

COMMISSION ON THE HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT

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After the regional congress in Lisbon, where the Commission held a symposium attracting numerous participants and high-quality papers, this second part of the programme was dedicated to two events which had already been planned. The challenge was to propose new forms of work. Thus, a specialized workshop on the use of geographical archives was held in Leipzig in January 1999, which provided an opportunity for exploring questions relating to this specialized form of research. Then, in January 2000, a colloquium in Yaounde mixed three different approaches: papers, round-tables, and a workshop-excursion. The colloquium sought to combine the theme of myth in the history of geographic thought with the attempt to adapt the activities of the Commission in an African context.

The preparation for the International Congress in August, 2000, is mobilizing our energies. Numerous initia-

tives have been undertaken. An important pre-congress symposium will take place in Chongju (in Korea), devoted broadly to inter-cultural issues of the Commission. Then, during the Congress itself, the Commission will attempt to evaluate the history of geographical thought by co-sponsoring two joint sessions. The first, which is organized in collaboration with the Study Group on the Cultural Approach in Geography (chaired by Paul Claval) will explore how geography reflects the evolution of culture and how this can help anticipate the future of the discipline. The second, co-sponsored with the Commission on Dynamics of Marginal Regions (chaired by Roser Majoral), seeks to place the notion of marginality itself in a historical and theoretical perspective. Details concerning these three initiatives of the IGU Congress in Korea are provided below.

Parallel to the organization of scientific meetings, the Commission has actively promoted collective publications. Such publications make it possible to disseminate the perspective which the Commission has sought to develop internationally in the course of its 4-year programme. There are good grounds for extending certain aspects of this programme, and it is anticipated that this will be requested during the International Congress.

With my best wishes for the new century!

Vincent Berdoulay

Specialist workshop on «The use of archival material in the history of geographical thought», Leipzig, 15-17 January 1999

A group of about a dozen people met in Leipzig 15-17 January 1999 to discuss the ways in which archival sources had been used in the study of the history of Geographical Thought, and some of the

problems and difficulties that arose in the use of this material. The meeting had been arranged by Ute Wardenga (Institut für Landeskunde, Leipzig), with the assistance of Patrick Armstrong (University of Western Australia).

After welcoming delegates, Patrick launched the programme with a rather pessimistic piece entitled: "The disappearing archives: a view from 'Down Under'" in which he discussed difficulties of access to archives, the deterioration of archive collections, the problems occasioned by frequent government and industrial re-organisation and financial stringency being experienced by bodies responsible for the curation of archives. Although most of his examples were Australian, others mentioned experiencing similar problems elsewhere. Ute then gave a talk on "The significance of archive materials for research in the history of geography". This was followed by a paper by Haim Goren Tel-Hai College, Upper Galilee, beautifully illustrated with extracts from archival materials, on "Archives in the study of the history of the geographical revealing of the Holy Land: problems and prospects". Marie-Claire Robic (Université Paris I) completed the first session with her talk entitled "Comments on French Geographical Archives and on examples of research in this field".

In the afternoon of the first day of the meeting, Ingrid Honsch (Institut für Landeskunde, Leipzig) described and explained some of the treasures from the Archives of the Institute. Delegates were interested to see the wide range of archival material held, including photographs, paintings, diaries and letters from eminent geographers and explorers. Among the items of special interest displayed was a letter from Charles Darwin to Alexander von Humboldt, and manuscript maps prepared by Walter Christaller in developing his central place ideas, as well as Christaller's PhD diploma!

Later Joao Carlos Garcia (Institute of Geography, Oporto) discussed "The Archives of the Portuguese Geographical Institutions and the History of Geographical Thought" and a paper jointly written by Perla B Zusman (University of Buenos Aires) and Héctor Mendoza Vargas (Institute of Geography, Mexico City) considered "New Directions? New Readings in Argentinian and Mexican Geography (18th and 19th centuries)".

On the second day of the meeting, Bruno Schelhaas (Institut für Landeskunde, Leipzig) gave some interesting insights to a very sensitive topic: "Research into the history of GDR geography and archival practice". Sabine Richter (Institute of Geography, Bonn) then spoke on "The Troll Archives", and Astrid Mehmel (also from Institute of Geography, Bonn) gave a paper

entitled "Comments on Archival Research concerning Alfred Philippson" that dealt sensitively with the relationship between the personal experience of her subject and his intellectual development. Patrick Armstrong gave a talk on "Taking the archives to the field" which attempted to show how study of archival sources such as the field notes of geographers, explorers and naturalists could be used to gain insights into the way in which they worked.

The formal part of the workshop was completed with an excursion exploring the City of Leipzig, which examined the complex history of the city - the mediaeval mercantile legacy, the destruction of World War 2, the socialist period, the emergence of capitalism - influenced the distinctive urban form.

The workshop allowed specialists from five continents to discuss common problems, and to become aware of each other's research. All participants appreciated the work of Ute Wardenga, and her Leipzig colleagues in organising the unique meeting.

Patrick Armstrong

Geographers: Biobibliographic Studies

Geographers: Biobibliographic Studies has continued with Patrick Armstrong, of the University of Western Australia as Supervising Editor, and Geoffrey Martin, Emeritus Professor at Southern Connecticut State University, as Associate Editor. Publication of volume 19 was delayed for several months on account of difficulties experienced by the publisher. The firm of Mansell, who have published the series for many years is now in the ownership of The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.

Volume 19, due for publication before the end of 1999 includes essays on Karl Marx, Mary Kingsley, Francis Beaufort, Francisco Diaz Covarrublas, José Gavira Martín, William Dunbar, James Parsons and William Warntz.

Volume 20, also currently in press, similarly includes brief biographical essays on a range of individuals who have made a contribution to geographical thought, with notes on each subject's distinctive contribution. The approach of the editors has been to include essays on those who have influenced the development of the subject, not only those who called themselves geographers. Volume 20, therefore, includes the eighteenth century figures John Adair and John Ogilby, explorer James Cook, early travel writer and naturalist Thomas Pennant, Chinese navigator Zheng He and cartographer Charles-Eugène Perron. Thomas Malthus, author of *Essay on Population*, is also included, as well as figures

closer to the centre of the geographical fold such as Owen Lattimore. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Akira Nakanome represent Japanese thought, and Pedro C. Sánchez Granados that of Mexico.

Each volume thus contains essays on thinkers from many different countries and periods. The editors are always happy to consider well-written and well-researched essays for inclusion in forthcoming volumes. The would be particularly pleased to include studies of geographers from Africa and South America.

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For ordering copies of *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies*, contact : The Continuum International Publishing Group, Wellington House, 125 Strand, London WC2R 0BB. Volumes are sold at the rate of UK £ 45 each.

Colloquium and workshop
«Myth and scientific knowledge in the history of geographical thought»
Yaounde (Cameroon), 12-18 January 2000

The aim of this meeting was to explore to what extent there are relationships of opposition or of complementarity between scientific thought and mythic thought. The idea was to clarify the epistemological issues which are structuring these relationships and particularly to draw attention towards a few themes (the place of mythic thought in the major streams of thought which have concerned geography; the dismissal, or bracketing in, of the importance of myths at the time of the foundation of geography as an academic discipline; the difficulties, and the assertion, of scientific thought in the geographic conceptions of cultures where mythic thought dominates). By combining three operating modes (papers and panels from January 12th to 14th, and field work from January 15th to 17th), and by taking advantage of the context provided by Black Africa, the meeting fully met its objectives.

The scientific responsibility of the meeting was shared by Angelo Turco (Univ. of L'Aquila, Italy) and Athanase Bopda (National Institute of Cartography, Yaounde), the latter also being in charge of local organisation. Over twenty persons, with a strong African representation, participated to the debates which were held on Mount Febe, a place which dominates the city of

Yaounde. Logistical and financial help had been provided by the IUHPS, the IRD (ex-ORSTOM), and the NIC. The debates were anchored on twelve formal papers and on two panels chaired and organised by African colleagues. After the welcome speech read by Paul Moby Etia (director of the NIC) and the introduction provided by V. Berdoulay (chair of the Commission), an extensive lecture which was given by Angelo Turco on myth and geography offered a clear and coherent basis for structuring the reflections for the remainder of the meeting. The paper of Paul Claval (summarised by V. Berdoulay) helpfully complemented this initial framework, especially as it insisted on the presence of myths in societies with ideologies and in the geographies they produce.

The other papers explored various aspects of myth in geographic thought. Marc-Louis Ropivia (Univ. Omar-Bongo, Libreville, Gabon) and Hideki Nozawa (Univ. of Kyu-Shu, Japan) insisted on political geography and geopolitics, as well as on the problem of developing their scientific uses in particular regional contexts. Carlo Cencini (Univ. of Bologna, Italy) completed these considerations on action by talking about the myth of wildlife in Africa, which places conservation between values and interests.

A panel chaired by Paul Moby Etia (NIC) then directed discussions toward the relationships between "mythic thought and scientific rationality". The African experience provided the basis for the discussions. In this respect, Appolinaire Zogning (NIC) showed and commented a very interesting movie, which made explicit the complex relationships weaved between traditional knowledges and scientific knowledges in their approach, understanding, and management of the repeated volcanic eruptions of Mount Cameroon.

An other series of papers then focused on historical examples of the assertion of scientific thought in relationship to myths. Again, Africa provided the major examples. Emanuela Casti (Univ. of Bergamo, Italy) showed the mythologies of Africa in French cartography at the turn of the XIXth century, Isabelle Surun (Univ. Paris I) made explicit the construction and deconstruction of the geographic myth of Tombouctou, and Jean-Yves Puyo (Univ. of Pau) analysed the colonial myth of an inexhaustible equatorial forest from 1890 to 1940. Guy Mercier (Univ. Laval, Canada) turned his attention to the workings of mythic thought at the heart of theory-building in political geography by comparing the contributions of Ratzel and Vidal de la Blache. Then, Danièle Laplace-Treyture (IUFM Aquitania) used her analyses of geography textbooks to further the understanding of the rationalities which are called forth by geographi-

cal knowledges. Finally, Athanase Bopda showed the mythic and epic repositories drawn upon by the contemporary territorial subdivisions which have been constructed in central forested Cameroon; this paper also provided the bases for structuring the issues to be examined during the field trip which was to follow.

In the mean time, a second panel was held on "geography in Black Africa: research, practice, and social relevance". It was chaired by François Kengné Fodouop (Univ. of Yaoundé), and it benefited from a special contribution from Paul N'Diaye (Univ. Cheikh-Anta-Diop, Dakar, Senegal). The panel showed the pertinence of the Commission's activities, as they try to articulate a concern for the universal with the taking into account of particular contexts in the advancement of geographic thought.

A three-day field trip in Western Cameroon (mostly in the lands of the Bamileke and of the Bamoun), coordinated by A. Bopda, made it possible to discuss in depth some of the issues which had been raised during the scientific exchanges in Mount Febe. The rich information which was thus conveyed also contributed to the success of this "first-ever" meeting of the Commission in Black Africa.

Recent publications

• Vincent Berdoulay and Josefina Gómez Mendoza (eds.), *Voyage, circulation et transfert des idées géographiques (XIXe-XXe s.) / Travel, circulation, and transfer of geographical ideas (19th-20th c.) / Viagens, circulação e transferência de ideias geográficas (s. XIX e XX)*, special issue of *Finisterra* (Lisbon), 32 (65), 1998.

ISBN: 0430-5027

[order from : CEG, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Lisboa, Alameda da Universidade, 1600-214 Lisboa Codex, Portugal, ou à ceg@mail.telepac.pt]

• Anne Buttimer, Stanley Brunn & Ute Warden-ga (eds.), *Text and image. Social construction of regional knowledges*, Leipzig, Beitrage zur Regionalen Geographie 49, 1999.

ISBN: 3-86082-033-8

[order from : Institut für Länderkunde, Geographische Zentralbibliothek, Schongauerstr. 9, D-04329 Leipzig]

• Vincent Berdoulay & Olivier Soubeyran (eds.), *Milieu, colonisation et développement durable. Perspectives géographiques sur l'aménagement*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2000.

[order from : L'Harmattan, 5-7 rue de l'Ecole Polytechnique, 75005 Paris, ou 55 rue Saint-Jacques, Montréal (Québec) H2Y 1K9]

Forthcoming meetings

Three meetings are being prepared by the Commission within the general programme of the 29th International Geographical Congress in Korea, August 2000.

Pre-congress symposium of the Commission on "Geographic thought of the East and the West : Living with diversity", Chongju (Korea), August 10-13, 2000 (just before the main sessions of the Congress in Seoul). Scientific organiser Hong-key Yoon (University of Auckland) and local organiser Ryu, Je-Hun (Korea National University of Education).

Statement of interest and any enquiry should be sent to:

Assoc. Prof. Hong-key Yoon, Department of Geography, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland, New-Zealand, tel.: +64-9-373 7599 ext. 8466; fax: +64 9 373 7434; hk.yoon@auckland.ac.nz

Two sessions of a half or full day each within the Scientific Programme of the main Congress in Seoul (August 15-18, 2000):

Joint session with the Study Group on Cultural Approaches in Geography, on "Adapting geography to evolving cultures". Organised by P. Claval and V. Berdoulay.

For information, contact:

V. Berdoulay, Laboratoire SET-CNRS, Domaine universitaire, 64000 Pau, France, Fax: +33 5 59 80 83 39; vincent.berdoulay@univ-pau.fr

Joint session with the Commission Dynamics of Marginal and Critical Regions (chaired by Roser Majoral), on "Approaches to the concept of marginality".

Contributions are invited on (1) the historical and geographical perspective of the notion of marginality, and (2) the idea of marginality in the main geographical approaches.

Statements of interest should be sent to : Vincent Berdoulay, Laboratoire SET-CNRS, Domaine universitaire, 64000 Pau, France, Fax: +33 5 59 80 83 39; vincent.berdoulay@univ-pau.fr