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THE BEGINNINGS OF
HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS:
HISTORICAL ATLASES IN THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
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ABSTRACT

Historical atlases came into being in the eighteenth century. This article discusses the view of history in these early works, and especially their representation of non-European history. In contrast to historical atlases of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they did not consist primarily of maps that portrayed changing territorial boundaries, but used a variety of different media to give a much more varied picture of history. The traditional Christian view of universal history was reassessed, but the break with tradition did not yet result in a new orthodoxy. Therefore, the representation of non-European history varied: Some authors stuck to a basically unchanged Eurocentric view, others put more emphasis on the history of Asian empires, but African and American history were mostly neglected.

THE BEGINNINGS OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: HISTORICAL ATLASES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Historical consciousness is a difficult notion. In some sense it may be said to have always existed. Historiography, the telling of past events, goes as far back in time as we have written sources and yet, the modern Western notion of history is different. It encompasses much more than just the retelling of our forefathers' deeds and accomplishments. In the nineteenth century, it is often claimed, there arose a new relationship to the past, referred to as 'historicism'. Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) characterized historicism as "the historicization of all our knowledge and experience of the spiritual world".¹ This development was not limited to, but included deeply held values, some of them of ancient heritage. Troeltsch, a theologian who regarded historicism as a specific modern way of thought, feared this would lead to the ultimate destruction of all value systems, because historical scholarship and thinking was inherently relativistic, showing the rise and fall not only of empires, but also of modes of thought, values and ideals.

The development of historicism has often been articulated in terms of professional development within historiography. It typically encompasses different stages, like the rise of critical methods to analyze sources by Italian humanists of the fifteenth century and French Maurists and Jesuits of the seventeenth century, the rise of enlightened historiography with its emphasis on progress and civilization in the eighteenth century, and the founding of the German historicist school by Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) in the nineteenth century.² Interesting as this development may have been, it is only part of what Troeltsch had in mind when he wrote about historicism.³ He argued that historicism represents a wholly modern (and West-

ern) point of view, unlike ancient, medieval or even enlightened ways of viewing the past.⁴ Its defining characteristic was to emphasize change and evolution in history, not to look for the realization of either God's plan, as in older Christian universal history, or human reason, as in enlightenment historiography.

This point needs some clarification, as it is in this broader field of historical consciousness and not in the more narrow and specialized field of historical enquiry where historical atlases are situated. It is important to keep in mind that our modern view of history (or, for that matter, time in general) is not universal. Most historians would argue that it presupposes a break with older traditions and the experience of acceleration, such as Western Europe experienced during the French Revolution of 1789 and the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵ These developments helped to create a sense of distance from the past, which enabled historians (professionals and amateurs) to see the past not only as a precursor to the present, but as something fundamentally different that has to be understood on its own terms. "Every epoch is immediate to God", as Leopold von Ranke famously stated in 1854.⁶ The value of an epoch, according to Ranke, was to be sought not in what it followed, but in itself. He explicitly rejected notions of progress in history, which had featured prominently in enlightenment historiography. For most of human history, this approach to the past was not self-evident. While it would take a complete book or more to cover this issue satisfactorily, one or two examples may suffice here. A completely different view of time can be found in ancient Egypt. There, the view of history was essentially cyclical, combining notions of continuity with those of periodic crises.⁷ There was therefore no radical break with the past and no linear transition from the past to the present and future, but rather a continuous cycle of crises and their overcoming. This view found expression in

the symbol of the Ouroboros, a snake biting its own tail.⁸ Throughout these cycles, however, there was a cultural continuity maintained through language and monuments: “In Egypt, the old remained present; it never became alien in the sense of representing something left definitively behind, something unrecoverable or irretrievable.”⁹

While it may be granted that different cultures had different concepts of time, it is important to recognize that even in Renaissance and Baroque Europe, the view of the past was different from our own. It is striking, for example, how such a comparatively modern thinker as Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) employed historical examples in his writings: in his famous “Prince” (1532), he discussed political strategies of ancient Roman and Greek emperors and statesmen as if they were his contemporaries, completely disregarding the change in circumstances that had occurred in the preceding millennium or so. For example, he made a distinction between kingdoms that are governed by a prince and his servants on the one hand, and kingdoms governed by a prince and hereditary barons on the other. The former, including both the empire of Alexander the Great and the Ottoman Empire of Machiavelli’s own time, were harder to conquer, but easier to keep.¹⁰ For Machiavelli, as for his contemporaries, the present was not different from the past, but simply an extension of it, so lessons from history could be deduced directly.

In a similar vein, in 1529, the German painter Albrecht Altdorfer depicted the warriors in one of Alexander the Great’s battles against the Persians as sixteenth century knights and Turks, respectively. To the modern mind, this looks like an anachronism, but to Altdorfer and his contemporaries, the events of the fourth century B.C. were at once historical and contemporary. It was only 300 years later that observers like Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) could distinguish the painting both from his own time and from antiquity.¹¹ This transformation of historical consciousness, which Reinhart Koselleck called the “temporalization of history,”¹² had several reasons for occurring: the end of millennial ex-

pectations, the rise of modern prognosis and the philosophy of progress. It was especially in the years between 1760 and 1780 that a philosophy of history surfaced, for example in the work of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), which led to the discovery of a specific historical temporality.¹³

This brings us back to the question of when this modern historical consciousness arose. While the experience of the French and Industrial revolutions undoubtedly must have played a role, the intellectual seeds were sown much earlier, even before the mid-eighteenth century. While it is always possible to find even older antecedents, an appropriate starting place could be the time around 1700, incidentally the time the first historical atlas was published. Intellectual historian Peter Hanns Reill diagnosed a “crisis of historical consciousness”¹⁴ for this time, the overcoming of which would ultimately be historicism. At the end of the seventeenth century, the traditional view of history had lost much of its appeal, partly because of the new natural philosophy of the seventeenth century, which is associated with the names of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and René Descartes (1596-1650), which occurred partly because the traditional Christian view was static and could not accommodate the experience of change. Intellectually, it proved barren, because it could not mediate between the most general pattern of history and its specific details and tended therefore to be either an accumulation of countless facts or a sum of most general statements about universal history.¹⁵ Such was the situation when, in the final decades of the seventeenth century, the quarrel between ancients and moderns broke out, sometimes referred to as the “battle of the books”.¹⁶ Although historiography played only a subordinate role in this event, it was to have profound effects on the development of historical consciousness.

Looking at the arguments in this debate from a distance of 300 years, many of them seem astonishingly anachronistic, only corroborating a point made earlier: that modern historical consciousness had not yet evolved. Essentially, the intellectuals who argued in favor of the ancients argued that the famous men (women were only rarely mentioned) of ancient Greece and Rome were

still models to be upheld. In fact, modern men could at best strive to come close to, but never attain their achievements. The “moderns”, on the contrary, argued that modern achievements in the fields of science, technology and the arts had come close to or even surpassed the achievements of the ancients. In both cases, the most common way was a simple diachronic comparison, paralleling achievements of the ancients and moderns in various fields of intellectual pursuit.¹⁷ However, as the debate wore on, some participants and observers realized that this way of comparison was far too simplistic. The French writer Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757), who took the side of the moderns, reflected upon the very division between ancients and moderns: To the Romans, the Greeks were ancient, while they themselves were modern; however, at the time of de Fontenelle’s writing, the Romans were placed with the Greeks in the same category as ancients. De Fontenelle went on to wonder what historians of later times would make of the respective achievements of ancients and moderns, speculating that with the passing of time, his own present would eventually be grouped with the ancients. Moreover, de Fontenelle speculated that what his own time saw as mistakes could in the future be seen as an advantage and vice versa.¹⁸ Here we have a historicist concept in a nutshell, arguing that aesthetic judgments are relative and may change with the passing of time; de Fontenelle, however, did not draw the obvious conclusion that every epoch therefore has to be approached on its own terms, as Ranke did in the nineteenth century.

Fontenelle may have been exceptional, but he was not alone in producing what may be called ‘proto-historicism’. The Dutch classical scholar Jacobus Perizonius (1651-1715) in 1703 defended the style of the ancient Roman historian Quintus Curtius Rufus, on the grounds that every time and every nation has their own style, and one could not legitimately use modern aesthetic criteria for judging ancient historians. In a similar vein, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) argued in 1670, to the dismay of many, that the Bible was written for a primitive people and the moral lessons it contained were therefore by no means universal.¹⁹ The Italian scholar Giambattista Vico (1668-1744)

observed, like Fontenelle, that humans interpret the past in light of the present and that ancient peoples had even resorted to forgery in order to appear older than they actually had been. Focusing on the then fashionable controversy between ancients and moderns concerning Homer, who had been criticized as immoral by the moderns, he argued that Homer’s values were in line with his own time, but not with present values. There is, according to Vico and contrary to the moderns, no reproach to be made, but the famous poet could not, contrary to the ancients, be regarded as a moral guide for the present. With these thoughts, Vico tried to bridge the gap between ancients and moderns, and inadvertently discovered the relativity of values that would later become such a central tenet of historicism.²⁰

This is not to suggest that we should predate historicism by a century or so. Perizonius, Spinoza, Vico and Fontenelle should be regarded as precursors, illustrating what the most intelligent thinkers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were capable of. The historiographical mainstream of the eighteenth century, however, did not follow their lead, but rather remained confined to either the model of Christian universal history or the enlightened idea of linear progress.²¹ Nonetheless, the debates surrounding the famous quarrel between the ancients and moderns may help to explain why historical consciousness became more prominent in the early eighteenth century, a development which led to the publication of the first historical atlas in 1705.²²

Before we turn to this remarkable and often neglected work, we have to answer one question: did historical atlases exist before 1700? When was the first atlas published that we can designate as historical? The answers, according to the literature, differ widely. Some claim that the “Parergon”, published by Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) as an appendix to his “Theatrum Orbis Terrarum” in 1579, has the right to claim precedence²³; others argue that prior to 1800, the historical atlas as we now know it did not exist.²⁴ In a way, both views are correct, depending on what one calls an ‘historical atlas’. The former is based on the definition of an atlas as a collection of maps, such as it

is defined by many encyclopedias today. However, as we will see, an atlas was not always meant to be just that. As for the latter classification, it is certainly correct that the historical atlas gained its current shape more or less around 1800. However, this does not mean that there were no atlases prior to this date.

Instead of proceeding from an arbitrary definition of what an atlas is, it may be more rewarding to enquire what the learned world in earlier centuries thought it was. It is therefore appropriate to start an investigation into historical atlases not with the first collection of historical maps, but rather with the first work that was called an 'historical atlas'. This was the "Atlas Historique", which was published in French by Châtelain in Amsterdam from 1705 onwards.²⁵

The "Atlas Historique" (1705-39)

Judging from its publication history, the atlas was a major success. The first edition was published in seven volumes between 1705 and 1720. Subsequent editions of volumes were published separately throughout the years up to 1739, including a third edition of the first volume in 1721 and a last (fourth) edition in 1739.²⁶ The later editions contained some corrections and new material, but the basic structure of the work remained unchanged. There has been some disagreement about the author (or rather general editor), as his name was not given (or rather, given as Mr. C***). Library catalogues usually give the credit to a man called Henri Abraham Châtelain, about whom not much is known. Modern scholars attribute it rather to the Huguenot publisher Zacharias Châtelain, or prefer to leave the question open.²⁷ The atlas was a collaborative project, however, and involved more than one author. The maps were drawn by the anonymous Mr. C***, whereas the genealogical tables were provided by the well-known scholar Jacob Wilhelm Imhof (1651-1728) and by Ferdinand Ludwig von Bressler und Aschenburg (1681-1722). The texts were written by the colorful French Protestant Nicolas Gueudeville (1652-172?) and, to a lesser degree, Henri Philippe de Limiers (?-1725).²⁸ As becomes obvious from this enumeration, the atlas is not a simple collection of

maps, but rather embodies an approach to history that today would be labeled as multi-media learning. It comprises mainly five different elements: maps, texts ("dissertations"), genealogical tables (often in the form of family trees), images and chronological tables. The combination of these elements varied according to subject, as we will see. All of these different forms of representing history have their own logic and their own history.²⁹ None of them were really new. However, to argue that the Atlas Historique contained little new material is probably unfair. It was not meant to present new information; rather, it wanted to give an easily accessible synoptic view of history. The originality of the atlas lay more in the order and arrangement of material than in any specific form as such.³⁰

To the reader, the difference in tone and style between Gueudeville's dissertations and the rest of the work is easily discernible. As the anonymous editor wrote in the preface to the second edition, he sought to attain truthfulness and impartiality, at least in the maps and chronologies, whereas the dissertations were "from a better quill".³¹ Their author, N. Gueudeville, was a fugitive French monk who had escaped to the Netherlands.³² He made little effort to hide his resentment of both Catholicism, especially as it concerned the power of the Pope and absolute monarchy. When writing about the Roman emperors, he remarked that an honest prince was a wonder of the world.³³ At the beginning of his dissertation about modern Rome, which is essentially a history of the Popes, he assures the reader that he wants to write from a neutral, not a confessional, viewpoint. We will never know if he really had this intention, but he obviously gets carried away during the course of writing and defends himself in the end by admitting that his account was partisan, but claiming he only took the party of reason.³⁴

Looking at the contents, there is a striking incongruity in the Atlas Historique. On the one hand, the opening part of the first volume makes it very clear that the general view of history was in line with the Christian tradition. On the other hand, the organization of content was not consistent with such an approach. The traditional view was based

on an interpretation of the Book of David and essentially regarded history as the succession of four great empires, the last of which would be the Roman Empire. Although this theory had already been rejected by Jean Bodin (1530-96) on empirical grounds, it was still the dominant view around 1700, when historians tried to combine different elements and reconcile them with the four-empires-theory. Different versions of this theory have come forward in the last 1,500 years, but the most influential of these identified the four empires as the Neo-Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman Empires. Alternatively, one could count the Median and Persian empires separately, or argue that the fourth empire was not the Roman, but one of Alexander the Great's successors. Regardless, there remained quite a few big empires, both past and present, which did not fit into the scheme. Bodin mentioned the Ottoman (Turk), Goth, Arab and Tatar empires.³⁵ These were only examples in the familiar space of Europe, West Asia and North Africa. To these, one might have added empires in Eastern Asia or the New World. In the seventeenth century, Chinese history had come to the knowledge of the European learned world, basically through translations from Jesuits.³⁶ This was why the traditional doctrine of four empires looked increasingly old-fashioned to enlightened historians in the eighteenth century, as Johann Christoph Gatterer (1727-99) explained in 1767. He suggested arranging universal history instead according to either nations or epochs.³⁷

Gatterer's own historical accounts adhered to the first principle, which is precisely what we find in the *Atlas Historique*. Each nation was treated individually; sometimes (as in the case of the Romans) a distinction was made between ancient and modern, but on the whole, this was a very modern arrangement, couched in much traditional rhetoric. Volume one contained sections on universal history, ancient Greece, ancient and modern Rome, Naples, France, Spain and the United Provinces of the Netherlands. Volume two to four continued the survey on European history with sections on Germany, Prussia, Hungary, Bohemia (all in volume two), Great Britain, Ireland, Switzerland, Savoy, Lorraine, Venice (volume

three), Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Muscovy and European Turkey (volume four). Volume five shifted the focus to Asia (Assyria, Asia Minor, Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, the Holy Land, Arabia, Persia, Tartary, India, China, Japan, Siam), while volume six treated Africa and the Americas (Egypt, Barbary, Nigritia, Guinea, Ethiopia, Congo, Kaffraria and the Cape of Good Hope, Canada, Louisiana, Virginia, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Brazil, Madagascar, the Philippines, the Antilles and Ceylon). Volume seven was a supplement.

The question remains, however: how much of the material in this atlas is really historical in our modern sense, i.e., dealing with developments of the past? Especially for the non-European countries, large parts were filled with general descriptions of people, their habits and customs, or famous buildings, making the atlas sometimes reminiscent of a travel guide. Nevertheless, it is not true, as some would have it, that it was simply a geographical description of the world.³⁸ In many parts it was a combination of both geography and history. However, the treatment of the individual countries varied. There did not seem to be a general scheme, but rather a loose combination of texts (one or more dissertations), maps, chronologies, genealogical tables and illustrations. To give an example, the section on ancient Rome consisted of (1) a nine-page dissertation; (2) three maps: one of Italy before the Roman conquest, one of the Roman Empire in its greatest extension and one of the city of (ancient) Rome; (3) a chronology of Roman kings, consuls and emperors, giving each name and short remarks about his years of reign; (4) a chart of the Roman emperors with a small portrait of each.³⁹ The series of emperors was continued up to the present, both for the Western Empire and the Eastern, where the Turkish sultans took the place of the emperors from 1453.

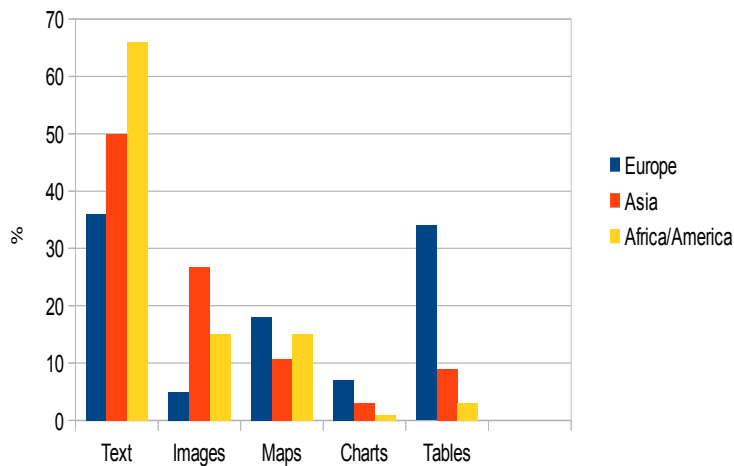


Table 1: “Atlas Historique”: Breakdown of Content.

The breakdown shows that there was a significant amount of text in the Atlas Historique, while maps filled only 10-20 % of its pages. Images were especially important for the volume on Asia, but also the one on Africa and the Americas. Taken together, text and images (excluding maps) comprised ca. 80% of the content of volume five and six. In volume one, they were counterbalanced by the large number of pages devoted to (mostly chronological) tables.

The concept of history that was supposed to underlie all this was made explicit at the start of the atlas. As previously mentioned, the authors remained fully within the boundaries of the traditional doctrine of the four empires. In the preface to volume one, the author emphasized how good it was to live in an enlightened century, where the arts and sciences have come to the throne. The atlas was meant to be a wise guide through history, for the young to learn from and the elder to remember. 41 Through the medium of history, the dissertation on universal history explained, the living strike a deal with the dead: the former receive wisdom and folly, good and bad examples from which they can learn, while the latter receive praise and reprimand. History could be divided into the sacred and profane, with the following chart supposed to be a “passe-partout” 42 for history.

Essentially, the chart portrays two strands of history in the form of a family tree. Note, however, that both these charts have to be read from the top down, i.e., the oldest are at top of the page. The chain of sacred history begins with Adam and Eve and leads via Jesus to the Popes. The chain of profane history visualizes the doctrine of the four empires, beginning with the Assyrian Empire and leading to the Roman Empire

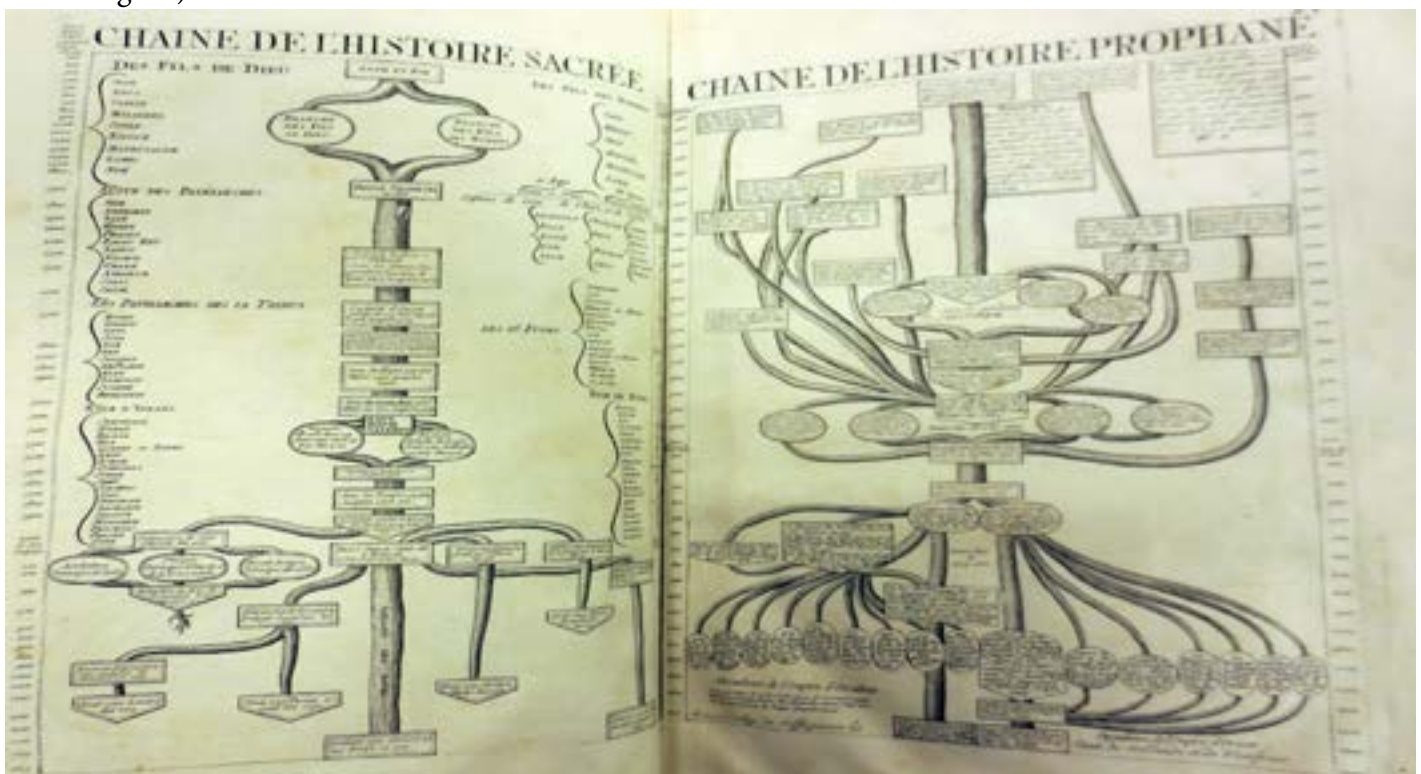


Table 2: The chain of history (from the “Atlas Historique”).

and the states that came into being as a result of its demise. This chart is meant to provide a rough sketch of history, as well as a means for memorizing it.

Universal history was also portrayed in a map called "Plan de l'histoire universelle". It was a map of Europe, Asia and Africa, with a small map insert showing America. It exhibited the boundaries of the Greek and Roman empires. For the other two empires, the information about their extension was not sufficient. The map does not appear very precise, but rather like a rough sketch. The boundaries of the Roman Empire are wrong, comprising Persia and Poland. Below, it contained small images of the Seven Wonders of the World. Around the map tables were placed with information about the four empires and the principal states, both ancient and modern.

The description at the bottom of the map praised Europe's role in the world: even though it was the smallest continent, it was still the most important and not just for its arms, but for other aspects that made people happy. It had a mild climate and the arts and sciences blossomed there, providing all other parts of the world with its new discoveries. This claim provided a legitimation for the concentration on Europe in volumes one to four. There is, however, a certain tension between this Eurocentrism and the doctrine of the four empires, because two of them, the Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian and Persian empires were clearly Asian, whereas the Greek and Roman empires, while they may have had their power bases in Europe, extended over three continents, as the map made clear.

Another part of the section on universal history addressed the problem of chronology. For a number of reasons, this was a difficult problem at the time. The system familiar to most modern readers is to count the years before and after the birth of Jesus Christ (BC and AD). This method was already in use around 1700, but had not been universally established. In historiography, it was more common to count from the beginning, i.e. from Creation onwards. This led to the complicated question of when exactly the earth had been created. Most scholars agreed, on careful exegesis of the Bible, that

it must have been around 4.000 B.C.; however, to establish an exact date was more complicated. The chronology of the Irish Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) was for the most part accepted as orthodoxy. It dated the Creation to the year 4.004 B.C. Still, the dating of the Deluge varied by a large margin, having taken place between 1307 and 2262 years after the Creation.⁴⁵ Another set of problems was the integration of non-European traditions. Both Chinese and Egyptian history seemed to go back before the Deluge or even the Creation, according to indigenous sources. The claim that China had already been populated before the Deluge, however, was too much to swallow for many learned Europeans. Instead, scholars like Georg Horn (1620-70) tried to reconcile Chinese annals with the Biblical tradition by identifying Chinese emperors with persons from the Old Testament (e.g., Fu Hsi as Adam, Yoa as Noah etc.).⁴⁶ As for the Egyptian dynasties that purportedly pre-dated not only the Deluge, but even the Creation itself, Gerardus Vossius (1577-1649) found an elegant solution by claiming that these dynasties had not ruled consecutively, but partly simultaneously.⁴⁷

In the Atlas Historique, chronology was not uniform throughout. In the beginning, universal history was divided into fourteen different epochs, the limits of which were defined by either Biblical events or famous kings.⁴⁸ In modern times, these were wholly European: the last three epochs lasted from the coronation of Charlemagne in 800 to the French King Saint Louis IX (1214-1270), from there to the death of William III of England (1702) and from there to the present. The years in this chronology are counted both from the beginning of the world (dated 4004 B.C.) and before or after the birth of Jesus.

The fourteen epochs, however, did not structure history in the atlas, as each country had its own chronology according to its rulers. In most cases, the years were counted in reference to the birth of Jesus, sometimes in combination with the years of the world (i.e., since the Creation). In the case of ancient Rome, the number of years counted from the founding of Rome was also added.⁴⁹ Here, however, a mistake seems to have been made in

the count of the years of the world, because the founding of Rome, conventionally set at 753 B.C., is dated in the year of the world 3300 and not in 3251, as it should be. In the preface to the second edition, the editor admitted this mistake, but argued that an error of forty years or so was not that much, given the large number of years since the Creation.⁵⁰

The chronological problems presented by Chinese and Egyptian rulers' lists were solved according to the predominant teaching of the time. The (legendary) Chinese Emperor Fu Hsi (Fohi) was identified with Noah and therefore, Chinese chronology did not contradict the Holy Scripture. Yet the chronology dated the beginning of his reign back to 2952 BC, or year of the world 1052, six centuries before the Deluge!⁵¹ As for the Egyptian kings, matters were more complicated. The editor followed the suggestion that in early times, four dynasties ruled simultaneously. Even so, their exact order appeared too uncertain to be included and the chronology started with Alatis (Salitis), who began to rule in the year of the world 1920 (2084 BC). The Egyptian state was founded in 1760, about a century after the Deluge.⁵²

Because most of the chronologies were based on the ruling years of sovereigns (princes, kings, emperors, or Roman consuls), they had a distinctly elitist flavor, and regarded history from a top down perspective. Indeed, as most sovereigns came from noble families, the chronologies combined with the genealogical tables gave history, at least European history, a distinctly dynastic bias. This impression is reinforced by the inclusion of a genealogical table at the very beginning of volume one, showing the royal families of Europe that were related to the ruling French dynasty placed at the center.⁵³ Next to France, it showed the ruling families of Spain, Portugal, England, Denmark, Sweden and Savoy. Other, less important dynasties were placed underneath. The Holy Roman Empire is somewhat hidden in the bottom-left corner.

This dynastic view of history presents a striking contrast to Gueudeville's dissertations, in which he made little effort to conceal his republican sympathies. He criticized the ancient Roman emperors

for trying to erect a universal monarchy, because God did not want humans to live under only one ruler. The right of universal domination, stated Gueudeville, belongs to God alone.⁵⁴ Freedom never flourished as much as it did in the Roman Republic and never was servitude more contemptible than in the Roman Empire.⁵⁵ Lucky was the country where the government regarded its citizens as friends. Only one country came close to this ideal, which was the Netherlands.⁵⁶

Gueudeville certainly was no proto-historicist. He regarded history as a collection of examples, both good and bad and highlighted the learning potential that history held. He did not hesitate to castigate rulers when they failed to live up to his ideals and did not have any qualms about applying the ethical standards of his own time even to ancient rulers. Alexander the Great, the reader was told, was a drunkard, superstitious and probably insane, because he claimed to be Jupiter's son.⁵⁷ In the same vein, he did not have a problem with judging peoples outside of Europe by his own (Christian and republican) standards. Predictably, he showed a lot of respect for Asia as a cradle of great empires and world religions.⁵⁸ He did not exhibit many sympathies for Islam, though. He criticized what he regarded as fanaticism and denounced the miracles of the prophet as big stupidities, nonetheless believed by the majority of humans. Reflecting on the fact that there were many more Muslims in the world than Christians (he claims a ratio of 1,000:1), he concluded one should call the human the credulous animal.⁵⁹ According to Gueudeville, the Ottoman Empire was founded, like many others, on usurpation and injustice and Mehmet II was a "barbarous monster."⁶⁰ The Persian kings were tyrants⁶¹; China, the darling of enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire⁶², was also censured. This formerly wise people, so stated Gueudeville, had given itself to atheism and superstition and had become enemies of reason and horrors of nature.⁶³ He found much common sense, surprisingly perhaps, in the laws of the Tartar Emperor Genghis Khan. He especially praised his religious tolerance and his laws against idleness.⁶⁴

In Africa, Gueudeville reserved his praise for the Egyptians, who were an exception in a continent

whose inhabitants were cruel, wild, deceitful, greedy and rude, amongst other things. The Egyptians were on the whole pleasant and witty, but adhered to religious superstition by adoring turnips and onions. He did not find African kingdoms worth mentioning, except of course Egypt; there were many small rulers, Gueudeville writes, who thought of themselves as great kings, but had neither means nor troops.⁶⁵ The ancient Egyptians were not good warriors either, but they made the arts and sciences flourish. Women were not excluded from government, a rule the author welcomed. However, the modern Egyptians had degenerated, being ignorant, misers, thieves and hypocrites.⁶⁶

As for America, Gueudeville unequivocally condemned the treatment of indigenous peoples by Europeans. Columbus had no right to claim the land for the Spanish crown; God had already given it to its inhabitants. As such, the discovery of America was a disaster for the native population.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Gueudeville did not revive the myth of the noble savage. America's native inhabitants were rather described as wild, aggressive and deceitful. Before the Europeans arrived, the devil ruled undisturbed over America.⁶⁸ The only kingdoms of the continent were Mexico and Peru.⁶⁹ The history of pre-colonial Mexico was ambivalent: the ancient Mexicans ruled with terror over other peoples, but some of their kings were just; and even Moctezuma (Montezuma) II had some good characteristics.⁷⁰ Surprisingly, Gueudeville praised the rule of the Inca: the founder of their religion must have been a Jew, and their laws separated the legislative and judicial powers.⁷¹



Table 3: Map of France (detail, from the “Atlas Historique”).

The maps in the “Atlas Historique” are not always historical in a strict sense. Sometimes they are just simply geographical and political, showing the most important physical features like mountains (in the shape of mole hills) and current political and administrative boundaries. There are maps, however, that give interesting additional information. The map of France is a case in point.⁷² Even if it is not readily apparent, it is an historical map, because it contains a lot of information about historical events. So the places where famous battles took place are marked, as are the birthplaces of famous persons. As the following table demonstrates, this has a rather curious effect: Because the map assembles information from several centuries, and because military events are marked more often than civil ones, nearly all of France looks like a big battlefield.

The maps for other parts of the world contain different types of information. In Africa, for example, it is not the battlegrounds that are marked, but rather the characteristics of the native peoples. The reason for this may be lack of information about historic sites, or the wish to make unfamiliar territory more familiar.

Predictably, this resulted in some stereotypical descriptions, as the following map shows, where the inhabitants of the kingdom of Temian were described as cannibals. Other kingdoms were characterized in terms of natural (including human) resources such as gold, jasper and slaves. The map, therefore, resembles modern economic maps.

Another very interesting map was given in volume 6, concerning America.⁷⁴ It is unusual in that it is centered on the sea rather than on the land. It is titled “South Sea”, even though it contains large parts of the northern seas as well. The continent of America is situated in the middle, with north on top; on the left, the map covers the Pacific Ocean up to East Asia; on the right, the Atlantic Ocean up to Western Europe and Africa. It also contains the main shipping routes of European discoveries. It also features inserted images, such as portraits of the most important discoverers on top of the map, but also scenes from nature (beavers, fishery) and history (the landing of Pizarro). Modern historical atlases, influenced by the “new global history”⁷⁵, pride themselves on putting the connections between the continents at center stage. As this map shows, this is not an invention of the twentieth century. Moreover, it was not the only map to show movement. A map of ancient Greece, for instance, highlighted Alexander the Great’s military campaigns.⁷⁶



Table 4: Map of Barbary, Nigritia and Guinea (detail from the “Atlas Historique”).

As noted above, the atlas also contains images (other than maps). These differ in distribution and content. In volume one, there are hardly any images: they fill only 5% of the pages, compared to 27% in volume five (Asia) and 15% in volume 6 (Africa and America).⁷⁷ Images in volume one are mostly concerned with government, showing either important buildings or constitutional organs such as parliaments or councils, like the French “parlements” or the Roman conclave.⁷⁸ Table 5 is a typical example: the image shows an orderly assembly of men, either standing or sitting, who do not exhibit any recognizable individual features. The prince or king usually stands out through his position in the room or the size of his chair. Sometimes a legend is added to explain the different office-holders. The emphasis is on the rational and orderly procedure of the body.



Table 5: The Conclave (from the “Atlas Historique”).

Contrast with this the illustration of the Ottoman government in volume 5 of the atlas.⁷⁹ It combines four portraits of high officials in ceremonial gear: the sultan, the grand vizier, the head of the janissaries and another officer. The emphasis here is obviously more on those persons who are recognizable and whose names are partly given. At the same time, their habit is exotic, the sultan wearing a turban and

a robe and one of his aides holding a scimitar (Table 6), three emblematic features of Turks in the European imagination.⁸⁰ Turkish rule appears here not only as highly personalized, in contrast to the more procedural, rational European government; the ruling persons appear exotic and alien, adding to the differences between Europe and Asia.

More often, however, the images on of non-European countries were not concerned with government or politics. Most of them were are rather ethnographic and depicted motifs taken from religion, everyday life (food, drink, habit), flora and fauna, etc. Whether this information was really particularly useful to the reader or mainly included for entertainment, is



Table 6: The Sultan (from the “Atlas historiqueHistorique”).

difficult to establish. However, it reinforced the distinction between Europe and the other continents by making the latter appear strange and, exotic, at times maybe even bizarre.

The general thrust of this impressive, if flawed, work, should be clear. The overall view of history was dynastic. The princes or republican rulers made history, at least the so-called profane history. Therefore, genealogies of the ruling families, and chronologies structured according to kings and princes were of prime importance. Even if the volumes treated countries individually, these were not seen as nation-states as they would be in the nineteenth century, but rather as dynastic states. Next to political history, the atlas covered military history and the history of religion. To this, one may add some aspects of cultural history, for example in the description of famous buildings, or of Roman triumphs.⁸¹ In principle, the atlas tried to cover all known regions of the world, and the treatment of non-European history was not different, in principle. However, lack of genuinely historical information made the ethnographic element stronger in the description of other continents, which tended, as in the choice of images, to reinforce existing stereotypes.

The view of history cannot be described as proto-historicist. There was no reflection about the relativity of values, neither toward past societies nor toward non-European peoples. All were judged according to the same, apparently universal, enlightened standards. The Christian view of history, embodied in the doctrine of the four empires, was kept in form only. In practice, the atlas went far beyond the confines of the traditional view, in geography as well as in chronology. It is for this reason that the *Atlas Historique* should be remembered, despite its eclectic and maybe unoriginal content.

The contemporary reviews were divided about the atlas' quality. Some reviewers praised the organization of the material and recommended it as a work of reference. The dissertations of Gueudeville were met with more reservation. A reviewer noted that they were not very instructive and made laugh only those who thought like the author.⁸² As noted above, however, the maps and chronologies did not escape criticism, mostly for their mistakes in detail, so much so that the editor felt obliged to include a lengthy de-

fense of the work in the preface to the second edition. On the other hand, there was enough positive feedback to motivate the editor to continue the work for more than thirty years.⁸³

Johann Georg Hagelgans

Although historical atlases were not as common in the early eighteenth century as they are now, the *Atlas Historique* was not the only one of its kind. In 1718, an "Atlas Historicus" was published by a German theologian, archivist and polymath named Johann Georg Hagelgans (1687-1762). Not much is known about his biography. For most of his adult life, from 1729 to his death, he served the Prince of Nassau (a small principality in south-west Germany) as archivist and Schultheiss (sheriff).⁸⁴ He published many books on a wide range of issues, e.g., questions on theology, universal history, astronomy, politics, a register of universities and also some poems. This does not mean that his areas of interest were separate from one another. He made no effort to conceal his religious convictions, which were probably influenced by Pietism.⁸⁵ In his astronomical writings, he tried to show that Copernicus' system did not contradict the Bible. There, God used the words that humans would understand at the time, so the Bible was not to be taken literally in every respect.⁸⁶ However, he believed in the Christian view of universal history, i.e., in the doctrine of the four empires and the end of the world. In a chronology of the world he published in 1751, he explained that the Bible was to be regarded as the most reliable source for the earliest times. The sometimes conflicting claims of other civilizations (he mentions Egypt, but probably meant China as well) were often contradictory, he claimed and attempts at clarification led from one labyrinth to another. Hagelgans wished to see these chronologies banned to the junk room.⁸⁷ He was certain that the world would last about 7.000 years, in analogy with the seven days of Creation as told in the Book of Genesis, because the number seven embodied the sacred order.⁸⁸ Although he declined to give exact dates for the Creation and the end of the world, he adhered to the then common view that the world must have been created around 4.000 BC. The end of the sixth millennium would see, according to the Book of Revelation, the return of Christ and the beginning of a millennial empire of peace. He expected this to happen in 2034, give or take a few years. ⁸⁹

In general, the Book of Daniel (next to the Book of Revelation) seemed to hold a certain fascination for Hagelgans. He even had himself portrayed as the prophet Daniel on a medal, along with the inscription “amicus dei” (friend of God) and “inimicus mundi” (enemy of the world).⁹⁰ This may be a sign for his Pietist worldview, which involved a certain extramundane orientation. But it may also have had more concrete implications. In his hometown of Idstein, Hagelgans was for years involved in a long and protracted struggle with the local bailiff. The reason seems to have been a disagreement over a maid, but the animosities persisted for more than ten years.⁹¹

Hagelgans gives no information why he chose to publish an historical atlas at this time, other than it should help the memory and the use of historical books.⁹² It consisted of eight large tables, each covering a different period of time. Taken together, they portrayed the complete history from Creation until 1700. The epochs were divided in the following manner: the first lasted from the Creation to the fall of Troy; the second until the destruction of Persian supremacy in Asia; the third, until the birth of Jesus; the fourth, until the division of the Roman empire; the fifth, until the resurrection of the Western Empire (800); the sixth, the following four centuries (until 1200); the seventh, the following three centuries until the discovery of the new world; the eighth, the last two centuries, which Hagelgans considered modern history. In a later edition, a table for the time up to 1750 was added.⁹³

Two aspects of this periodization are worth mentioning. First, Hagelgans obviously combines elements of sacred history (Creation, birth of Jesus Christ) with others taken from profane history, especially the four empires. Up to the resurrection of the Western Empire with Charlemagne, he remained well within the traditional Christian view of history. However – and this is the second remarkable aspect – after this the periodization becomes surprisingly secular, oriented towards centuries rather than key events, with the notable exception of the age of discovery. There is a certain tension here: Hagelgans, with his intimate knowledge of the Book of Daniel, wants to structure history according to the prophet’s vision, but he fails to produce a convincing periodization on these terms for the Middle Ages and the modern period.

This tension between writing truly universal history and remaining within tradition can also be seen in geographical terms. His tables are structured in a simple way: the lines mark the years (or rather centuries) and the columns the countries. While the order of the columns follows a certain scheme, their number is not fixed, but varies according to period. The tables proceed from Western Europe on the left, starting with Portugal and Spain, eastward, covering central, northern and Eastern Europe, West Asia, Persia, India, China and Africa. Later, from the ninth century onward, American history is portrayed as well. The resulting numerous boxes are filled with names and dates, but above all with pictures and symbols. In his map key, Hagelgans uses no less than seventy-seven symbols, denoting either rulers (kings, emperors, etc.), events (conquests, plagues, earthquakes), or kinship. As if this was not confusing enough, the tables are illustrated with miniature pictures of important events, mostly wars and battles. Another distinction is introduced according to the degree of certainty. The symbols are drawn in contours if the event is only legendary, in hatching if it is in doubt and in full if it is true. An impression of the result can be gained from Table 7, showing history from the Creation to the fall of Troy.

As for chronology, the tables denoted time according to different systems that were current at the time, among them Greek (years before the first Olympic Games in 776 BC), Roman (from the foundation of Rome in 753 BC), the Julian Period counting 7980 years and often used in astronomy, before and after the birth of Christ and different versions of the years since Creation.⁹⁴ Hagelgans did not take a definite position on when the world was created; rather, he informed the reader of the different theories of his time, giving the dates as 3949, 3947, or 4004 BC. The problems with Egyptian chronology, mentioned above, were completely ignored. The pharaohs were first mentioned after 1950 BC. For the ancient Chinese rulers, he employed a different solution. He marked Emperor Fohi as predating the Deluge (dated at 2292 BC). In contrast to the *Atlas Historique*, he was not the same person as Noah, but rather a legendary figure, as can be seen in Table 7. By banning the earliest Chinese rulers into the realm of myth, Hagelgans could leave his Christian chronology intact.

Of course, the Biblical figures like Adam, Eve, Noah and others were portrayed as historical, not legendary.

Hagelgans thought his atlas was self-explanatory 95, but this is only the case if the reader is very familiar with history. An example from Chinese history may suffice. Table 8 shows the story of King Wu Yi (WuYi, Vu-Je) of the Shang (Yin) Dynasty in twelfth century BC, who, according to Chinese historian Sima Qian, challenged the gods by playing chess with an idol and ridiculing the gods for losing, as well as shooting a leather bag full of blood and calling it shooting at heaven. Appropriately, he died after being struck by lightning.96 Hagelgans depicts all the vital ingredients of the story: a chessboard, a dripping leather bag, a person lying dead, the lightning. However, it is impossible to assemble them into a coherent story unless one has heard of it beforehand.

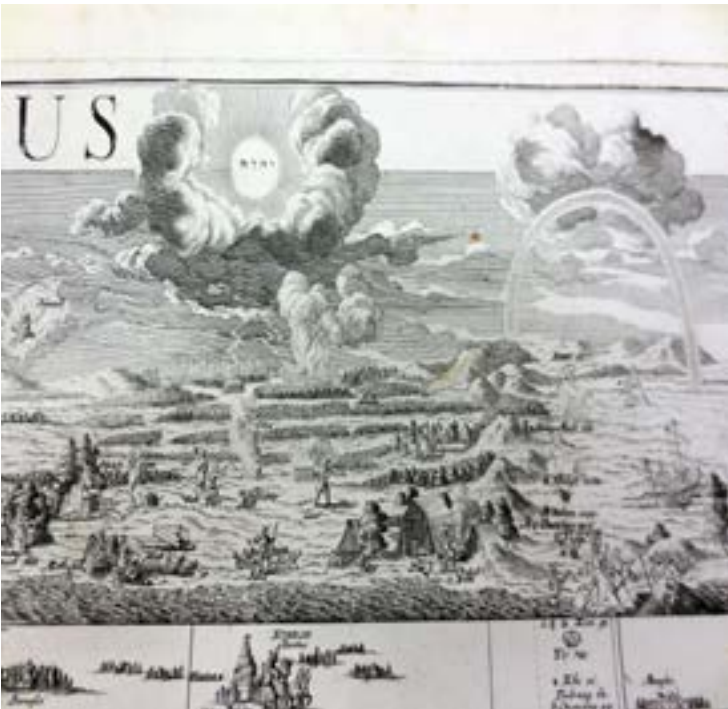


Table 7: Johann Georg Hagelgans, Atlas Historicus, Table 1 (detail).



Table 8: Johann Georg Hagelgans, Atlas Historicus, Table 1 (detail).

As its author explained, the atlas concentrated on political history.97 The history of arts, sciences and churches were to be dealt with in a separate publication, which was never published. Therefore, much of its space is filled with kings, armies, battles, military expeditions, etc. A critic has remarked that all the people (Germany, Romans, Indians, etc.) look the same, rendering the atlas in fact ill-suited at representing historical variety.98 However, this is not the case, as Table 9 makes clear. It shows the violent confrontation between the Saracen and Byzantine troops during the reign of Justinian II. Even though their scimitars are missing, the Saracens are clearly recognizable as different from the Christian soldiers by their turbans and robes. Likewise, the Native Americans were portrayed as semi-naked with a loincloth and, though not always, a warbonnet.



Table 9: Johann Georg Hagelgans, Atlas Historicus, Table 5 (detail)

It is not quite correct to say that only political and military history was portrayed. Rather – in contrast to its author’s statement – the atlas covered catastrophes like earthquakes, famous buildings (the Temple of Salomon, the castle of Versailles), or sometimes the arts and sciences (the invention of movable type printing by Gutenberg, or the geodesic mission by the Paris Academy of Sciences). However, it is true that these were not the most prominent features; they were exceptions rather than the rule.

To most events, only small space was devoted; but some were portrayed in a different fashion, for example by inserting a larger picture or a map. These would often dominate visually on a given table. It is interesting to note which elements of history Hagelgans chose to highlight. They are nearly always events relating to European or West-Asian history. In ancient history, these are mostly taken from Greek, Roman and Biblical histories, such as the fall of Troy, the building of the Temple of Salomon, the birth of Christ, Roman triumphs, etc.⁹⁹ Especially prominent are pictures of animals that illustrate the vision of Daniel. Each of the four animals was supposed to represent one empire.¹⁰⁰ The birth of Christ, interestingly, is combined with the caption “Regnum meum non est mundanum” (my kingdom is not of this world). In the Middle Ages, there are more portrayals of persons and events relating to Asia, such as Attila, Tamerlan or Mohammed.¹⁰¹ Scenes from

the life of the Prophet are depicted, such as the Hijra, or Mohammed designating Ali as his successor; however these scenes resemble secular events and have in no way the same religious pathos as the birth of Christ (Table 10).



Table 10: The birth of Jesus Christ (from Johann Georg Hagelgans, Atlas Historicus, Table 4)

For the modern times, the relative absence of larger images is striking. Table 8 shows Habsburg Emperor Joseph and the Ottoman Wars, as well as the fall of the Ming Dynasty in China. In Table 9, the Reformation Jubilee of 1719 gets special attention, making Hagelgans’ confessional allegiance very clear.

Maps exist both as inserts in the tables and as separate sheets. Of the first variety, a simple map of the hemispheres is remarkable because it shows the spread of the human population over the world. According to the Book of Genesis, all humans can be traced back to one of Noah's sons: Ham (or Cham), Sem and Japhet. There had long been a tradition in European thought that identified the descendants of Ham (Hamites) with Africans, the Semites with Asians and the descendants of Japhet with Europeans. After the discovery of America and the Native Americans, the scheme had to be modified. The Spanish scholar Benedictus Arias Montanus (1527-98) suggested the latter were descendants of Sem, identifying some unspecified mountains mentioned in the Bible with the Andes.¹⁰² Hagelgans, however, did not concur. Unfortunately, he gave no explanation for why he thought that Northern Americans were descendants of Japhet and therefore of Europeans, whereas Southern Americans are descendants of Ham in the East, and of Sem in the West. Maybe geographical proximity played a role, but this does not explain why he did not think that North American settlers came from East Asia (as indeed they did, according to modern theories).¹⁰³ In his famous history of the Indies, the Spanish scholar Jose de Acosta (1540-1600) had suggested that North America had been populated via a landbridge either in the North or the South of the Continent.¹⁰⁴ Another option would have been to postulate the existence of Pre-Adamites, i.e., of humans who had already existed before the Creation of Adam. The French scholar Isaac de la Peyrère (1596-1676) had argued this point in 1655, but it was refused by orthodox Christians as contradicting the Biblical account.¹⁰⁵

Apart from the inserts, the atlas included four maps of Europe: one showing Europe in antiquity before the rise of the Roman Empire, one covering the period from Augustus to Charlemagne, one showing the Barbarian invasions and one for the time after Charlemagne. For the most part, the maps are not noteworthy. They contain no color and the boundaries are marked only with thin lines. It can be assumed that their primary function was to indicate the geographical locations of certain places and countries. However, the map showing the Barbarian invasions (or "migrationes gentium") has been praised as the first attempt to show dynamic processes on an histor-

ical map.¹⁰⁶ It shows movements of peoples over a period of 2,500 years, from Greek colonization to the Mongol invasions of the later Middle Ages, with dotted lines and arrows (Table 11). However, it should be noted that this was not as original as it may seem. The Atlas Historique, as we have seen, also included maps with lines showing movements.



Table 11: Migration of Peoples (Johann Georg Hagelgans, Atlas Historicus, Map 3, detail).

The maps underline the general impression that Hagelgans' atlas, despite its vast scope, was still Eurocentric. This was largely due to his adherence to the doctrine of the four empires, which led him to emphasize the history of Europe and West Asia. There was a certain tension between his traditional Christian chronology and his geographically universal reach, because even the non-European parts of the world that were treated in greater detail, such as China, followed the chronological structure derived from elsewhere. Within these limits, however, it is noteworthy that the reader learned more about some parts of the world than others. For example, Chinese history was fairly well represented, but the history of India was not covered as well. In Table 4, from 0 to

ca. 400 AD, there is not a single entry in the Indian column.”¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, the history of Native Americans was better represented than one might have expected. It started long before Columbus with the Tepaneca, around 900 AD.¹⁰⁸ This was roughly in line with José de Acosta’s (1540-1600) account, which dated the arrival of the Nahuatlaca, of which the Tepaneca formed a part, in Mexico at 902 AD. As first people he mentions the allegedly primitive Chichimeca, which Hagelgans did not include.¹⁰⁹ As for Africa, there is a lot more information about the northern part, especially Egypt, than about Southern Africa.

The tables, Hagelgans’ principal medium, do not lend themselves easily to the demonstration of global connections. That they were nonetheless important to the author becomes clear when looking at the Middle Ages, where not only Marco Polo’s famous trip to China is represented, but also the legendary voyage of the Welsh prince Madoc to America in the twelfth century.¹¹⁰ Again, the lack of explanation is to be regretted, because it is possible that Hagelgans’ belief in the Madoc myth led to his depiction of North America as settled by the descendants of Japhet (Europeans). In short, the myth states that a Welsh colony was established in North America and some “white” Native Americans (the Mandans) survived until the time of Columbus. Modern scholarship has shown that there is no evidence of a Welsh medieval prince who travelled to America; even a prince named Madoc could not be verified. Even though a folk legend had probably existed earlier, the story was largely fabricated by English scholars of the late sixteenth century who wanted to add some legitimacy to Britain’s challenge of the Spanish colonial empire.¹¹¹

As Hagelgans’ atlas was focused on tables rather than maps (with the exceptions mentioned), it was difficult to present the voyages of exploration by Columbus or Vasco da Gama, because the location of departure was in a different and not even neighboring column from the location of arrival.¹¹² As such, he chose to represent both the departure of the explorers in the European columns and their arrival in the respective overseas columns. That meant, of course, that the voyage itself was not represented and the reader had to jump from one column to the other to get the full story.

Hagelgans’ atlas has to be seen as part of a broader tradition. The table is a form of representation that goes back to ancient Mesopotamia and Greece, and as a form of historical representation it found its classical form with church father Eusebius (260/65-339/40) in the fourth century AD, with the arrangement of kingdoms in columns and years in lines.¹¹³ However, it acquired central importance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the age of rationalism, when, as Michel Foucault puts it, “the episteme of Western culture had opened up an area to form a table over which it wandered endlessly, from the calculable forms of order to the analysis of the most complex representations”.¹¹⁴

Especially the eighteenth century has been described as the heyday of tables.¹¹⁵ For historical scholarship, tables were supposed to provide diffuse historical knowledge with rational integrity.¹¹⁶ Most tabulated histories by European scholars in the eighteenth century included sections on China and India, but not on other parts of the world outside the traditional classical theater of Europa, West Asia and North Africa. The reason for this neglect is that only the East Asian cultures were considered to be on equal footing with European civilization.¹¹⁷ Hagelgans goes one step further by including pre-Columbian American history. This appears very modern. On the other hand, what is true for the tabulated historical works of the early modern period in general is also true for the “Atlas Historicus”: the plurality of history is subject to an authoritative order, in this case the order of Christian universal history.¹¹⁸

Johann Matthias Hase (Hasius)

The relative popularity of historical atlases is continued in mid-century (1750) by the German mathematician Johann Matthias Hase (1684 -1742). The atlas was published posthumously and it is unclear if he ever intended to publish it in this form. It was his publishing house (Homann in Nuremberg) that arranged previous works of Hase and edited them under the title of “Atlas Historicus”.¹¹⁹ Hase had earned himself a reputation in cartography and his maps are today still seen as a milestone, or even a paradigm shift, in historical cartography.¹²⁰

Hase was born in 1684 in Augsburg, Germany, as the son of a mathematics teacher.¹²¹ He studied theology and mathematics at the universities of Leipzig and Helmstedt. Afterwards, he worked as a teacher, until he became a professor of mathematics in Wittenberg in 1720. He was interested in cartographical projections, about which he published a book in 1717.¹²² His mathematical Ph.D. thesis, however, was devoted to the megaphone.¹²³ Later, he published both maps and books on history and geography, parts of which were later included in his atlas. His theological education may have helped him with his work on ancient geography.¹²⁴ In 1742, he published an outline of a history of big empires¹²⁵, which he could not elaborate on further due to his death. As a mapmaker, he worked with the cartographic publisher Homann in Nuremberg and drew maps of regions near and far, including Swabia, Silesia, Russia and Africa.

The historical atlas of 1750 comprehended six earlier works by Hase:¹²⁶ first, a universal history of monarchies in tables; second, a chronology in tables; third, nine tables with twenty-eight maps of the biggest empires; fourth, seven maps on the Roman-German Empire at different periods; fifth, six maps of the Holy Land; sixth, eight tables with plans of large cities in world history, including some famous monuments. This is obviously a rather erratic collection, assembled

by the publisher from the material at hand.

Therefore, one should not jump to conclusions about Hase's view of history. Given the content, it seems as if Hase emphasized political history, especially imperial history, at the expense of all others. However, he was well aware that this formed only part of broader history.

The first part of the atlas contained three introductory sections covering definitions, terminology and the divisions of history. Here, Hase upheld the traditional distinction between political (or civil) and ecclesiastical history, to which he added the categories of private and literary history. Political history was further subdivided into universal and particular. Universal political history contained Hase's favorite subject, the big empires, but also "sacred political" history (that is the history told in the Old Testament, from the Creation to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans) and the history of kingdoms and republics (see Table 12). As such, the history of empires is only one part of universal history among others. Of itself, it no longer held any privileged position as it used to in the doctrine of the four empires.

Additionally, Hase modified the traditional arrangement of empires somewhat. In his tabulated universal history, he distinguished between six mostly ancient and eight mostly recent major empires. In the first

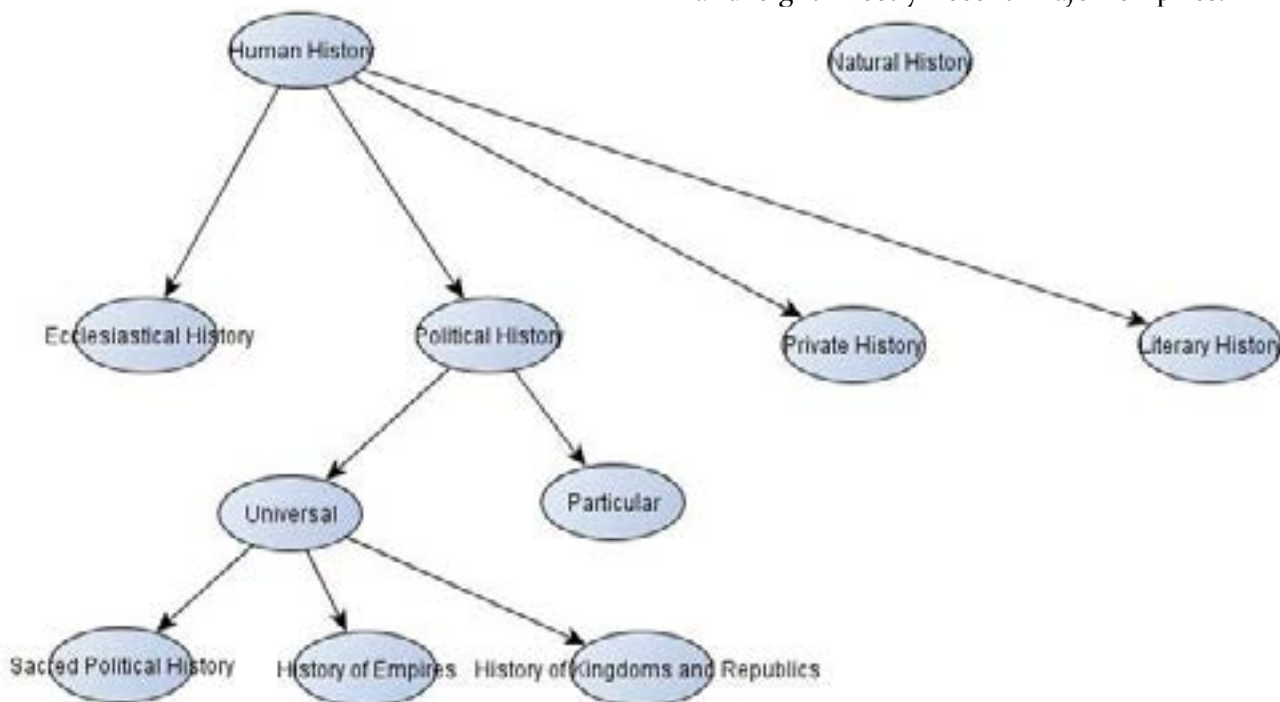


Table 12: Classification of history according to J.M. Hase. 127

group, the reader finds the familiar four empires: the Assyrian-Chaldean, the Persian, the Greek and the Roman; however, in contrast to other authors, Hase grouped the Median Empire with the Assyrian empire. Furthermore, two empires were added: in the beginning, the Egyptian Empire and in the end, the Frankish-Roman-German Empire.¹²⁸ The enumeration ended with Emperor Charles VI (1685-1740). The last one may be regarded as a continuation of the Roman Empire (although, interestingly, Hase did not seem to think so) and therefore its inclusion did not represent a decisive break with tradition; the inclusion of the Egyptians, however, seems more of an innovation.

He then proceeded to list eight mostly recent empires:¹²⁹ first, the Partian-Persian Empire; second, the Arab-Saracen Empire; third, the Tartar and Mongol empires; fourth, the Timurid or later Mongol Empire, including the Mughal Empire of India; fifth, the Ottoman Empire; sixth, the Russian Empire, which started with Peter I. (1672-1725); seventh, the Chinese Empire, which Hase dated back to the Qin dynasty. He mentioned the legendary King Fohi as well, but as an elected king rather than an emperor.¹³⁰ Eighth, several African empires: the Almoravid, the Nigrite (Songhai), and the West African Sharif empires. In general, for each empire, only the most important rulers were given, and the names of attached kingdoms added.

There were some inconsistencies in Hase's enumeration of empires. First, the dividing line between the first and the second group was not made clear. While he maintained that the first group was mostly ancient, and the other mostly recent, there were exceptions, and time in general did not seem to be the defining criterion. Otherwise, the Parthian-Persian empire would have to be included in the first group. Rather, it looked like the first group was seen as the more important group of empires. Second, it is unclear why a distinction was made between the early and the late Mongol Empire. The Persian Empire was mentioned twice, as well. Third, the African empires were not a single empire, but three, though they were counted only as one.

Hase does not explain how he arrived at the number of fourteen empires. However, he distanced himself

from the traditional doctrine of the four empires with a rather curious remark that he disliked the common opinion of four empires, but reserved to speak about the reason in oral communication.¹³¹ After his death, his publisher tried to defend him by pointing out that he was not the first to rearrange the traditional order, and that he did not intend to deny the doctrine of the four empires, but only sought to explain it in a different way. That he found more than four empires had to do, the argument went on, with his knowledge of oriental history.¹³² This rather feeble attempt at apology showed that it was still considered dangerous to diverge from the traditional canon in the mid-eighteenth century.

The number of fourteen empires was not written in stone, even for Hase himself. In a later work, posthumously published in 1750 and concerning his maps of the great empires, he counted only twelve empires. The difference lay in the treatment of the Tatar-Mongol Empire(s), which were counted as one and not as two and the neglect of the Chinese Empire.¹³³ To illustrate his universal history of great empires, Hase had drawn thirty-two maps, only twenty-eight of which were included in the atlas. They basically followed the structure of the twelve (or fourteen) empires outlined above, but did not include maps of the African and Chinese empires.¹³⁴ The representation of the remaining eleven empires was unequal. While a certain bias towards the Roman Empire (three maps) and the Frankish-Roman-German Empire (five maps) may not be surprising, the Asian monarchies were also well represented: five maps on the Arab-Saracen Empires, and three on the Ottoman and Tatar-Mongol Empires, respectively. In geographical terms, while many empires obviously contained parts of different continents, there clearly was a certain Eurasian bias. The native African empires were missing and America was not represented at all. In terms of epochs, ten of the twenty-eight imperial maps were devoted to antiquity, twelve to the Middle Ages and six to the modern period. ¹³⁵

The style of Hase's imperial maps can be seen from Table 13. The maps are very detailed, but the most striking feature is the use of color. Hase always presented the empire in full color and the neighboring states in outline colors. This, he explained, was supposed to show the size ratio.¹³⁶ Sometimes the empire is not shown in a uniform color, but its different



Table 13: Johann Matthias Hase, the Russian Empire under Peter I (1689-1725).

parts have different colors. The physical geography (rivers, mountains, etc.) is also shown, but it takes a closer look to identify particular features, because the colors and therefore the political geography, are dominant.

The series of twenty-eight small maps on the universal history of empires was completed with seven larger maps on the history of the Frankish-German Empire from Charlemagne to Charles VI. Although the maps partly covered different periods from those of the smaller maps, a certain degree of redundancy was inevitable. As a result we find here another map of Charlemagne's empire and another map of the empire at the time of Charles VI. Five of these seven maps covered the medieval period.¹³⁷ He included the kingdom of Poland in the medieval empire of the thirteenth century, which historical atlases nowadays no longer do. The problem, of course, is that the relations of the kingdom of Poland and the Holy Roman

Empire in the Middle Ages are far from clear. In general, scholars emphasize that medieval kings ruled over people rather than territory and that the exact boundaries of entities such as the kingdom of Poland were fluid and hard to determine.¹³⁸

Another problem was a certain anachronism in these maps. For economic reasons, the maps of one empire were all printed from the same plate and the colors were added later. That meant, however, that the names of rivers, mountains, towns and cities were always the same, which made cities appear on the map at a time before their foundation (e.g., Alexandria before Alexander, or Berlin at the time of Charlemagne). It is interesting to note that Hase was aware of this anachronism and apologized to his readers for it. ¹³⁹ This is proof of a growing historical consciousness that tried to understand the past on its own terms.

As noted above, Hase's imperial maps have been called a paradigm shift in historical cartography.¹⁴⁰ They went beyond the maps of ancient and sacred geography that had dominated historical cartography since

Abraham Ortelius (1527-98). They included most of Asia and were more precise than older maps about the time span they purported to cover. They were also more precise in a topographical sense, because Hase, as a mathematician, took great pains to ensure the accuracy of his maps. Most importantly, the maps employed color to mark territorial changes of political entities and (though not always) were arranged in a chronological sequence, so the reader could follow political-territorial history by simply turning the page. These maps look very modern indeed, much more so than the ones in Hagelgans' or Châtelain's atlases. This is due to the fact that the use of maps became predominant in the nineteenth century and is still very common in historical atlases today. Hase was a pioneer in this respect, but his inclusion of Poland in the Holy Roman Empire also shows the dangers of this approach. The political allegiances in medieval Europe, let alone other parts of the world, were often complex. The drawing of clear boundaries on maps may suggest more coherence of an empire, or a state, than there really was.

Yet, it would be wrong to conclude that Hase's atlas was the first truly modern historical atlas. It included, as we have seen, elements that were typical of the eighteenth century, like tables. Even his maps were not all like the imperial maps discussed above. Of his six maps of the Holy Land, three showed territorial boundaries, the first under David and Salomon (tenth century BC), the second at the time of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties (around 300 BC) and the third at the time of Herodes (37-4 BC). More interestingly, however, are his three other maps, which show the near East and West Asia from Asia Minor to the Indus, respectively. There he added distances between cities and towns, derived from ancient itineraries.¹⁴¹ Originally, Hase had combined these maps with tables giving the longitudes and latitudes of ancient cities and the distances between them.¹⁴² In the atlas, the latter were not included.

Although these maps themselves did not show movements, they could help to understand geographical movements in ancient times. This type of map was very rare in Hase's time, as it still is today.

As mentioned, the atlas contained not only maps, but also tables. The tables that present an outline of

the universal history of empires have already been discussed. They were joined by chronological tables, which had been taken from the same work, first published in 1743.¹⁴³ For Hase, as for many of his contemporaries, the discoveries of ancient Chinese and Egyptian chronologies presented a serious problem, for they seemed to contradict the Biblical stories of Creation and Deluge. Like Hagelgans, Hase admitted that he found the Bible more trustworthy than the heathens' accounts, which, in contrast to Hagelgans, he did not discard. He regarded the first Egyptian dynasty (the dynasty of Gods) as mythical, because it would go back to a time before Creation. Apart from this, however, the Egyptian chronology could be brought into accord with the Biblical account.¹⁴⁴ To this end, Hase had to pre-date Creation somewhat, because according to the widely accepted account by Ussher, the first historical Egyptian king, Menes, would have ruled before the Deluge and according to Joseph Justus Scaliger's (1540-1609) account, he would have been contemporaneous. Therefore, Hase chose to follow a different version of the Bible, namely the Samaritan Pentateuch and arrived at the year 4651 BC as the beginning of the world. He dated the Deluge to 2995 BC and Fohi, who was not identical with Noah, as ruling more than a hundred years later. As for the pharaohs, even the dynasty of Gods could be accommodated by this time frame, should it really have existed.¹⁴⁵

The chronology covered in sixteen tables the time from the beginning of the world to Hase's time. It is arranged in the familiar Eusebian format with years in lines and kingdoms or regions in columns. The countries covered varied according to period, but in general, the European and Asian empires were well represented. America was completely missing. Even the European kingdoms outside the (Holy) Roman Empire were not represented. There is no column for Spain or Portugal and the discoveries of Columbus and others were not even mentioned. The African empires (other than Egypt) were also missing. In terms of content, most entries comprised rulers, dynasties, or wars, so the chronology was skewed towards political history. However, in some tables there was a column for miscellanies, which provided space for cultural history, such as, for example, famous poets.¹⁴⁶

The last part of Hase's atlas was devoted to a comparison of ancient and modern cities. Here, Hase placed himself in the tradition of comparative ancient and modern geography, a genre that flourished in the eighteenth century following the quarrel of the ancients and moderns.¹⁴⁷ On eight tables, Hase showed twenty-three city maps at a uniform scale.¹⁴⁸ Twelve of these cities were in Asia, ten in Europe (including Constantinople) and only one in America (Lima). The European city maps contain considerably more detail. The maps of Asian cities were often very sketchy. However, Hase wanted to show the relative proportions of cities and not the details. In his opinion, ancient Babylon was still the largest city of all time, even if its size had been overestimated by ancient historians.¹⁴⁹ On one page, he compared Palimbothra (today Patna), Mespila (Mosul), Paris and ancient Syracuse. No explanation was given for this arrangement.

To his city maps, Hase added drawings of famous buildings or monuments, such as the Tower of Babel. On one table, there is another interesting intercultural comparison, not of cities, but of pyramids. Hase contrasts Egyptian pyramids with their Mexican (Maya) and Scythian counterparts, both in size and in geometrical shape.¹⁵⁰ However, all of them are dwarfed by the ancient monument of Ninive (Table 14).

This was probably the famous tomb of Ninus, which was allegedly built by Semiramis. The Greek writer Xenophon (fifth and fourth century BC) claimed to have seen a big pyramid adjacent to the city, but did not identify the building, nor did he compare it to the Egyptian pyramids. Diodorus Siculus (first century BC) told the story of a large mound that Semiramis erected in Ninive to commemorate her deceased husband Ninus, but did not give any information about its shape.¹⁵¹ Regardless, in his comparison of cities, Hase obviously sided with the ancients. To him, Babylon was the biggest city ever and Ninive possessed the largest pyramid. However, it is not quite clear what conclusions he drew from this. In his chronology, he rejected the Biblical account of the four empires and his imperial maps showed more medieval than ancient empires. As such, Hase's atlas combined traditional and modern elements. It has to be kept in mind, however, that he probably never intended to publish the atlas in this form, and therefore any interpretation of its composition is risky. Hase was well aware, for instance, that the history of empires was only a part of universal history. Likewise, his atlas did not, unlike nineteenth century historical atlases, consist of only maps, but rather followed the tradition of combining various elements such as tables, maps and images. What defines his approach was his mathematical rigor and his Asia-centric view of history. Certainly, his emphasis on empires goes some way toward explaining his preference for Asian history, for many empires in history were Asian or Eurasian. However, there is still a curious neglect of Africa, the Americas and even some European empires, such as the Spanish and Portuguese.

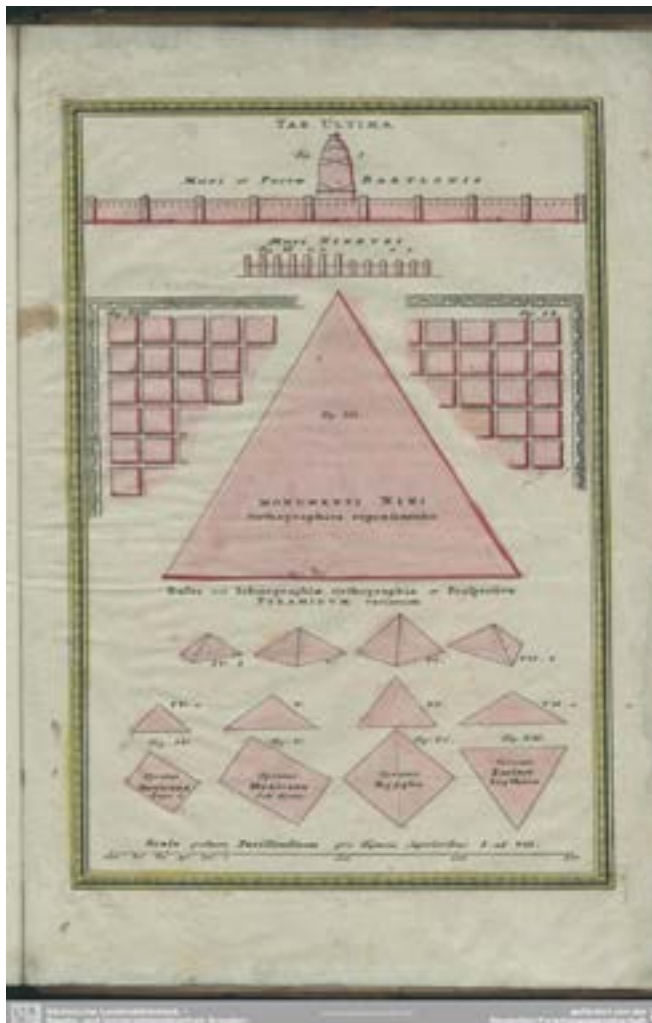


Table 14: Johann Matthias Hase, Comparison of the biggest cities.

We do not know much about the reception of Hase's atlas. Apparently, it was well received after publication, a review praising the amount of knowledge gathered in the book.¹⁵² Even though it is hard to find in libraries nowadays, the publisher kept it in

stock until at least 1814, when a map of Napoleon's empire in 1813 was added.¹⁵³

Marcellinus Reischl

The longevity of Hase's atlas may be due to the absence of any better alternative. The second half of the eighteenth century was not a good time for the production of historical atlases, it seems, though it is not clear why. To be fair, in 1758 another "Atlas Historicus" was published in Augsburg, Germany. Its author was a Benedictine monk of the Bavarian monastery of Ettal named Marcellinus Reischl (1697-1763). He published quite a few books from the 1730s through the 1750s, partly religious pamphlets, introductory works to mathematics and physics, and Aristotelian philosophy. His "Atlas Historicus" was written in Latin and contained only text, apart from two tables illustrating genealogy and heraldry. Basically, it was a traditional account of the four empires and Genesis, dating the Creation at 4000 or 4004 BC.¹⁵⁴ The preface emphasized the glory of God's wisdom, which the reader could learn from history.¹⁵⁵ The use of history existed in the moral and intellectual lessons one could draw from, and in the defense of the true Catholic faith.¹⁵⁶ The first part of the atlas introduced several auxiliary sciences, among them geography, chronology, genealogy, and heraldry. The second part gave an account of history from the Creation to the present. The periodization was taken from the Bible, but after the birth of Christ it was structured in centuries. The chronological problem of how to fit in ancient Chinese history was completely ignored; as for Egypt, their first king (Apis) was dated at four centuries after the Deluge.¹⁵⁷ America was populated by the descendants of Noah, either through a land bridge or by sea.¹⁵⁸ However, as the account was based on the theory of the four empires, it was heavily skewed towards events connected to the Roman Empire or later, the Roman-German Empire, and the history of the Catholic Church. Even events in the history of West Asia, such as the rise of Islam, the Ottoman Empire, etc., were mentioned only in passing. The same is true for the voyages of discovery in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹⁵⁹

Johann Christoph Gatterer

While Reischl's atlas was one of the last examples of traditional Christian universal history, Johann Chris-

toph Gatterer (1727-1799) belonged to the intellectual movement we call enlightenment. The son of an illiterate non-commissioned officer, Gatterer studied first theology, then languages, philosophy and mathematics at the University of Altdorf (Germany).¹⁶⁰ Later, he worked as a teacher. His academic reputation was established through a genealogical work that was published in 1755.¹⁶¹ In 1759, he became professor of history in Göttingen, where he remained for the rest of his life. Today, he is considered one of the founding fathers of history as an academic discipline.¹⁶² He founded an historical institute in Göttingen in 1766 and worked as editor of two historical journals. His own fields of specialization were the auxiliary sciences on the one hand and universal history on the other.

Gatterer elaborated on his view of universal history in an extended essay published in 1767.¹⁶³ There, he criticized the separation of the history of religion, arts, sciences and nature from the history of nations and states. If the former were treated separately, the latter would consist only of a chronological register of princes with a description of battles and wars. In contrast, universal history worthy of the name should comprise all times, all countries and all noteworthy facts. Such a history, he admitted, had not been written yet.¹⁶⁴ Contemporary textbooks were tasteless, he opined, because they limited themselves to memorizing facts. As for the structure of universal history, he regarded following the four empires through time as too old-fashioned. There were only two possible solutions: either a structure according to epochs or one according to nations. Both options presented problems, so Gatterer resolved to structure his universal histories according to nations to avoid cutting history into small incoherent parts; he also made the decision to add synchronic tables. To him, the representation of synchronicity in history was the biggest problem for the universal historian.¹⁶⁵

Of course, one could not present the history of all nations in a single work, so the easiest solution was to structure the account according to the ruling nations in a particular time, of which there were no more than eight in history: the Assyrian-Median, Persian, Greek, Roman, Parthian-Persian, Frankish-German, Arab and Tatar (Mongol) "nations". There are obvious parallels both to the traditional doctrine

of the four empires, which Gatterer refused and to Hase's enumeration of empires. As for the former, Gatterer made a distinction between the Persian and the Parthian-Persian empires, as well as between the Roman and Frankish-German empires. In addition, he added the Arab and Mongol empires to the list, as Hase had done before him. The latter, as we have seen, counted even more empires that did not seem important enough for Gatterer to be classified as ruling nations, namely the Egyptian, Ottoman, Russian, Chinese and Nigrite empires. Indeed, Gatterer's neglect of East Asian, African and American history is striking. African, American, Japanese and Indian history were to be treated only in the context of Columbus and the age of discovery, whereas China was dealt with in the context of the Barbarous invasions, which he believed were caused by China's destruction of the Huns' Asian empire.¹⁶⁶

Gatterer wrote several works on universal history and was not always consistent in the treatment of non-European history. In his "Handbuch der Universalgeschichte" (1761/64) he ignored ancient Chinese history, treating modern Chinese history extensively, because only then China was becoming important to Europe.¹⁶⁷ In his "Versuch einer allgemeinen Weltgeschichte" (1792) he divided history into three big periods of 1.800 years each: the age of Adam and Noah, the Assyrian-Persian age and the Macedonian-Roman age.¹⁶⁸ During the latter, he identified periods in which non-European peoples played a prominent role, such as the Roman-Parthian-Chinese epoch from 146 BC to 226 AD, or the Roman-Slavonic-Arab epoch from 622 to 1037 AD. Like his predecessors, he included both the Creation (dated at 3984 BC) and the Deluge in his account.¹⁶⁹

Gatterer produced an historical atlas about which our knowledge is limited, because it is lost.¹⁷⁰ It consisted, apparently, of a number of maps he used for his lectures. He never published the atlas in printed form, only giving out copies to his students, which is why the atlas has been lost. Indeed, there has been disagreement about its very existence.¹⁷¹ What is usually regarded as Gatterer's atlas is a series of twenty-four maps covering the Eastern hemisphere (Europe, Asia, Africa) from 93 BC to 1513 AD in clearly defined intervals. The maps were all made from the same plate, so they differed only in color. They were

meant to cover the history of peoples' migrations, but they in fact do more than that. They could probably pass for an atlas of medieval history, but this term was not as common in the eighteenth century as it is today.¹⁷²

The maps were seen as an important improvement compared to (for example) Hase's maps, especially in terms of Asian history. However, Christian Kruse (1753-1827), who published an historical atlas of Europe, wrote in a review that he would not call this series of maps an historical atlas and neither did Gatterer.¹⁷³ The latter had too much knowledge to limit himself in such a way and he regarded, according to Kruse, the maps as no more than an unfinished attempt. This may be true, especially when one considers Gatterer's work on geography, in which he did not talk of an atlas, yet provided an overview of the map series.¹⁷⁴ The twenty-four maps were not the complete series; they were to be joined by seven maps of ancient empires and one of modern history in a single world map. Judging from Gatterer's description, his aim was rather to show, similar to Hase, the great empires in history rather than peoples' migrations in a narrow sense. In the map of modern history, he wanted to show the empires of Great Britain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, France, Denmark, the Ottoman Empire, Russia (the biggest empire), Austria, Prussia, China (the second biggest empire), the Moghul Empire, Persia, Morocco, Congo, Muttapa, and Abyssinia.

Gatterer was not only one of the founding fathers of modern historiography, he was also a meticulous researcher. This is evident in his maps. For example, he published an entire monograph on a map of Thrace at the time of Herodotus and Thucydides, in which he explained in great detail what features he included and why.¹⁷⁵ His attention was not limited to political boundaries, but also to natural features like mountains. One can assume that he dedicated the same effort to his maps included in the "atlas". But Kruse found many faults in his review, concentrating on a map of the eleventh and twelfth century. Apart from a lack of detail, the essential problem was that the maps purported to show the territorial boundaries in the Eastern hemisphere over a time span of fifty or even a hundred years, which is difficult if not impossible, because the boundaries were hardly ever static

for such a long period of time.¹⁷⁶ As such, Kruse criticized Gatterer's map for not showing the correct boundaries for a single year in the time span given. The kingdom of Jerusalem never had the extension ascribed to it in Gatterer's maps, and in this vein, the critique goes on over eleven pages.¹⁷⁷ The map in question is shown in Table 15. It shows a number of political entities marked in color, although

As in Hase's atlas, the example shows the problem of depicting territorial boundaries on a map that would become even more acute in the nineteenth century. As for Gatterer, we still do not know if he ever regarded his map series as an atlas or as a precursor to one. Today, it is normal to refer to a collection of maps as an 'atlas', but at the time, this was not the case. The idea seems to have been similar to Hase's:

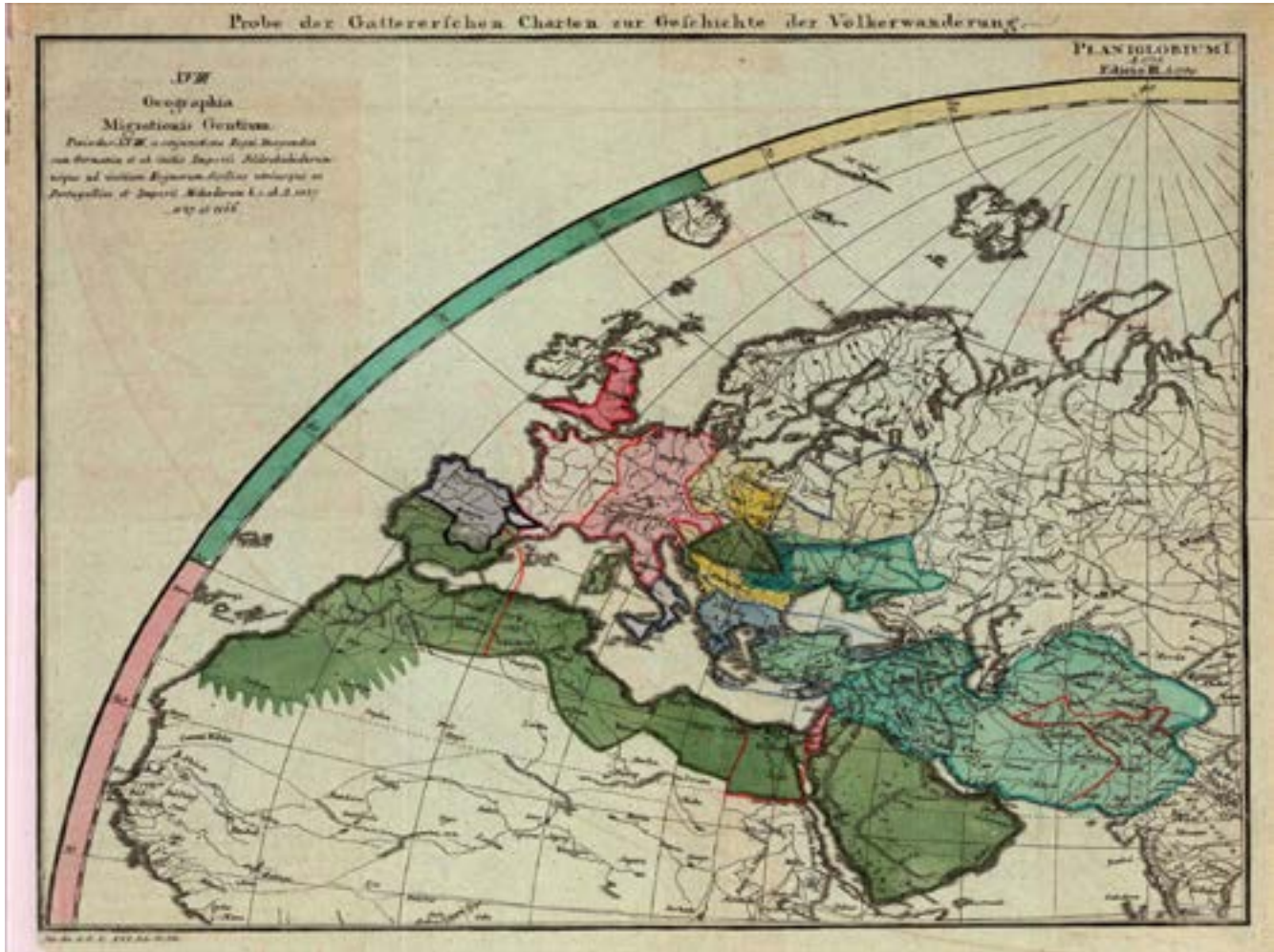


Table 15: Johann Christoph Gatterer, The geography of peoples' migrations, 1037-1127/1146.

not all the states are colored, but only the ones Gatterer thought important for the particular period. A change of boundaries is marked by superimposing a red line over the color, as in the case of the Seljuq and Ghasnavid empires. The style is rather crude, given the scale of the map, although an attempt is made to show the uncertain nature of boundaries in the case of the southern boundary of the North African part of the Seljuq empire which appears frayed on the map.

to show the extension of the biggest empires in history, but Gatterer was not consistent over time in his choice of empires. His "atlas" included rather more empires than his written works, for example the African empires. It seems he did not plan to include pre-Columbian empires in America and in ancient history he neglected China and Egypt, whereas for the Middle Ages he noticeably concentrated on Asian history; as such, the charge of Eurocentrism would be hard to sustain. Given that all twenty-four maps on medieval history were made from the same plate, one can see that his main interest was in the empires of West Asia, Europe and North Africa. Not only the Americas are missing, but the map ends with India

(only partly shown) in the East and the tenth degree of northern latitude in the south, showing North Africa and the Arab peninsula.

Emmanuel Comte de Las Cases

Emmanuel de Las Cases (1766-1842), a French nobleman, is today better known through his memories of his stay with Napoleon in St. Helena than through his historical atlas. In his own time, however, his atlas was very popular and a commercial success. Las Cases came from a family of the lesser nobility in Languedoc (southern France) that was not wealthy.¹⁷⁸ His father was an army officer who had been wounded in one of the numerous French wars and received a small pension. As befitted his status, Emmanuel first attended a military school and then went on to the navy as a garde-marine, presumably planning a career as a navy officer, despite his sea-sickness. His prospects seemed promising, especially after he had managed to be received by the king in 1790, already in the midst of the French Revolution, which he regarded with hostility.¹⁷⁹ In 1791, he decided to emigrate first to Germany and later to London. As a staunch royalist, he even participated in several ill-fated military expeditions by French émigrés against his revolutionary fatherland. He returned to France in 1802, but converted to Bonapartism only later, in 1804/05, after being taken in by the glory of Napoleon's victories.¹⁸⁰ He became chamberlain under Napoleon and accompanied him when he was sent to St. Helena in 1815. Las Cases published his memories of the time with the former emperor in the 1820s, which made him famous.

He took to writing when he was an émigré, partly out of financial necessity, similar to Nicholas Gueudeville a hundred years earlier. The atlas was such a success that he became financially independent in the early 1800s.¹⁸¹ The knowledge that went into the atlas must have been self-taught to a large degree, for his education was not very good, as Las Cases himself confessed later. When he took to teaching as an émigré in London, he learned in the morning what he was to teach in the evening.¹⁸² Another factor that influenced his writing was sheer boredom. He began studying German history while he was on the Isle of Wight while waiting to embark to France in 1794/95 to take part in the émigrés' failed invasion at Quiberon.¹⁸³

It is not clear when exactly Las Cases decided to publish an atlas, but the work on important parts of it started fairly early. He first began studying genealogy when the nobility came under attack during the French Revolution.¹⁸⁴ At the time, he was still a monarchist and his work was an attempt to prove the legitimacy of the nobility's privileges. He published his table on the "Geography of History" which would later become an important part of the atlas in London in 1797, under the pseudonym "Lesage". Apparently this work was well received; however, several members of the Lesage family protested against the abuse of their name.¹⁸⁵ He seriously started working on the atlas in 1798 and the first edition was published in English in 1801. After his return to France, he prepared an enlarged French version, which was published in 1804 and then went through many different editions. Color was introduced in 1806.¹⁸⁶ The atlas remained successful until at least mid-century and was translated into Russian (1812), German (1825), Spanish (1826) and Italian (1826). The last edition that could be found was a Belgian edition of 1853.¹⁸⁷

The atlas was aimed at an intermediate level between that of school textbooks and scholarly literature, according to a guide to the atlas published in 1800.¹⁸⁸ The first were deemed too arid, the latter too detailed and voluminous. The general idea was to facilitate the private study of history by applying the methods of geography, especially in the form of visualization. The student should first become acquainted with a general outline of history before getting into the details of a particular time or place.¹⁸⁹ The result of this approach were what Las Cases called either "Historical Maps" or the "Geography of History". These are quite unlike what we would call maps today. They are rather tables that represent broad swathes of history; in fact, two tables suffice for Las Cases to show an outline of universal history: one for ancient, the other for modern history, the dividing date being the birth of Jesus.¹⁹⁰ The third table of the atlas, titled "Geography of History", was similar to the table on modern history, but comprised only the first millennium AD and provided more detail (Table 16).

The rest of the atlas was filled with genealogical tables and maps of individual countries or regions. In the French edition of 1807, these were ancient Greece

and Rome, the Barbarian invasions, France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Denmark, Russia, Sweden, Asia, America and Africa. In addition, a world map illustrated the age of discovery.¹⁹¹ The relationship between tables and maps was about equal in the atlas. The 1807 edition contained sixteen tables and thirteen maps; the enlarged edition of 1827 contained eighteen tables and twenty-two maps.¹⁹² The maps were always supplemented by a significant amount of text outside and sometimes even inside of it.

The key to history, the author explained, was to be found in the first two tables on ancient and modern history. In fact, these tables, together with the mentioned table on the “Geography of History”, summed up Las Cases’ view of history and may be summarized by the following observations. First, the chronology Las Cases used was wholly conventional. His table on ancient history started with the Creation in 4004 BC and for the earliest times he followed the outline of the Old Testament. He did not see any contradiction between modern science and the Biblical account, claiming that with the progress of science, the truth of the Scripture became ever more apparent.¹⁹³ In fact, the sciences of history, astronomy, physics, and geol-

ogy all claimed at first that the earth had to be millions of years old, but as they progressed, it became apparent that this had been a miscalculation. For instance, it had been shown that the ancient Egyptian dynasties had ruled simultaneously, and not consecutively. Chinese ancient history did not go back beyond 800 BC, and Indian history was even younger. The early history of Egypt was shrouded in obscurity, but Las Cases mentioned Menes as first king, 115 years after the Deluge. He included the four empires (Assyrian, Persian, Greek, and Roman) in his table, which were also marked by different colors. He divided history after the Deluge into three distinct phases, the first of which was called the era of uncertainty (ca. 2300-1800 BC), the second the era of heroes and myths (ca. 1800-800 BC) and the third the beginning of history proper (800-0 BC). The geographical scope of his table on ancient history was in fact limited to the classical space of Europe, West Asia, and North Africa (Egypt). Apart from a short discussion about the beginnings of history, he did not mention ancient Chinese or Indian or American history.

The table on modern history was even more Eurocentric. In fact, it concentrated exclusively on this continent at the expense of others, except for the East



Roman and Ottoman empires. The time was divided into centuries, each of which was given short characterization, such as “religious troubles” (sixteenth century) or the age of Louis XIV (seventeenth century). The center of the table was occupied by the Roman Empire and its successor states, marked in different colors. The Roman Empire and later the Roman-German Empire were colored green, while the empire of Charlemagne had the same color as the kingdom of France, namely yellow. Thus, while the Roman-German Empire appeared correctly as successor to the ancient Roman Empire, the empire of Charlemagne was excluded from this line of succession, and turned into a

predecessor of the kingdom of France. The

Table 16: Emmanuel de Las Cases, The Geography of History

Ottoman Empire was not portrayed as a successor of the East Roman Empire, however, but marked in a different color (red). The table on the “Geography of History” gave more details on European history, but was not fundamentally different from the table on modern history. It focused on European history since the tenth century, providing a column for every major European nation (including Russia), but none for other parts of the world. It was not arranged in a strictly geographical manner, but began with Great Britain and France on the left, continued with Burgundy, Germany, Italy, and Spain, and finished with Greece, Russia, Denmark, and Sweden. While there seemed to be a certain east-west orientation, the inclusion of Spain between Italy and Greece made sense only in political terms, because of the links between the two countries. Again, the columns were marked with different colors (Table 16).

For the period 1000-1200 AD, the Roman-German Empire (green, left hand side) dominated, but then slowly dissolved into smaller kingdoms and states. The expansion of France in the modern period, however, was not marked, only the fusion of England and Scotland. As a result, the reader gets the impression that the dominant process of this time was the dissolution of the Roman-German Empire. The content of the tables was mostly filled with kings, princes, and battles, but there were also special columns devoted to famous men (writers, scientists, generals), to the history of the fine arts and sciences, and to ecclesiastical history.

The genealogical tables in the atlas were kept in a similar style. They did not come in the form of family trees, but looked little different from the “Geography of History”. Columns were marked with different colors, and sometimes (as in the genealogical table of France) linked with bold lines. They were limited to European dynasties. Considerable space was given to French and German ruling families (such as Habsburg, Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, Nassau, Brunswick), whereas Russia, Denmark, and Sweden were treated in a summary together on one page. There were no genealogical tables of non-European dynasties.

The genealogical part of Las Cases’ atlas was the part criticized most often, but not for the neglect of Chi-

nese or Egyptian ruling families. Rather, a rival author in the field, Nicolas Viton de Saint-Allais (1773-1842), wrote negative reviews as early as 1810 and 1811, indicating numerous errors.¹⁹⁴ For example, he disapproved of Las Cases’ decision to include only the inheriting children of each family. As a result, his genealogies did not include non-inheriting children and childless women. A German journal remarked, in a review of Viton’s work about the sovereign families of Europe, that the latter had never been considered an authority on genealogy, at least in Germany.¹⁹⁵

The same could be said about Las Cases concerning cartography. His maps were rather crude, and unlike later (and some earlier) authors, he did not attempt to show historical changes through series of maps. Rather, he included only one or two maps on each country (in Europe) or region (in the wider world). The design of the maps was simple. They included physical features such as mountain ranges, but these appeared crude and inaccurate. Colors were used to mark separate political or geographical entities, sometimes continents, sometimes empires, countries, or provinces. Colored lines were used to mark either boundaries or movements, such as Hannibal’s campaign on the map of ancient Rome.¹⁹⁶ Many maps were not strictly historical, but showed the administrative structure of a given country. As in the case of the British Isles or Italy, they were made historical only by the addition of information about campaigns and battles.¹⁹⁷ Two maps were presented for France, one showing its provinces, marked with colored boundaries, physical features such as rivers and mountains, and battle sites. The other was more historical, as it tried to depict the growth of the French state throughout the centuries. The different provinces were marked with different colors, not according to the date of their acquisition, but the manner in which this was achieved (violence, marriage, inheritance, or revolution).¹⁹⁸ This was an interesting attempt at showing the growth of a country, but its drawback was that it is very difficult to get a clear picture of how big France was at any given point in time during the interval (from Hugh Capet in the tenth century to the treaty of Lunéville in 1801).

The maps of the non-European world were even less detailed. The atlas devoted one double-page to each continent (Asia, Africa, the Americas), containing both a map and some text. Later, a map of Australia

(without text) was added.¹⁹⁹ The maps intended to show the present political and physical state of the respective continent. They were not what we would call 'historical maps'. However, the map of Asia showed the boundaries of historical empires, such as the Tatar empires of Genghis Khan and Tamerlan.²⁰⁰ The text, correspondingly, gave information about these empires, as well as the Persian Empire of Nader Shah and European settlements in India. Chinese history was all but neglected, even though the author considered the Chinese and East Asians in general active and intelligent people, in contrast to the Indians, whom he regarded as indolent and servile.²⁰¹

On the map of Africa, the colored lines did not show ancient empires, but rather European voyages of exploration. In fact, Las Cases did not think much of Africa in general, or African history in particular. Africa was the most regrettable continent, the text explained; not one of the present peoples deserved attention. As for African history, he claimed that there was no knowledge of either great events or great men.²⁰² This is curious, because the "Atlas Historique" published a hundred years earlier by Châtelain had provided a lot more information on Africa. Not even Egypt and the pharaohs were given any special mention, rendering African history completely reduced to the history of its exploration by Europeans.

The map of North and South America was held in a similar style. Except for rivers, mountains and political boundaries, it showed the voyage of Columbus, the campaigns of Cortes and Pizarro, and, in a later edition, the Lewis and Clark expedition.²⁰³ In the accompanying text, pre-Columbian history was again ignored, and American history was reduced to four events: the discovery by Columbus; the conquest of Mexico by Cortes; the conquest of Peru by Pizarro; the War of Independence of the United States.²⁰⁴ While Las Cases admired Columbus, he was more ambivalent toward Cortes and Pizarro. He recognized their military achievements, but criticized their cruelty and avarice. He considered both the Aztec and the Inca rich, powerful and civilized peoples.

One of the most interesting maps in the atlas was titled "Historical Map of the World" ("Mappemonde Historique") and showed the world in two hemispheres with America on the right, and Europe, Asia, and Af-

rica on the left.²⁰⁵ The continents were marked with different colors. A large amount of text was included on the map, partly geographic in nature, partly ethnographic. Thus, each continent was characterized with respect to race, dietary habits and religion. The reader learned, for instance, that Europeans were nearly all white, ate bread and practiced Christian religions. A lot of significant amount of information about wind and ocean currents was given on the map, which may have been helpful in understanding its main subject, namely the voyages of discovery since the fifteenth century. The text gave an overview of the main voyages, structured according to geographical direction as seen from Europe. As such, the discoveries appeared as a joint effort by Europeans. The map noted for many parts of the world when and by whom they had been discovered. Obviously, this was a Eurocentric view in so far as the whole process of discovery was told only from a European perspective, neglecting voyages of Arab and Chinese explorers in the Indian Sea. On the other hand, a modern view was also presented here: the history of the world as the history of contacts between different continents. From a cartographical viewpoint, it is remarkable that Las Cases did not draw lines on this map to mark the routes of travel, as he and others did elsewhere, but preferred to mark the discovered objects. In this map, Las Cases' combination of geography and history was finally put to use. In contrast, even in today's historical atlases, information on winds and currents, so crucial to overseas travel, is mostly absent.

The success of this atlas has been referred to as mysterious.²⁰⁶ Indeed, as the preface to the German edition of 1825 explained, the work received significant praise and criticism in the two decades after its first publication.²⁰⁷ The criticism, as in the case of Las Cases' genealogical tables discussed above, seems to have come primarily from learned readers. Its defenders argued, however, that the atlas was not aimed at a learned audience.²⁰⁸ The lay audience must have liked the simplicity of the presentation and the lack of detail most academic readers abhorred. The drawback, of course, was its wholly conventional view of history. In practically all respects, the atlas belonged to the eighteenth and not the nineteenth century. Its view of history was strikingly similar to the one found in Châtelain's "Atlas Historique" in the early 1700s. If anything, Las Cases was even more Eurocentric than

his famous predecessor. He was also one of the last, if not the last, to pinpoint the Creation date to 4004 BC as a starting point. As we will see, later authors simply avoided the question by neglecting the question of the beginning of the world altogether. Further, although Las Cases was undoubtedly influenced by the Enlightenment, his view of history was also very traditional, as his emphasis on genealogies, wars and battles makes clear. It was still an aristocratic view of history that emphasized the achievements of great men like generals and princes. In this respect, the works of Gatterer and Hase indeed appeared more modern, in the sense that they came closer to what an historical atlas in the nineteenth century, and large parts of the twentieth century, would look like.

Conclusion

The example of the “Atlas Lesage” by Emmanuel de Las Cases shows that, despite their differences, there are enough commonalities among eighteenth-century historical atlases for them to be regarded as a unity. For one thing, they employed a variety of media instead of only, or predominantly maps. An exception would be Reischl’s atlas, which used only text, and Gatterer’s, which contained only maps. However, as shown above, Gatterer did not consider his collection of maps an atlas. The media used varied widely, from plain text to tables, from genealogical trees to copper-graved images. This variety of media corresponded to a more open view of what constitutes history. Enlightenment historians, from Voltaire to Gatterer, criticized the predominant focus on political and military history, and proposed the inclusion of customs, arts and sciences, and the economy.

Not all eighteenth-century atlases lived up to this ideal, but even those that did not often did acknowledge that they covered only part of (universal) history.²⁰⁹ The variety of subjects was impressive indeed: urban history (Hase), cultural history (Châtelain), ecclesiastical history, history of technology, etc. Yet political history still dominated most accounts, especially in the case of big empires (Hase, Gatterer), wars and battles (Hagelgans) or lists of rulers (Châtelain, Las Cases). Especially the latter two endorsed a view of history that can be called dynastic, i.e., history was made by great rulers and their families. This version of political history should be distinguished from the

nineteenth-century focus on the nation state and its borders, even though there is some overlap in the emphasis on military history.

What can also be seen from the development of historical atlases is both the demise and the tenacity of the traditional Christian view of history. Only one of the eighteenth-century atlases (Reischl) fully subscribed to it, while the others were more ambivalent. None of them completely renounced it, however. There was a distinctive tendency to assign more credibility to the Old Testament than to other sources of ancient history. As such, it remained customary to choose the Creation as a starting point, and to date it at ca. 4000 BC. Even Gatterer, who was highly critical of the traditional view, did not depart from this custom. In contrast, the doctrine of the four empires came under closer scrutiny or was outright rejected (Gatterer). However, no new canon was formed. More empires, especially the Asian ones in the Middle Ages and modern time, were included (Hase, Gatterer), but no new orthodoxy emerged. Each author chose his own succession of empires, and inconsistencies could even be found in the work of a single author.

The reassessment of the traditional view was in large parts inspired by the discovery of non-European history. The atlases differed widely in how they met this new challenge to integrate the history of East Asian, African and American peoples. No atlas went so far as to place them on equal footing with European (and West Asian) history, not even the ancient civilizations like China or Egypt. On the other hand, no atlas, except again Reischl’s, dared to ignore them completely. Two atlases (Gatterer’s and Hase’s) treated Asian history (especially the empires) in detail, but did not seem to care about African or American history. The “Atlas Historique” by Châtelain probably had the most complete coverage, yet it showed a tendency to underline the exotic and the otherness of other parts of the world. Still, it indicates that it was not a lack of knowledge that caused most authors to disregard native African or American history. The remaining two atlases (Hagelgans’ and Las Cases’) tried to add non-European historical facts to an otherwise unchanged Eurocentric account. The different solutions employed in the atlases betray a fundamental uncertainty in terms of how to come to terms with non-European pasts. A convincing answer was hard to

find, as the absence of a new canon shows. Las Cases' Eurocentric account was popular in the early nineteenth century, but it did not provide a blueprint for later works of the genre.

The time of Las Cases' success, it has to be reminded, coincided with the rise of historicism, especially in Germany. This is certainly more a coincidence than the result of a cause-effect relationship, simply because Las Cases was no historicist. In fact, most authors subscribed to the "pragmatic" view of history, i.e., that one could and should learn from history. Yet a growing sense of historicity or historical correctness can be seen in the works of Hase and Gatterer, who were well aware of the problem of anachronisms on historical maps, maybe more so than Las Cases. Nonetheless, there was no reflection on the relativity of values caused either by growing historicism or the encounter with other cultures. Rather, each author clung tenaciously to his value system, be it more traditional Christian, enlightened, or a mixture of both.

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31. *Atlas Historique*, vol. 1 (1721), preface.
32. See Rosenberg, *Gueudeville*, pp. 3-10, for a short biographical overview.
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88. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
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168. Johann Christoph Gatterer, *Versuch einer allgemeinen Weltgeschichte bis zur Entdeckung Amerikens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1792).

169. Pigulla, China, p. 103f.

170. Goffart, "Plot," p. 214; Gierl, *Geschichte*, pp. 237-244.

171. Goffart, "Plot," p. 215.

172. Ibid., p. 220.

173. Christian Kruse, "Probe der Gattererschen Charten zur Geschichte der Völkerwanderung," *Allgemeine Geographische Ephemeriden* 16 (1805), no. 4: 377-399, 381f.; likewise, the announcement of Gatterer's maps in the journal of his institute does not mention an atlas, but a number of maps. *Historisches Journal der Mitglieder des königlich historischen Instituts zu Göttingen* 8 (1776), no. 4: 15-17.

174. Johann Christoph Gatterer, *Abriss der Geographie* (Göttingen: J.C.Dieterich, 1775), pp. xiii-xvii.

175. Johann Christoph Gatterer, *Abhandlung über Thracien nach Herodot und Thukydidés*, trans. Hermann Schlichthost (Göttingen: J.C.Dieterich, 1800).

176. Kruse, "Probe," 385. Kruse himself opted to show the state of affairs for a particular year in his atlas.

177. Ibid., 386-397.

178. Cf. Jean-Pierre Gaubert, *Las Cases: l'abeille de Napoléon* (Portet-sur-Garonne : Loubatières, 2003); Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné comte de Las Cases, *Las Cases, le mémorialiste de Napoléon* (Paris: A. Fayard, 1959).

ENDNOTES

179. Gaubert, *Las Cases*, pp. 51, 54.
180. *Ibid.*, p. 82. Gaubert suggests that this was not his only motive, but that more mundane aspirations also played a part.
181. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
182. Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné comte de Las Cases, *Memoirs of the life, exile, and conversations of the Emperor Napoleon* (New York: Worthington, 1890), p. 5f.; Gaubert, *Las Cases*, p. 64.
183. Gaubert, *Las Cases*, p. 66.
184. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
185. *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 362.
186. *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 77f., 362f.
187. Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné comte de Las Cases, *Atlas historique, généalogique, chronologique et géographique* (Bruxelles: de Mat, 1853); *Atlante storico, geografico, genealogico, cronologico e letterario* (Venezia: Tasso, 1826); *Historisch-genealogisch-geographischer Atlas von Le Sage Graf Las Cases in drei und dreisig Uebersichten* (Karlsruhe: Velten, 1825-31); *Istoričeskij, genealogičeskij, chronologičeskij, geographičeskij Atlas* (Petersburg: publisher unknown, 1812); *Atlas historico, genealogico, cronologico, geografico y estadístico de Lesage* (Paris: Bossange, 1826); *Le Sage's Historical, genealogical, chronological, and geographical atlas* (London: R. Juigné, 1813).
188. Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné comte de Las Cases, *A short guide to Mr. Lesage's historical maps* (London: J. Barfield, 1800), p. 1f.
189. *Ibid.*, p. 2f.
190. *Ibid.*, p. 3; Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné comte de Las Cases, *Atlas historique, généalogique, chronologique et géographique* (Paris: Leclère, 1827), table 1 and 2.
191. Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné comte de Las Cases, *Atlas historique, généalogique, chronologique et géographique* (Paris: Sourdon, 1807).
192. Las Cases, *Atlas historique* (1807); Las Cases, *Atlas historique* (1827).
193. Las Cases, *Atlas historique* (1807), table 1.
194. Las Cases, *Las Cases*, p. 173f.

ENDNOTES

195. Anonymous, "Review of Nicolas Viton, *Maisons souverains de l'Europe*," *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* 311 (1810), no. 311: 577-581, 578.
196. Las Cases, *Atlas historique* (1807), table 7.
197. *Ibid.*, table 14.
198. *Ibid.*, table 12. A somewhat similar map is presented for Spain (table 18).
199. Las Cases, *Atlas historique* (1827), following table 31 (Asia).
200. Las Cases, *Atlas historique*, (1807), table 31.
201. Las Cases, *Atlas historique* (1827), table 31.
202. Las Cases, *Atlas historique* (1807), table 32.
203. Las Cases, *Atlas historique* (1827), table 33.
204. Las Cases, *Atlas historique* (1807), table 33.
205. *Ibid.*, table 29.
206. Goffart, *Historical atlases*, p. 418.
207. Alexander von Dusch, "Vorrede zur deutschen Ausgabe," Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné comte de Las Cases, *Historisch-genealogisch-geographischer Atlas von LeSage, Grafen Las Cases*, in 35 *Übersichten* (Karlsruhe: Velten, 1826).
208. *Ibid.*
209. Hase, *Historiae universalis*, p. 2f.; Hagelgans, *Atlas Historicus*, preface.

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