Abstracts

Rebekka Habermas  
The Atakpame Scandal – A Microhistory of the Global

At the turn of the 19th century colonial scandals attracted a great deal of attention: The Reichstag and the medias were full of stories about sexual abuse and colonial officers beating men and even children. The article argues that a close reading of the huge material produced by the medias as well as by the courts can be taken as starting point for a microhistory of the global. The article wants to show that scandals are more than media events, revealing important elements of a given political culture. They can as well be important moments in the history of transfer and entanglement, telling us a lot about colonial imaginations. Furthermore they offer a close look at colonial encounters. And in the end they offer new insights into the microstructures of globalization: A close reading of the debates, the records of interrogation, the Acts of Parliament and even the drafts of new laws, which try to put an end to the scandals, helps to understand how the German public may have shaped politics in Togo – or to put it the other way around: how events in Togo changed politics in Germany.

Martina Fetting  
The Grand Duchess’ Affair and Great Politics. On the Self-Conception of Monarchs in the Second German Empire

The article deals with a marital crisis in the Grand-Ducal house of Oldenburg in the years before World War I that led to extensive media reporting and public debate. It discusses normative ideas and moral conceptions of those directly or indirectly involved in the „scandal“ as well as the Dukes’ ideas of their sovereignty. It is argued that in spite of prevailing popular sentiments in favour of representatives of the monarchy, the emerging mass media required a renegotiation of the boundaries between the public and the private that also challenged the legitimacy and the self-legitimisation of the ruling nobility in the German Empire.

Regina Schulte  
Hegels Marriage in the Mirror of his Bridal Letters

This article analyses letters the philosopher F.W. Hegel wrote to his aristocratic bride before his marriage in the summer of 1810. These letters to the young Marie von Tucher and to close friends – courting her and constructing the positions of the future married couple – are read as an element of a rite of passage in which the meaning of love and marriage is negotiated between romantic love and a philosophy of rights and morals.
Margareth Lanzinger / Raffaella Sarti

How the „Maid of Spinges“ became Katharina Lanz. The Making of a Heroine from the anti-Napoleon Wars

This article focuses on the Mädchen von Spinges, a Tyrolean heroine who, according to tradition, in 1797 fought against the French who were attacking the village where she lived as a farm servant. In fact, her very existence is doubtful, as is her identification (attributed as late as 1870) as a priest’s housekeeper called Katharina Lanz, who was born in a Ladin village and died in 1854. The authors analyze the reasons for her success: the features traditionally attributed to the virgin fitted the gender-roles of the hegemonic Catholic-conservative and patriotic Tyrolean culture; the later identification with a Ladin woman turned out to be useful to the Habsburg interests in the context of the growing national conflicts within the Habsburg Empire.

Monique Scheer

Playful Piety: Somatic Interactions at the Marian Apparitions of Heroldsbach-Thurn 1949/1950

The recurring apparitions of the Virgin Mary experienced by several young girls in the southeast German village of Heroldsbach soon departed from the standard formulas of Lourdes and Fatima. The girls not only saw and heard Mary, but also other divine persons and objects, which they could touch, smell, and taste. The broad spectrum of emotions they displayed in their interactions with these invisible beings were not lost on the crowd of adults observing them. This essay explores this historical material from the perspective of a cultural anthropology of the body, senses, and emotions.

Franka Maubach

Fairy Tale, Play and Role Swapping. Children’s Reaction to the Violence of War (1939–1945)

In the wake of the intense 2003 debate on Germans as the victims of the Second World War, the history of German war children received unparalleled public attention. What is still lacking, though, is a systematic approach, which brings the collected evidence of children’s experiences into a typological order. This articles discusses at first the general question of how children experience history – in contrast to the way adults can be said to respond to and cope with historical events. Secondly, the article points at two „childlike“ ways of seeing the war and reacting to it. It interprets the infantile perception of war-related events as a strategy of applying the world and rules of fairy tales on real-life experiences. Children also reacted actively to acts of politically or racially motivated persecution and war crimes by acting them out, by playing war. A conclusive section discusses the long-term effects of those role-swapping-games after the war.