

ESF-NETWORK ON THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN EXPANSION

Workshop on computer applications in expansion history *Copenhagen, May 18-19, 1990*

Increasing use of computers in expansion history and the need to integrate such initiatives urged the European Science Foundation Network on the History of European Expansion to sponsor a small-scale workshop on this matter. It was convened by dr. J.T. Lindblad (Leiden) and prof. T. Svensson (Bergen/Copenhagen) and held at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies at Copenhagen. Participants included prof. K.N. Chaudhuri (London), Mme prof. C. Coquery-Vidrovitch (Paris VII), dr. Lewis Fischer (Bergen/Newfoundland), dr. R. Metz (Cologne), prof. N. Steensgaard and dr. I. Norlund (Copenhagen) and prof. H.L. Wesseling (Chairman of the Network).

The workshop focused on three main themes concerning respectively data base technology, the methodology of computer applications and the accessibility of knowhow and data. Demonstrations included a data base for the history of the Indian Ocean region, a huge file on Anglo-African trade in the eighteenth century and the History of European Expansion Data Bank of the Netherlands Historical Data Archive. A set of recommendations was formulated with respect as how to set up a data base, how to design coding schemes and in which software to invest. These recommendations will be outlined in a forthcoming article. It was also recommended to concentrate information on computer applications in a separate brief section in running issues of *Itinerario*. The participants endorsed the idea of a separate conference in the not too distant future on new frontiers in expansion history that can fruitfully be tackled with use of computer technology.

J. Thomas Lindblad

Project Statement

Geography and Empire: a comparative study of the role of geographical thought in the development of British and French Colonialism 1870-1940

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Context

In recent years, new perspectives have modified our understanding of both European imperialism and European geography during the critical years separating the Franco-Prussian war from World War Two. The familiar interpretation of imperialism in this period as an economic and geopolitical process of capitalist expansion into the non-capitalist world - a view associated primarily with economic and political historians - has been significantly re-assessed by scholars trained in a range of different disciplines from anthropology and art history of comparative literature and architecture. These relatively recent studies have developed a more nuanced, contextual and cultural analysis of the European colonial impulse. In particular, new emphasis has been placed on the complex, contested and shifting nature of the European colonial mind as well as on the conflicting imperial visions and images constructed by European expansionists.

This emphasis on the discourse of imperialism has necessitated a re-examination of the intellectual climate in which imperial ideas developed. Of central importance to this issue was the role of European science as a tool of imperial expansion and an agent of European hegemony. The science of Geography is especially intriguing as its emergence as a professional discipline and rapid growth in popularity after 1870 mirrored so closely the development of aggressive European imperial expansion. It has frequently been argued that the growing importance of Geography throughout Europe, indicated by its establishment in schools and universities and by the rapid rise in the number of learned geographical societies, was closely linked to its perceived role in promoting national consciousness within Europe while providing both the practical knowledge and the intellectual legitimacy for imperial expansion outside the continent. Yet relatively little attention has been devoted to the precise mechanisms involved in this relationship beyond those suggested by coincidental chronological development. Both imperialism and Geography were diverse and complex intellectual arenas and there is considerable scope for examining in greater detail the interconnections between these two spheres.

Objectives

The broad objective of the project is to examine more fully this relationship through a comparative analysis of the two principal imperial powers - Britain and France - with special reference to the relevant imperial ambitions of each country in southern Africa, the Maghreb, Egypt and Palestine during this period. There are two distinct aspects to this exercise. Firstly, the project will

investigate the contribution of Geographers - whether travellers, explorers, professional teachers or academic researchers - to intellectual and political debate about the formulation and implementation of imperial policy. This debate was influenced by a range of viewpoints and special attention will be paid to the various images of empire and contrasting forms of imperial and colonial engagement which were promoted by Geographers. Particular emphasis will be placed on the role of Geographers in debates about the civilian colonisation of Africa and the Middle East. This will involve research on the teaching, research and advisory activities of Geographers in Europe and in the colonies, whether undertaken independently or on behalf of the British or French governments.

Secondly, the project will examine the role of Geographers and geographical societies in influencing popular opinion concerning imperialism and colonialism in general and imperial expansion into Africa and the Middle East in particular. This will require research on imperial themes in the teaching of Geography within the secondary schools of Britain and France together with an analysis of imperial ideas in the popular geographical literature of the period.

Significance

The project will provide a new, comparative perspective on the history of European imperial and colonial engagement with Africa and the Middle East. Its significance will reside in the contribution it makes to an emerging body of scholarly literature. At the same time, the research undertaken on this project will reveal a considerable amount about the origins of more recent western attitudes towards development and towards the peoples and environments of the non-western world.

Methods

The project will be based on detailed historical and contextual analysis of published and unpublished texts, together with accompanying maps, photographs and other images. This will involve intensive periods of research in libraries and archives examining official documents, books, journal articles, newspapers, school textbooks, popular literature, diaries and memoirs relating to Geography and imperial or colonial development.

In Britain, the more important establishments include the Public Record Office (London), the library and archives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (London), the archives and library of the Royal Geographical Society (London) and those of equivalent societies in Manchester and Edinburgh, the Rhodes House library (Oxford), the British Library (London), the British Library Collingdale Newspaper Archive (London), the libraries and archival material of the University of London, the Bodleian Library in the University of Oxford and the Cambridge University Library, and the library and archives of the Palestine Exploration fund (London).

In France, the main institutions include the Archives Nationales (Paris), the library and archives of the Société de Paris and those of the equivalent societies in severaprovincial cities, the library of the Institut du Monde Arabe (Paris), the archives and library of the Centre des Hautes Études sur l'Afrique et l'Asie Moderne (Paris), the library of the Institut internationale d'Administration Publique (Paris), the library of the Institut de Géographie de l'Université de Paris, the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (Paris), the Archives du Ministère de la Guerre (Paris, Vincennes), the Archives Nationales: dépôt des Archives d'Outre-Mer (Aix-en-Provence), the library of the Centre de Recherches et d'Études sur les Sociétés Méditerranéennes (Aix-en-Provence) and the Archives de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille.

In Switzerland (Geneva), research will be undertaken in the archives of the League of Nations, whose policy for both colonial and mandated territories is of great importance to the themes of the project. In Egypt, use will be made of the archives and library of the Egyptian Geographical Society, and in Israel of the National Library in Jerusalem, including the extensive map collections. Interviews will also be undertaken with leading surviving Geographers from both countries who were involved in research in both the British and French empires during this period.

Results

The project results will take two forms;

- 1.the publication of a series of articles in learned journals followed by a full-length book on this topic;
- 2.the compilation of an inventory of materials available on this topic detailing both their nature and location.

Ports and their Hinterland, 1700-1950

From 23 April to 26 April, 1990, a seminar under the title "Ports and their Hinterland, 1700-1950" was held at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla. The seminar was jointly organised by the host Institute, the Urban History Association of India and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. The twenty-odd participants were accommodated at the IAS which is housed in the former Vice-regal Lodge in the Raj's summer residence. The hospitality extended to the participants was exemplary and included morning tea and newspaper on bed. The organisation, in the hands of Professors Indu Ganga of Guru Nanak Dev University (Secretary of the UHA) and J.S. Grewal (Director of the IAS), ran perfectly and, with the informal and constructive atmosphere of the proceedings, resulted in stimulating and fruitful discussions. As the seminar took place in the very room in which the 1972 Shimla Agreement was signed by Prime Ministers Bhutto of Pakistan and Indira Gandhi of India, the current crisis over Kashmir tended to add another, albeit more intangible, dimension of historical interest to it.

The organisers had beforehand circulated some suggestions as to major themes for the papers to be presented, but not all authors had chosen to leave the security of their established research interests. Nevertheless, the papers and ample discussion which followed the presentation of each paper, in their entirety, achieved a commendable extent of interrelatedness and cohesion. This, in turn, enabled the participants to construct comparative perspectives as well as a broad general context, within which the individual contributions could each take their place. This positive result was not in the least due to the felicitous fact that the proceedings kicked off with Atiya Habeeb Kidwai's paper, "Writing the historical geography of ports and their hinterlands: some conceptual and methodological issues", which right from the beginning forced delegates to think in terms of theoretical concepts and functional models. Indeed, if anything became the *Leitmotiv* for the seminar, it was the quest for the meaning, or meanings, of the "hinterland".

By contrast to the extended discussions about the nature and extent of hinterlands, the ports and port towns/cities themselves remained somewhat in the background. Most contributions dealt with the development of regional trade and the rise and fall of specific trading ports on the Indian coast. In doing so, inevitably, many important questions about the complex and multi-level relationship between Europe and India were addressed by authors and discussants. The spread of papers over time and place was quite representative for the current historiographical situation, with as much emphasis being placed on the eighteenth century and before (indeed, the 'mentality' of the Moghul court vis-à-vis external trade became one of the threads which linked many discussion sessions together) as on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Once again, it was stressed how important European archives can be for the analysis and understanding of indigenous Indian business enterprise, but it also became clear that "history from below" for the earlier period still has a far way to go. While it is true that the wealth of qualitative and quantitative evidence on, for example, 19th century Bombay can simply not be matched by similar documentation on India's port towns and littoral society in preceding centuries, a greater interest in themes relating to social and occupational issues and a sharper eye for relevant evidence in the available sources might nevertheless enable researchers to push forward their investigations.

The papers dealing with the pre-modern (18th century and before) period chronologically began with that by Shireen Moosvi (Aligarh Muslim University) on "Gujarat ports and their hinterland - the economic relationship", in which particular emphasis was given to the development of competing inland trade routes, evidence about minting activity Ahmadabad and Surat from coin hoards and museum collections, and the complex relationship between commercial, financial and fiscal relations in the Moghul Empire; Aniruddha Ray (Calcutta University) on "The Decline of Cambay, 1725-1759", in which he suggested that both the extent of the apparent 'decline' of Cambay and the reasons for that port town's demise need to be reassessed; I.P. Gupta's (University of Hyderabad) rather diffuse "A conceptual framework and some empirical evidence on selected ports and their hinterlands of North Coromandel region during the 18th and 19th centuries"; K.S. Mathew (University of Pondicherry) on "Cuddalore on the Coromandel coast and the maritime trade of India (1700-1800)"; Rajat K. Ray (Presidency College, Calcutta) on "Calcutta or Alinagar: contending conceptions in the Mughal-English confrontation of 1756-1757", which paper raised many more questions than the brief period indicated in its title might suggest and which, besides being stimulating in many other ways, led participants then and in later sessions to extensive musings about the meaning and historical significance of names, images and symbols; and Lakshmi Subramanian (Calcutta University) on "Ports, inland towns and states - western India in the eighteenth century", a fascinating and penetrating comparative analysis of the role and importance of Surat, Bombay, Poona and Baroda in the second half of the eighteenth century, when political power in western India was contested between the Peshwas in Poona, the Gaekwads in Baroda and what the author termed the "Anglo-Nawabi order" along the west coast with nuclei at Surat and Bombay.

The modern period was covered by a variety of papers, in which, on the whole, the conceptual underpinnings of historical research were more implicitly present than in the previous contributions. The

heavily conceptual and methodological paper by Atiya Habeeb Kidwai (Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal University) has already been referred to; by directly confronting many issues involved in defining and applying terms such as 'gateway' and "gateway city", "foreland" and "hinterland", and also the "colonial port city" itself, the author raised many important questions which continued to provide conceptual pegs for later discussions.

Other papers on the modern period included "Pondicherry - the port without a hinterland" by Narayani Gupta (Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi), which provided a succinct socio-economic overview of that coastal but not very maritime town in the nineteenth century; the fascinating "Knowledge for power: the significance of the Bombay revenue survey, 1811-1827" by Mariam Dossal (University of Bombay), which in the course of analysing the origins and results of Captain T. Dickinson's survey of Bombay Island investigated many questions relating to its land use and the fiscal policies of the Bombay government of the day; Frank Broeze's (University of Western Australia) "The external dynamics of port city morphology: Bombay 1815-1914", in which the evolution of Bombay's spatial arrangements and architectural style and appearance was discussed in terms of both foreland and hinterland influences through shipping and trade, immigration and cultural diversity; and "Karachi and its hinterland under colonial rule" by professors Banga and Grewal, which provided an illuminating overview of the development of Karachi's hinterland (especially the irrigated areas of the Punjab, but also Sind province) and its impact on the morphology of the port city itself.

Two papers, finally, covered very current affairs, set in a historical framework. Vasant K. Bawa dealt with "The Rise of Visakhapatnam and the decline of the Coromandel ports", in which a very broad overview of that port town's earlier performance within the Coromandel port system was matched against its recent spectacular growth which caused its population to grow from 70,000 in 1941 to over 500,000 by the early 1980s; the author was even carried away so far as to describe subject as a "City of Destiny". Dwijendra Tripathi (Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad), finally, in his "Despite hinterland: the travails of the Karwar port development scheme" recounted first how an ambitious scheme for the development of Karwar port (originally called Sadashivgarh) during the cotton boom of the early 1860s came to nought, and then how, not before 1988, the first stage of a modest port development project was actually inaugurated. From the comparison of the fortunes of both schemes important suggestions were made about the nature of the impact of 'imperialism' in British India and the autonomous role of 'government' in regional economic development.

The papers of the conference will be published by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library under the editorship of professor Ravindar Kumar. It is hoped the volume will appear before the end of this year (1990). It may not carry the title suggested by some participants, "All at Sea at Shimla", but is nevertheless certain to be attractive to all who are interested in the maritime and economic history of India and the impact of European expansion on India.

Frank Broeze.

Report on the International Symposium of the ancient town of Hoi An, held in Da Nang (Vietnam) between March 20 and March 25, 1990.*

More than 40 participants attended the International Conference on the historic town of Hoi An, held in Da Nang between March 20 and March 25, 1990. The conference was organized by an ad-hoc state committee, composed of leading academics of the University of Hanoi and officials of the Vietnam's ministries of Culture, Higher Education and Foreign Affairs. Apart from 26 Vietnamese scholars, 8 scholars from Japan, 3 from the Netherlands, 1 from Poland, 1 from Thailand and 1 from Australia submitted papers on different subjects concerning the history of Hoi An (or Faifo as it is also called). The town, located about 20 km south of Da Nang in Central Vietnam, was a famous port-city. In the 17th and 18th centuries Hoi An had trade relations with Japan and China, with surrounding Southeast Asian countries, with South Asia, and with European countries like Portugal, Holland, France and England. Scholars from China, Portugal, France and the United Kingdom were invited, but for different reasons they were unable to attend.

The main sponsor of the conference was the Japanese Dailo Paper Firm, whose president Mr. Takeo Ikawa forwarded to the State Committee a sum of 100.000 US \$ meant for the restauration of a part of the town and for the organization of the conference.

The presence of the Japanese ambassador in Vietnam, Kumoki Asumara, and his wife, together with the cultural attache of the Embassy, Dr. Yoshiharu Tsuboi, and several members of the Japanese Association of Vietnamese Studies, chaired by professor Yamamoto Tatsuro stressed the importance of the conference for Japan.

The majority of the papers came from Vietnamese specialists working in central institutions, like the National University of Hanoi, but also from regional historians (the province of Da Nang-Quang Nam where Hoi An is located) and from the south of Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh-city) submitted papers. Only three out of forty scholars were women.

The symposium also attracted the Japanese and Vietnamese television. The conference organizers prepared a tour of the ancient town where a traditional boat-race was held and several old houses and monuments were visited. A post-conference visit to the historic capital of Hue was organized in order to give the participants an appreciation of the history of this part of Central Vietnam. Later, a small group of historians, including this participant, had the chance to visit all the archival collections of the southern part of Vietnam, kept at several places in Ho Chi Minh-city, including the archives of the Imperial Palace. For the first time, we also had a chance to see the microfilm collections and the audio-visual archives of the defunct Republic of South Vietnam.

The main conference activities were held during March 22 and March 23. The opening session took place on Thursday March 22 in the presence of high officials of the Vietnamese government, the Japanese ambassador and various guests from different countries. After the official opening, marked by the absence of political statements, a general session began on the history and present status of the historic town of Hoi An.

Proceedings started with an overview from Professor Phan Huy Le (National University of Hanoi and Dean of the Vietnamese Association of Historians). He stressed among other things the fact that the ancient town of Hoi An has to be seen as part of a wider region and that special attention should be paid to the periods before the town reached its zenith in the inter-maritime trade of Southeast-Asia. Probably the place where Hoi An later was founded served already as a commercial port for Tra Kieu or Simhapura, one of the capitals of the ancient Champa kingdom (8th - 15th century), as can be shown by the various monuments and archeological sites around the place.

Later, the promising beginnings of a commercial and entrepreneurial centre was the work of the Nguyen-administration, an effort that according to Professor Le was underestimated until now in the works of many Vietnamese historians, mainly working in the northern part of Vietnam. In addition to the various studies already written about Hoi An he acknowledged that "the results of research show that Hoi An in the XVIIth century was a most prosperous port-city of the whole Southeast Asian region".

Many of the issues raised by Professor Le were touched on again in subsequent papers in this opening session. His colleague, Professor Tran Quoc Vuong, archeologist and head of the Center for Intercultural Studies (National University of Hanoi) elaborated on the geo-historical position and geo-cultural identity of Hoi An. Professor Ishizawa Yoshiaki, chairman of the Japan-Vietnam friendship association, stressed the special relationship between Hoi An and Japan. Drs. Truong Van Binh and Dr. John Kleinen (Centre for Asian Studies Amsterdam) presented an overview of the Dutch presence in Vietnam following the commercial activities of the United Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) and stressing the importance of the documents left in the Central Archives in The Hague and especially the value of these documents for the historiography of Vietnam in the 17th century.

The subsequent sessions on Thursday and Friday were divided in three main thematic topics, covering all the aspects of the investigations concerning Hoi An. The first main session dealt with archeology and cultural matters. Papers were read by Professor Hasebe Gakuji (National Museum in Tokyo) on historical

relations between Japan and Vietnam through ceramic trade and by Roxanne Brown (Thailand) and Peter Burns (Australia) on ceramics found in Vietnam and in the Philippines. Other papers were presented by Dr. Vu Van Phai and Dr. Dan Van Bao (University of Hanoi) on geo-morphical features of the port and its surrounding area; by Dr. Hoang Van Khoan and Dr. Lam Ky Dung (same university) on ancient coins found in situ and by two collaborators of the famous Cham museum of Da Nang, archeologists Tran Ky Phuong and Vu Huu Minh on the estuary of the river Dai Chiem during the period of the Champa kingdom and its aftermath (from the 4th century onwards). A technical paper on shipbuilding by three authors (Nguyen Boi Liu, Tran Van An and Nguyen Van Phi) was complemented by a more anthropological contribution on aquatic festivities, like the origins of the traditional boatrace and presented by the local historians Nguyen Duc Minh and Tran Van Nha. This session ended with two contributions on the spoken dialect and the use of the lingua franca in the 17th and 18th centuries by Doan Thien Thuat and Hoang Thi Chau (both from the National University of Hanoi).

At this same time two other main sessions were being held. The way the conference was organised and the great number of papers, mostly read at a great pace, prevented interested scholars from attending other sessions. This report focuses on topics discussed in the session on history and less attention is given to the sessions of archeology and related culture, while the session on architecture and restauration is barely touched upon.

The papers in the session on the history of Hoi an and the surrounding region did not follow a chronological path, nor were the papers clustered in thematic topics. Hence the different levels of analysis made an overall assessment difficult. The papers dealt with topics ranging from a very broad and general level like professor's Shiguru Ikata (Daito Bunka University) on the role of port cities in Southeast Asia to a rather parochial contribution on collecting sea-swallow nests at the coast of central-Vietnam, written by two members of the Hoi An relics administration committee.

There was a set of papers dealing with the relationship between Japanese, Dutch and Vietnamese in the town of Hoi An and related to the maritime trade in Southeast-Asia. Professor Kato Eichi (Historiographical Institute of Tokyo University) spoke at length on the limited success of the United Dutch East Indies Company because of the dependency on Japanese policy and trade with other nations. Dr. Leonard Blussé (University of Leiden) gave an assessment of the Dutch interest towards Vietnam, especially the differences between the policies towards Annam and Tonkin, when the country was divided between the Trinh ruled north and the Nguyen ruled central and southern part. He reasserted Buch's well known remark in his dissertation (1929) that the Dutch VOC had no clear cut policy towards Annam. In an original contribution, professor Kwamoto Kuniye (Keio University) asked that attention be given to what he called a "fresh international outlook" towards the Nguyen rulers who dealt with foreign powers like the Japanese Tokugawa. Related with the Japanese in Hoi Hoi, Dr. Vu Minh Giang (faculty of History, University of Hanoi) made some additional remarks on the visible and historical presence of the Japanese merchants. In spite of the absence of a French contribution to the colloquium, Dr. Ton Nu Quynh Tran (Scientific Secretary of the Institute of History in Ho Chi Minh-city) raised the interesting point as to why the early French presence in Hoi An tended to be uneasy and impermanent and never developed into a sound commercial relationship with the Vietnamese court at that time.

The interlinkages between the port-city and the hinterland were the subject of the papers read by Dr. B Bang of Hue University and by Dr. Phan Dai Doan of National University of Hanoi. The way the neighbouring port of Da Nang superseded the port of Hoi An in the 19th century, partly as a result of the changing political outlook of the Nguyen rulers, was a theme worked out by Dr. Duong Trung Quoc of the Institute of History (Hanoi). How the importance of Hoi An as a commercial town changed was demonstrated by the social geographer Professor Nguyen Dinh Dau (Association of Historical Studies in Ho Chi Minh-city) in an eloquent sociogenetic study of the different names of the port-city in foreign documents and maps. Professor Nguyen Van Hoan (Institute of Literature, Hanoi) used the historical contacts between Vietnam and the West as a starting point for his vision on how the Vietnamese language was romanized by Western missionaries. His presentation of the way Japanese interpreters lent a helping hand in the phonetization of the romanized Vietnamese language (quoc ngu) aroused some heated debate among the attending scholars.

As already mentioned, the session on architecture and restauration was not attended by this participant. According to the papers and the programme, the Polish specialist Kazimien Kwatiakowki gave an outline of the efforts Polish architects and craftsmen devoted already to the restauration of Hoi An. Dr. Chu Quang Tru, staff member of the Institute of Fine Art Research gave an enumeration of some well chosen examples of the artistic developments of Hoi An as demonstrated by existing artifacts. Dr. Trinh Cao Tuong of the Institute of Archeology reported on his findings of the ancient architectural features in the 16th and 17th centuries. Two members of the Department of Museums presented a position paper on the policy that should be followed in the protection and utilization of the Hoi An monuments. Their colleagues Hoang Dao Kinh, Vuu Huu Minh, Hoang Minh Ngoc and Nguyen Hong Kien, working on a specially erected project

centre, suggested in a related paper that at any means the impression might be avoided that Hoi An will be transformed into a living museum.

During the reporting of the discussions on Friday afternoon, it still was not very clear how to bridge some important differences in scientific and historical approach. As usually, several 'rapporteurs' summarized the discussion, held in the different sessions, but a clear cut overall vision was lacking.

There was, however, an unanimous call for attention to support and finance the restauration of the remains of the historic town.

A further issue which requires more carefull thought is that of the relationship between local studies and the way of making these parochial studies speak to larger issues. The time that a social history of Vietnam, combining history, anthropology and sociology, will be written is still far away. Nevertheless, the conference was immensely valuable in bringing together so many topics on different levels, in spite of an overall approach to present an interlinked dynamic model of the role Hoi An played in a national and international context. I think that a research agenda has to be drawn up in order to combine historical, anthropological and art-historical research. This is a task for the Vietnamese scholars who profit themselves from the international attendance of their colleagues from Japan, the Netherlands and several other countries. However, this conference confirmed that there is an encouraging number of scholars in many countries who are committed to do research on Vietnam. The organizing committee deserves to get the credit to have been able, thanks to the efforts of the local historians and authorities, to arrange a truly scientific conference of international standards.

John Kleinen

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