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Empire and Imagination in Early America and the Atlantic World (15th – 19th Centuries). Bayreuth: European Early American Studies Association, Lehrstuhl für Geschichte der Frühen Neuzeit (Universität Bayreuth), Bayreuth Institute for American Studies (BIFAS), 13.12.2012-15.12.2012.

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Empire and Imagination in Early America and the Atlantic World (15th - 19th Centuries)

From 13 to 15 December 2012 the fourth biennial conference of the European Early American Studies Association (EEASA) was held at Bayreuth University, Germany, under the title "Empire and Imagination in Early America and the Atlantic World (15th - 19th centuries)". The EEASA aims to foster international collaboration between Early Americanists throughout Europe and the US. As such, it provides a multilateral European alternative for the practice of early American history - an increasingly international field - different from normal bilateral relationships between individual Europeanists and scholars and institutions in North America. In continuation of this goal the EEASA board invited historians and specialists of art history, literature, music and theater to Bayreuth for a trans-disciplinary reconsideration of "empire" in early North America, but also in the Caribbean, by bringing together the terms of "empire" and "imagination". Key questions of the conference were the role of representation and vision (political, iconographic, musical) in the construction of empire, alternative visions of empire by politicians, authors and artists, how metropolises conceived of empires, and native conceptions of newcomers. The conference was hosted by the Bayreuth Institute for American Studies (BIFAS), the Chairs of Early Modern History (Prof. Dr. Susanne Lachenicht), American Studies and Intercultural Anglophone Studies (Prof. Dr. Sylvia Mayer) and North American Studies (Prof. Dr. Jeanne Cortiel). The Bavarian America Academy, BIFAS and the Universitaetsverein Bayreuth funded this year's EEASA meeting.

During the conference, Bayreuth historian Prof. Dr. Lachenicht, was elected president of EEASA. She's the first German historian to serve as chair of EEASA.

IOANNIS D. EVRIGENIS (Medford) shed light on the political-intellectual discourse concerning the status and nature of American Indians in the 16th and early 17th century. He demonstrated by the example of Thomas Hobbes that due to the lack of first-hand information and interaction with Indians, European intellectuals created a contradictory image, often drawing on extremes.

OLIVER SCHEIDING (Mainz) examined the role and the contribution of Native Americans themselves in the mapping of the Southeastern regions of North America. He demonstrated that they drew and used maps for diplomatic purposes while trying to forge alliances with European powers. By providing Europeans with geographical knowledge, they played an active role in the mapping of the nascent transatlantic empires.

CHRISTIAN CROUCH (Red Rook) took up the conference keywords of empire and imagination most effectively and demonstrated that by studying native people's perspectives, the continuation of the French empire in America after the end of the Seven Years' War could be made visible despite its lack of physical presence.

GEOFF PLANK (Norwich) showed how the pastoral ideal shaped the discourse on Pennsylvania among Quakers and non-Quakers from the 17th well into the 18th century and how it was interpreted. Thomas Tryon for example gave real world meaning to this ideal by advocating vegetarianism and animal rights as well as promoting the abolition of slavery. His arguments were later picked up by Benjamin Lay, a pivotal figure in the reform of American Quakerism.

MARK SOMOS (Cambridge, MA) then claimed in his paper the existence of a distinctive American State of Nature discourse, which was inspired not only by a reconsideration of European thinkers such as Hobbes, Pufendorf, Locke, Rousseau and Vattel by the colonists, but also by the biological reformulation of State of Nature models by Linnaeus.

MAX EDLING (LONDON) also looked at the early United States, stressing the fact that it was a regime of diversity, not homogeneity. Contrary to popular notions

of the United States as the first liberal nation, he put forward the idea to describe the American Founding as the Birth of the American Empire, a term which would allow for the observed diversity of political status and the hierarchical organization of territory.

ANGEL LUKE O'DONNELL (Liverpool) concerned himself with the creation of an American Identity still in the colonial period. Using the example of the Paxton Boys, he showed how settlers from different ethnic backgrounds experienced a feeling of togetherness, promoted by the use of various print media.

THOMAS DIKANT (Frankfurt/Main) stayed with the period and region and gave a new twist to Thomas Jefferson's famous book "Notes on the State of Virgina" by reading it with the 18th century love of and interest in statistical accounts in mind. Dikant demonstrated that Jefferson synthesized in the text political arithmetic and personal knowledge of the land while at the same time sketching out the ideal citizen.

S. MAX EDELSON (Charlottesville) and STEVEN SARSON (Swansea) dealt with Major John Cartwright's early plan of imperial reform which consisted of a confederacy of independent states. His geographic vision and political ideas proved useful for organizing the further territorial expansion of the United-States and possibly influenced not only Jefferson's Northwest Ordinance of 1787 but also Madison's views on representation in an extended polity.

ARNAUD COURGEY (Paris) expanded on the theme and analyzed the Federalist opposition to the Jeffersonian expansion, and in particular the Federalist Party's response to the Louisiana Purchase and the ensuing threats of Northern secession.

MONICA HENRY (Paris) also looked at geopolitical strategies by revisiting the Western Hemisphere Idea and examining its origins and limitations in the young United States. Despite severe flaws in the contemporary argument, Henry concluded that political actors in the Early Republic stuck to the Western hemisphere idea in order to put a spatial order to the rapidly changing geography of the Age of Revolutions.

JILL FRALEY (Lexington) presented the history of the Appalachian region in a juridical perspective. She demonstrated how the juridical definition of the region evolved from an undefined zone of waste property between Spanish, French and British colonies to a coveted region divided through a clear borderline. The recognition of this border definition was not carried out through military conquest nor treaties but through legal agreements and diplomacy.

CSABA LEVAI (Debrecen) compared the historical developments of Hungary and North America, and observed the constitutional position of the two territories. He also examined the reasons for the split between the respective peripheries and cores of the empires. While analyzing the means used to intervene at an international scale by both territories, he also highlighted the reactions of Hungarian states towards the initiative to create a more centralized and unified empire.

HERMANN WELLENREUTHER (Göttingen) provided the first keynote lecture on "Interdependency, Interaction and Communication as Key Terms of Atlantic History". Encompassing the present state of historiography of the Atlantic world, he underlined its original eurocentricity, deriving from the European Imperial states' attempts at dominating new continents. Wellenreuther examined complex layers of interdependency and interaction in the Atlantic world, pointing to the problems in regulating trade and commerce by complex legal systems, destined to nationalize the Atlantic space and to establish control overseas. He raised awareness for the nature and ways of communication that occurred in the Atlantic world, making control of the overseas empires difficult and challenging the idea of an Atlantic dominated by empires.

CATHERINE ARMSTRONG (Manchester) analyzed the European effort to bring the colonies' landscape under control, and compared the initiatives of the French and British imperial powers in doing so. While French explorers appeared to have provided a higher number of accounts, both the British and the French explorers - helped by the natives - contributed to the knowledge on the backcountry region, interpreting many things in a similar way.

In his paper, PHILIPP RÖSSNER (Manchester) observed the effects of mercantilism on Scotland's economy. Basing his analysis on the commercial revolution and the examination of the linen industry and colonial trade in Scotland, he suggested that overseas trade, technology transfer, and protectionist measures, such as high duties on manufactured imports, and bounties on selected manufactured exportations, brought on structural changes in Europe in general, which were beneficial for Scotland in particular.

Turning away from European interaction and towards American self-reflection, MARK NIEMEYER (Bour-gogne) analyzed Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Evangeline*. He suggested that Longfellow's epic poem is not only to be understood as a window to American history dealing with the afterlife of Acadians but also as

an ambiguous critique to the American imperialism of the mid-nineteenth century. The wandering of Evangeline seems to confirm the new territorial conquest of the young state, but the poem also includes a warning of the imperial course taken.

PIERRE-FRANÇOIS PEIRANO (Toulon) also scrutinized American imperial visions by looking at visual representations of the Lewis and Clark expedition, as they were used in the early 20th century. By describing the evolution of the visions of empire he showed that these pictures not only represented the Lewis and Clark expedition but the shifting representative needs of the American nation.

CLAIRE BOURHIS-MARIOTTI (Paris) looked at alternative visions for free Blacks left out of the westward movement in the U.S. and painted a vivid picture of Haiti's importance for antebellum African-American emigrationists. Haiti remained throughout this period the "promised land" though severe disappointment ensued on both sides when African-Americans actually emigrated to Haiti.

ELENA SCHNEIDER (Williamsburg) turned to imperial imaginings in the Spanish Atlantic, examining changes of policy with the Spanish colonial administration during the 18th century. Acknowledging that commerce not conquest was the true source of wealth, the Spanish attitude towards the slave trade and its importance changed, too. The discourse remained historically oriented however, demonstrating the power of imagination over reality.

FRANÇOIS BRUNET (Paris) dealt in his keynote with performances of American ingenuity on European stages from the middle of the 18th to the middle of the 19th century. Innovators in a wide range of fields such as painting (John Singleton Copley, George Catlin), transportation (Robert Fulton) and communication (Samuel Morse) sought recognition and investors in Europe during this time after having failed to receive the same in the United States. The public performances of their inventions marked them however as workmen instead of independent geniuses heralded by the time.

ALLISON STAGG's (London) talk was also concerned with an early American artist, James Akin who in his turn became a cartoonist. Akin studied engraving and painting in London and there was influenced by the character of Londoner satirical caricatures. Back in the United-States, he used his new skills in fine art and his network of artistic colleagues to make powerful political statements in the form of caricature. His drawings were the first of their kind that were designed and published in America.

JENNIFER TSIEN (Charlottesville) studied the travel report "Histoire de la Louisiane" (1758) to show how its author combined Enlightenment ideas and a travel report. While providing genuine information on Louisiana, the author repeatedly teased his readers with supernatural stories only to refute them with scientific descriptions. In this way, he tried to teach his readership to be proper enlightenment readers and to develop a proper skepticism towards colonial schemes as well as travel accounts.

GESA MACKENTHUN (Rostock) claimed that the issue of colonial dispossession lay at the heart of gothic fiction. By quoting a wide range of authors, spanning from Cotton Mather to Stephen King, she demonstrated that in all these stories the real origin of evil lay in the sacrifices of the Native Americans. This conjunction between terror and territoriality could also be found in the OED as well as in Edmund Burke's Theory of the Sublime.

LAURA STEVENS (Tulsa) examined the different interpretations of the biblical Deborah by the construction of national identity in England and in the thirteen colonies. In England, the biblical character was associated with the Queen and thus consolidated the monarchy as an important part of the national identity. In America, the interpretation evolved from the establishment of parallels between the American and Jewish colonists to the encouragement of individual actions against tyranny and thus against British power.

Generally, the conference and in particular the lively question-and-answer-sessions showed that "empire" and "imagination" went together very well as keywords and opened up interesting new avenues of exploration. This was particularly true for "hidden" empires of imagination such as the French empire after it had ceased to exist physically or the creation of imperial visions such as those of the young United States. The next EEASA biannual conference will be held in Lublin, Poland, in 2015 under the thematic heading of "Protest and Protestation".

Conference Overview:

Panel A

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Ioannis Evrigenis (Tufts University), Hobbes and the Indians: America as the State of Nature

Mark Somos (Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University), American States of Nature: From Rightless Savage, through Chosen Nation, to Liberty for All

Oliver Scheiding (Universität Mainz), Native Agency and Empire Building in the Colonial Southeast

Panel B

Max Edling (King's College, London), 1787: Birth of the American Empire

Angel Luke O'Donnell (University of Liverpool), Tangible Imagination: The Paxton Boys and the Origin of American Identity in Philadelphia

Thomas Dikant (Goethe Universität Frankfurt/Main), Jefferson's Statistics: Governmentality in the Notes on the State of Virginia

Keynote Lecture I: Hermann Wellenreuther (Universität Göttingen), Interdependency, Interaction and Communication as Key Terms of Atlantic History

Panel A

Catherine Armstrong (Manchester Metropolitan University), Imperial Borderland? Representations in Print of the Landscape of Carolina and Louisiana 1660-1745

Csaba Levai (University of Debrecen), Within Two Imperial Systems: Hungary and the British Colonies in North America in the 18th Century

Philipp R. Rössner (University of Manchester), Mechanisms of British Imperial Control as seen from Scot-land and the Atlantic Economy after 1707

Mark Niemeyer (Université de Bourgogne), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Evangeline: Empire and the Afterlife of the History of the Acadians

Arnaud Courgey (Université Paris Diderot), Empire without Imagination or Imagination without Empire

S. Max Edelson and Steven Sarson (University of Virginia/Swansea University), The Grand British League and Confederacy

Panel B

Pierre-François Peirano (Aix-Marseille Université), The Representations of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Revival of Imperial Dreams

Claire Bourhis-Mariotti (Université Paris Diderot), 'Go to our brethren, the Haytians, who, according to their word, are bound to protect and comfort us' - Antebellum African-American Emigrationists and a Promised Land Away from the American Empire: Haiti

Geoff Plank (University of East Anglia), The Pastoral Ideal and Debates over the Future of England's Transatlantic Empire in the Late Seventeenth Century

Jennifer Tsien (University of Virginia), Enlightenment vs. the Colonial Imagination: the Case of Louisiana

Gesa Mackenthun (Universität Rostock), Terror and Territoriality: Imperial Sovereignty and Jurisdictional Ambivalence in Early American Discourse

Monica Henry (Université de Paris Est-Créteil), Revisiting the Western Hemisphere Idea

Keynote lecture II: François Brunet (Université Paris Diderot) : Projecting the 'Empire of Freedom' on European Stages: Performances of American Ingenuity in France and England, 1757-1867

Panel A

Christian Crouch (Bard College), 'The French Connection': Bonds of Blood and Empire in a Former French Atlantic World

Elena Schneider (Omohundro Institute), Imperial Imaginings in the Spanish Atlantic during the Era of the Seven Years' War

Panel B

Jill Fraley (Washington and Lee University), Waste Property and the Making of Nation-States in Eighteenth-Century America

Allison Stagg (University College London), The Partisan Caricatures of James Akin in the Early Republic

Laura Stevens (University of Tulsa), The Biblical Deborah in the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic

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