

International Conference

„Empires to be remembered“

Vienna 24th–28th November 2015

Mission statement

Recent research on empire histories can be characterized in the following way:

1. Individual case studies of empires have been and continue to be subjects of isolated inquiries that focus on the phenomenon of empire on a case by case basis often in isolation from each other.
2. Historical empires and imperial powers have been compared arbitrarily with each other. Many times these studies have been guided by a eurocentric views without taking into account seriously global history in its far-reaching geographical and chronological dimensions.
3. An undertaking in empire studies which is large-scale interdisciplinary, and comparative in the sense of an *“histoire totale”* has been organized for the first time in Hildesheim in 2010. However, there are still global regions which have not been considered and periods which have not been taken into consideration appropriately. These gaps shall be closed with this conference in Vienna. As a result a well-chosen number of further historically tangible imperial orders and formations shall be analyzed in a systematic way.
4. The approach chosen by the ten sections of this conference is defined in the following way:
 - Global and intercontinental;
 - comprehensive in terms of time and periods,
 - universally historical, that is, presented in a comparative manner and analyzed according to unified criteria.
5. As already in Hildesheim the aims of the conference shall be achieved by a catalogue of unified questions addressed to each individual study.

I. Material History of the Empires

1. Origin: founding myth?, power vacuum, apolarities, neighbors, power history background and power politics context, antagonistic powers (Charles S. Maier), polarities;
2. Structure: leadership, representatives, apparatuses, armies, soft-power factors, institutions, administration, center/periphery, centralization/decentralization;
3. Extent: “relevant power area” (Herfried Münkler), expansion (growth from within toward the outside or from the outside in? Maier), establishment, integration, self-presentation, openness, uncertainty, “the dynamics of unstable borders” (Maier), hypocrisy (as the price of imperialism and of empires toward democracies, Maier) and legitimation, missions, promises, communication both within and to the outside, capabilities for reform, resistance, and regeneration, crossing the “Augustan threshold” (Michael Doyle), permanence versus a short-lived nature: *longue durée* empires or brief war empires;
4. Reactions and perceptions by third parties, the larger power-historical context;
5. Erosion and disintegration (creeping and protracted decline, change of dynasties, institutional decay) or abrupt end and total collapse, repercussions on the reception).

II. Reception History of the Empires

1. Concrete effective history: heritage, legacy, and achievements of civilization;
2. Imagined receptions: removals, historical fiction, that which has been forgotten and ignored, stylizations, overinterpretation, disproportionateness in ascribing significance;
3. References to historical empires, forerunners, generation of historical consciousness and tradition, imperial image continuities;
4. Historiographies: historians and their schools: who makes an empire into an empire, who capitalizes an "empire"?
5. The state of modern research and comparisons spreading across eras (analogies, parallels, differences).

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