 'modern' inevitably brings with it heavy ideological baggage, rendering preferable the approach of 'long-term continuity' up until the 18th century, when Voltaire was the first to deconstruct the notion of a continuous *historia salutis*.

CHRISTOF DIPPER's (Darmstadt) contribution neatly brought the discussion from the 16th to the 19th century: at this point in modernity had the 'religious problem' really been left behind? What of the concept of 'progress'? And do we now speak of modernity or post-modernity? Undoubtedly the 19th century marked a transformation in France that was clear to its contemporaries, but to what extent was this true in other states? The 19th century saw an increased human capacity for self-construction and 'understanding', outside of any religious discourse, with the spiritual and the sacred relegated to a purely private dimension: a century of great movement that contemporaries felt the need to 'name'. EMILIE DELIVRÉ (Trento) examined a case of what she calls the "transition matrix". The "Rügegerichte", widespread institutions of popular justice the progressive disappearance of which in the 19th century was a sign of transition understood as a political, social and linguistic response to the changes of the time. CLAUDIO FERLAN (Trento) examined transition in the religious sphere stemming from the schism in the Christian world in his case study: the establishment of the first generation of Jesuits in Austria in the mid-16th century was a mixture of Catholic pastoral urgency and disorientation on the part of the clerics in performing their mission. FERNANDA ALFIERI's (Trento) case study also focused on the Society of Jesus, though in its later *Societas renata* version dating from the revival of 1814. A range of Jesuit writings of the time were used to approach the complex problem of perception by contemporaries of the change in historical time in its relationship with biological time, of the old and new for a religious order whose mission was to establish links with a present perceived as ambiguous. Here again discussion offered a wealth of reflection on the concept of 'transition' as an option for understanding the past, both as the passage from one age to another and as transformation within one and the same age. The contemporary age took centre stage from the third day, in particular the post-World War II period in Italy and Germany. PAOLO MACRY (Napoli) opened proceedings with another reflection on transition, warning against underestimating short-term political approaches in favour of the long-term analysis preferred by economic and social analysis. Using examples taken from Italian history, Macry underlined the challenge of using the concept of transition, undoubtedly a valid work tool, while connecting the short and long term and empirical analysis with analytical synthesis. The two case studies presented focused on the post-war period in Germany and Italy. GIOVANNI BERNARDINI (Trento) analysed the ideological evolution of the SPD, the Labour Party and the PSI from the 1950s to the 1970s. If the idea of uncritical 'modernisation' guided the growth of social democracy in the 1960s as a social force capable of attracting support, in the 1970s overdependence on the category blunted critical capacity to read the changes of that decade. CECILIA NUBOLA (Trento) analysed the clemency measures granted to fascists in the immediate post-war period, with transitional justice identified as a crucial area where judgement of the past accompanied adherence to the new state. It was stressed that the question of whether the amnesties and pardons granted actually helped transition from fascism or led to a sort of 'state amnesia' is still very much open to debate. It emerged in discussion how the very vastness of the concept of transition rendered it apt for describing modernity as an open age: true both of the 'structural crisis' of the 1970s, involving problems of state governance and the restructuring of capitalism, and the permanent tension between long-term political aims and current governmental imperatives. More generally, the generational question came into play as an essential element for analysis of long-term transition.

AXEL SCHILDT (Hamburg) dealt with the watershed of 1945, arguing that this definite political rift did not constitute a year zero for the society of the FRG. Especially in the field of political or everyday culture, the years of reconstruction revealed continuities, to the extent that one might even speak of modernisation in an authoritarian context. A more profound break was traced to the 1960s, with the emergence of a new consumer so-

ciety and political stabilisation that led to a broadening of democracy. MAURIZIO CAU (Trento) looked at the question of transition from the point of view of the constitutional cultures of Italy and Germany, and their links with political culture and the redefinition of the public space. Emergence from totalitarianism was managed in different ways, and with different redrawing of constitutional traditions: in Germany there was a lack of positive theoretical reference models whereas in Italy there was no complete break with the past. MARCO MONDINI (Trento) compared the transition between war and peace in Italy and Germany. Post-1918 demobilisation was an uncertain process contributing to social strife and political instability, while the second post-war period achieved a more efficient exit from conflict. However this reading demands revision since it ignores the links with the past persisting in the institutions such as the *Bundeswehr* or the long avoidance of Italian responsibility, seeing the dissipation of the patriotic experience and alternative readings of the war as processes culminating only in the 1960s. GABRIELE D'OTTAVIO (Trento) also took a comparative approach to the development of political science in Italy and the FRG after 1945, when the discipline was re-established and institutionalised in the universities. Although the process differed in the two countries, political science met with similar criticism in both states for its inability to accompany the development of democracy in the face of the 1968 movement. The discussion following the second phase of work covered a number of areas: the differences between the two post-wars, including the greater social issues associated with the post-1945 period due to the larger involvement of civilians; the similarities between the constitutions of Italy and Germany in terms of legal systems, openness to supra-national initiatives, balancing of constitutional powers and effective removal of previous models of national law; the importance of integrating discourses on transition with the generational discourse; and the importance of studying East and West Germany together since to forget the East is to lose both proper understanding of the West and the geopolitical perspective.

The last day opened with a detailed attempt by MICHAEL FREEDEN (Oxford) to integrate the concept of transition with that of age: without a definition of the latter and its limits, the nature of transition cannot be determined. The difficulty of giving a name to World War II was traced to the difficulty of providing an order for events, reflecting a disorientation that apparently continues into the present. HEINZ-GERHARD HAUPT (Bielefeld) again analysed the advantages of the category of transition: its interdisciplinary quality; the possibility of intersecting macro and micro history and interweaving analysis of structures and practices; its questioning of rigid chronology; its focus on the point of view of contemporaries. As a conclusion to the conference, PAOLO POMBENI (Trento) stressed how the term 'transition' was a polysemic word that allowed history to free itself of traditional limitations such as the 'dictatorship of the event' and the recourse to teleological readings.

The value and fruitfulness of the category of transition was thus confirmed as an instrument of long-term analysis, allowing historians to overcome the traditional divisions imposed at the academic level (first of all between modern and contemporary history). Thus, the reaction to the first results of the research project 'Transition as a historiographical issue' was largely positive. During the debate, the research group of the Italian-German Historical Institute was encouraged by the other participants to codify a common set of techniques and tools of investigation in order to improve the theoretical value of "transition" as an analytical category; and to further investigate the temporal and theoretical meaning of "modernity" as the epochal framework in which the processes debated at the conference are inscribed.

Conference overview:

Saluto del direttore FBK-Isig / Begrüßung des Direktors des FBK-Isig

Paolo Pombeni (Trento): La transizione e le sue fasi: riflessioni sui problemi aperti / Der Übergang und seine Phasen: Überlegungen zu offenen Problemen

Marcello Verga (Firenze): Tradimento della borghesia e transizione:discorsi sulla storia italiana dell'età moderna/ Verrat des Bürgertums und Übergang: Deutungen der italienischen Geschichte der Neuzeit

Carlo Taviani (Trento): "Stati privatizzati". Discorsi sulla lunga transizione del potere territoriale delle compagnie finanziarie e commerciali (XV-XVIII secolo) / "Privatisierte Staaten". Diskurse über die lange Wandlung der territorialen Herrschaft der Finanz- und Handelskompanien (15.-18. Jh.)

Katia Occhi (Trento): Ai confini dell'Impero. Attività produttive e reti commerciali tra continuità e mutamento (secoli XVI-XVIII) / An den Grenzen des Reichs. Vorindustrielle Produktion und Handelsnetzwerke zwischen Kontinuität und Wandlung (16.-18. Jh.)

Commenti / Kommentare: Luciano Pezzolo (Venezia) - Marcello Verga (Firenze)

Reinhard Stauber (Klagenfurt): Neuzeit? Zur Problematik des Übergangs um 1500. Eine Einführung / Modernità? Sulla problematica della transizione intorno all'anno 1500. Un'introduzione

Stefan Bauer (Trento): Transizioni nello spazio della letteratura storiografica. Onofrio Panvinio (1530-1568): la comunicazione e trasformazione della storia della Chiesa / Übergänge im Raum der Geschichtsschreibung. Onofrio Panvinio (1530-1568): Kommunikation und Transformation von Kirchengeschichte

Massimo Rospocher (Trento): Dall'oralità alla stampa: transizione o rivoluzione? / Von der Mündlichkeit zur Druckerpresse: Übergang oder Revolution?

Commenti / Kommentare: Roberto Bizzocchi (Pisa) - Luise Schorn-Schütte (Frankfurt a. M.)

Christof Dipper (Darmstadt): Die historische Schwelle um 1800. Eine Skizze / La soglia storica intorno all'anno 1800. Uno schizzo

Fernanda Alfieri (Trento): "Trarre come dal caos e dar forma alle cose"? La Compagnia di Gesù nel primo Ottocento tra rotture e continuità / "Aus dem Chaos den Dingen Form geben"? Die Gesellschaft Jesu zu Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts zwischen Brüchen und Kontinuität

Claudio Ferlan (Trento): La percezione del mutamento religioso. I primi gesuiti in Austria (secolo XVI) / Die Wahrnehmung der religiösen Veränderung. Die frühen Jesuiten in Österreich (16. Jh.)

Emilie Delivré (Trento): Giustizia popolare e transizione giuridica: i Rügegerichte nella Sattelzeit / Volksjustiz und Übergang im Justizwesen: Die Rügegerichte in der Sattelzeit

Commenti / Kommentare: Marco Bellabarba (Trento) - Pierre-Antoine Fabre (EHESS - Parigi) - Dieter Langewiesche (Tübingen)

Paolo Macry (Napoli): La sfera politica come gestione e come rappresentazione della transizione / Die politische Sphäre als Führung und Darstellung des Übergangs

Giovanni Bernardini (Trento): Ideologia e transizione. La socialdemocrazia nel secondo dopoguerra tra specificità nazionali e reciproche influenze / Ideologie und Übergang. Die Sozialdemokratie nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg zwischen nationalen Eigenheiten und gegenseitiger Einflußnahme

Cecilia Nubola (Trento): Giustizia di transizione. I provvedimenti di clemenza nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra / Übergangsjustiz. Die Gnadenverfahren in Italien nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg

Commenti / Kommentare: Jens Späth (DHI - Roma) - Raffaele Romanelli (La Sapienza - Roma)

Axel Schildt (Hamburg): Kulturelle Umbrüche nach 1945 / Cambiamenti culturali profondi dopo il 1945

Maurizio Cau (Trento): Culture costituzionali in transizione. Italia e Germania nel secondo dopoguerra / Verfassungskulturen im Übergang. Italien und Deutschland nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg

Marco Mondini (Trento): Transizioni dalla guerra alla pace: smobilitazioni e ritorni nell'Europa del '900 / Übergänge vom Krieg zum Frieden: Demobilisierungen und Heimkehr im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts

Gabriele D'Ottavio (Trento): La scienza politica in Germania e Italia dopo il 1945. Da oggetto di trasformazione a attore della transizione / Die Politikwissenschaft in Deutschland und Italien nach 1945. Vom Objekt zum Akteur der Übergangsphase

Commenti / Kommentare: Gustavo Corni (Trento) - Maurizio Fioravanti (Firenze) - Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (Bielefeld)

Michael Freeden (Oxford): Transition: an Ideal Type of Conceptual History / Übergang: ein Idealtyp der Begriffsgeschichte / La transizione: un idealtipo della storia concettuale

Dibattito conclusivo / Schlussdebatte
Quali nuove prospettive di ricerca apre il concetto di "periodo di transizione"? / Welche neue Forschungsperspektiven eröffnet das Konzept der "Übergangsperioden"?

Moderatore / Moderator
Paolo Pombeni

Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (Bielefeld): Ergebnisse und Perspektiven / Risultati e prospettive

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