

23, 2 (2012), Geschlechtergeschichte global

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164 Seiten, ISBN: 978-3-412-20897-4, ISSN: 1016-362X

Order: <http://www.boehlau-verlag.com/978-3-412-20897-4.html>

Abstracts

Ulrike Gleixner, Women Patrons in the “Empire of God”. Women of High Rank in the Network of the Protestant Mission in India in the 18th Century

The paper gives insights into the female donation network of the first transcontinental Protestant mission which was founded in 1706 in the Danish trading colony of Tranquebar in South East India. The millenarian hope of a Protestant Empire produced a support network in which an astonishingly high number of women were active. The participation of European women in the early modern mission networks has not yet been explored. The Protestant network which is in the center of this article included queens, imperial princesses, noble women in the service of the court, wives of high military officials, abbesses and canoneses of Protestant Convents (*Reichsstifte*), wives/widows of pastors and women of the academic middle class. The commitment to their Christian confession and the socio-political participation made the colonial mission attractive for European women of the upper classes. The India mission gave them “new” colonial space and offered access to new forms of social networking, where feudal and gender-based limitations lost their relevance.

Kirsten Rüther, Colonial Globalisation: History from the Vantage Point of Emma Sandile (1842 – c. 1893)

Emma Sandile was a Xhosa princess who, on the instigation of a colonial governor, was transferred to a college in Cape Town in the second half of the 19th century. There she was schooled as a member of a new African elite who was loyal to the British Empire. Open to what the future held, Emma attempted to form relationships through letter writing. In these letters she used the vocabulary of kinship to create the ties that she deemed necessary. Ideally she was supposed to become the wife of a chief whom, through her, the colonial government would have kept under their influence. In return, she was promised a patch of land of her own. When the marriage plans failed, Emma lost her privileged status and gradually turned into a woman who “wore red ocre”, a cosmetically applied substance that the colonisers considered a symbol of indigene backwardness. In the hierarchical order of colonial globalisation, she lost the scope of agency – although she never gave it up completely. Emma Sandile’s story provides us with an opportunity to observe an agent of globalisation who, like many around her, became embroiled in the transformations of 19th century colonialism. Most of the ambitious global histories currently being published do not, however, empirically integrate the perspective of those like Emma Sandile. This contribution attempts to delineate the scope that a colonised agent of globalisation had in codetermining the transformations of greater scope.

Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, “I am so tired of being a bird of passage”. Imperial Space and Imperial Rule in the Autobiography of a Russian Noblewoman

The article focuses on the autobiographical writings of the Russian noblewoman Varvara Dukhovskaia (born Golitsyna) (1854–1931), whose memories are analysed as source material from the cultural history of the late Russian Empire. As the wife of Sergei M. Dukhovskoi, a high-ranking dignitary of the Tsarist regime, who – among other offices – served as governor-general in the Amur province and in Russian Turkestan, Dukhovskaia was part of the mobile imperial elite who came into close contact with the cultural, geographical and political diversity of the Tsarist realm in the last decades of the 19th century. The article examines how Dukhovskaia reflected in her memoirs the experience of the nomadic life that the representatives of the autocratic regime had to lead. How did she locate Russia and the empire’s peripheries on her mental maps? How did she describe her own role as female spectator and actor on the stage of Russia’s “scenarios of power”? Autobiographies like those of V. Dukhovskaia are of great value for the writing of “imperial biographies”. They are helpful in the analysis of both self-images of the imperial elite and the emotional dimension of imperial rule. Autobiographical texts written by women are particularly distinctive, since their discursive boundaries differ from those of autobiographical texts written by men. With the help of sources of this kind, the article argues, we can better understand the spectrum of emotions of imperial rule shared by both men and women, a reality of imperial history that we have known so little about, because of the restraints of male autobiographical writing.

Anna Becker, Rethinking Masculinity and Femininity in Niccolò Machiavelli’s Political Thought

Niccolò Machiavelli’s political thought is usually conceived of as a quintessentially masculine theory at the beginning of the modern state. His politics appear to be constructed around strict dichotomies of *virtù* and *fortuna*, which are thought of as embodiments of male and female antagonism. This article examines Machiavelli’s perceived misogyny and re-evaluates the gender implications of his work. By reconstructing the relationship of fortune and *virtù*, and by analysing the nature of the prince and Machiavelli’s treatment of the female ruler Caterina Sforza, the article shows that Machiavelli’s notion of femininity and masculinity is far more complex than generally assumed and thus argues for a revision of Machiavelli’s thought on women, men and the politics of gender.