

A Transcultural History of Europe – Perspectives from the History of Migration

by Wolfgang Schmale

At heart, a transcultural history of Europe examines the topic of cultural transfer, above all those cultural assets tied up with identity (i.e. Kultureme). These Kultureme have drawn on a multiplicity of cultures including the ancient world, the three main religions of Europe (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), a number of regional and local cultural spaces, and the variations within these cultures that have emerged over the centuries. Numerous physical, intellectual and social sites created Kultureme that were transferred within Europe, for example, metropolises and court artists. The agents of cultural transfer and thus of transcultural history were ethnic or other social, religious, professional etc. groups. Among these, ethnic migration was predominant until about 1000 AD. From 1000 AD to the early 19th century, other forms, such as economic, demographic, professional and seasonal migration, were important. Since the 19th century, ethnic cleansing has played an increasingly important role, which, ran counter to transcultural history. This effect has been offset by immigration from the (former) colonial regions.

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European Cultures and Cultural Spaces

The history of Europe (→ Media Link #ab) is not that of just one culture, but many. On the one hand, these cultures have interlinked transculturally with one another; on the other, they have also repeatedly disentangled themselves in that such links have dissolved or chafed against one another until they snapped. Cultural transfer played an important role in these processes. It is founded upon the communication between "cultures", i.e. between phenomena manifested in a perceptible concentration of their semantic relations and social contexts, often with a spatial dimension. This definition is valid not only for national cultures, but also other examples such as court culture, the humanists, confessions and so on. Both material and intellectual cultural assets are communicated.¹ A "cultural asset" includes not only individual assets but also more complex ones. In the sense meant here, cultural assets can be architectural styles such as Gothic or the Baroque, institutions such as the university or academy, technologies such as clockwork mechanisms or the steam-engine, and institutionalised socio-political structures such as "constitutions" or "monarchy". Because these transfers can be understood as verbal and non-verbal communicative acts, the events – the moments in which transfer took place – depend on the various conditions and structures of the communication. These continuous processes of interlacing and intertwinement led to both the Europeanisation (→ Media Link #ac) of Europe and to the converse processes whereby the geographical space of "Europe" (i.e., that area which can be meaningfully referred to as "Europe" as a culture in the singular) repeatedly shifted.

▲ 1

In retrospect, we are justified in characterising ancient Greece and Rome as Europe in the sense of "European culture". At the time, this would not be appropriate, as no such self-designation existed. Equally, we include Judaism and Christianity among the roots of Europe, but both religions, which were at the same time complete cultures, cannot be identified with Europe in the ancient period. The identification of Europe with Christianity or *Christendom* only took place during the Middle Ages. A partial identification of Jewry with Europe exists primarily as a research method that has diverged into a variety of perspectives. Friedrich Battenberg termed one such as the "European Jewish Age", the other is closely connected to Dan Diner's research on the Jews as a "paradigm of European history". Lastly, one must men-

tion Islam, whose importance for cultural transfer to Europe is no longer questioned, although there is still considerable resistance to its partial identification with Europe. Despite the Islamic renaissance in Spain during the Middle Ages, Islam's position as a part, and thus a defining characteristic, of "European culture" developed during the 20th and 21st centuries with the creation of large Muslim populations across Europe.

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The ancient cultures of Greece and Rome, which were closely intertwined for several centuries, and the three main religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which shaped culture profoundly until (in Europe, at least) comprehensive processes of secularisation restricted them to the individual and private spheres, are five identifiable cultures that entered into a varied and complex process of exchange within Europe. This statement does not even broach the topic of the variations within these cultures, their origins further to the east and their legacies. The importance of ancient cultures (→ Media Link #ad) for the process of cultural exchange and transfer, and thus for a transcultural history, is closely connected to the phenomenon of "renaissance", of which there have been several in the centuries after the birth of Christ. Some of these drew more on the ancient world of Greece-Hellenes and others that of Rome: the Carolingian renaissance orientated towards Rome; the Renaissance that originated in 14th/15th century Italy with its admiration for Greece and Rome; the Classicism of the second half of the 18th and early 19th centuries that combined an appreciation of Greece and Rome; the Neo-Classicism of the late 19th century, and the present, which is perhaps more conscious of ancient periods that those of renaissance.

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There are, however, other cultures: the Eastern Roman Empire or Byzantium, which understood itself as European, and later Moscow, which defined itself as a Third Rome (→ Media Link #af). Since the Middle Ages, Christianity has divided itself into different churches (the Catholic versus Orthodox churches, the Uniate churches). In the late Middle Ages and early modern period, Protestantism provided a further impulse towards differentiation. At the same time, these developments always meant a process of cultural change and, despite all initial demarcations and hostility, cultural exchange over the long term. This is also true of Judaism, for which the generalised division into Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewry only incompletely captures the different cultural strands. Revivalist movements swept up the Christian confessions and Jewish religion equally towards the end of the early modern period; the Enlightenment transformed a section of the Jewish community in the form of the Haskalah (→ Media Link #ah) no less than it did the Catholic and (above all) Protestant churches. In particular, it encouraged transfer between the confessions and religions.

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In European history, both large empires and small political communities developed into their own cultural spaces, the main characteristic of which was permanent exchange with other cultural spaces. This was as true of maritime republics such as Venice and Genoa as it was of the Holy Roman Empire (of the German Nation), the Habsburg Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Such exchange was complemented by a constant influx from bordering non-European cultural spaces and from even further abroad. The so-called expansion of Europe changed European culture in general and laid the foundations for a continued transfer that extended into the post-colonial period. Important in this context were the Mediterranean (since ancient times), the Baltic and Hanseatic (\rightarrow Media Link #aj) spaces (in the Middle Ages, and to a certain extent in the early modern period), and, from the 16th century, the transatlantic space, which created a network of cultural transfer and exchange between the three Americas, Africa and Europe.

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The creation of empires in Eastern Europe – the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy – divided Europe in cultural spaces with a West, a Central Europe, which for a long time (until the term underwent a shift to the east) was basically the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, an East (Russia), a South East (the Ottoman Empire) and an area that was difficult to characterise – the Habsburg Monarchy: this had West-Central European, East-Central European and South-Eastern European components, but at the same time formed a single cultural space, whose durability within the history of mentalities became clear after the opening of the borders in 1989.

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Lastly, one can identify several civilisations that contributed transculturally to *European culture*. The oldest are the Megalithic, Celtic and Roman civilisations, whereby the last was clearly defined by the *limes*. Here, Roman civilisation should be understood as a hybrid, in particular characterised by Hellenic and later Christian components. We have al-

ready discussed religions as civilisations or cultures. In the 18th and 19th centuries, a pronounced differentiation in European civilisation took place tied to the industrialisation (→ Media Link #ak) of Western Europe. This continued until the forced, all-encompassing Stalinist industrialisation of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, which until that point had only been on the peripheries of industrialisation. The biography of the concept of Western Europe is closely connected to the geography of industrialisation in the 18th and 19th centuries and the existence of a North-Atlantic Europe (France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom), in which the processes of democratisation, running parallel to industrialisation, were stronger than in the rest of Europe. The division of Europe at the end of the Second World War into a free West and a Stalinist East shaped perceptions considerably. This was understood not only as a political division, but also a partition of civilisations. For this reason, the resonant call in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and other countries in 1989, which was repeated in 2004 during the expansion of the EU, of "back to Europe!" was both natural and justified.

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Other variations in cultural spaces gained a foothold after 1945. This is most true of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), later renamed as the European Economic Community (EEC), then the European Community (EC) and finally the European Union (EU), and less so for the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). In the case of the six ECSC and EEC states, the reference to the apparent parallel between the approximate area of the mediaeval Carolingian Empire and the territory of the six member states (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Italy and Germany) played an important role. However, a separate path of development was prevented through the creation of larger network of structures – for example, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (initially, the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation – OEEC), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the West European Union, and later the Conference for Security and Cooperation (CSCE, now the OSCE) and, of course, the successive expansions of the EU.

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Epochs of Transcultural History

Processes of cultural exchange and transfer, reception, imitation, renaissance etc., do not simply take place, but are set in motion by small or large groups of people and, to a lesser extent, individuals. How groups become groups varies considerably. They can be defined by ethnicity, religion, social class, profession or cultural and functional factors that cut across these divisions. Humanists and Enlighteners, to name two important groups for all these processes, can be best characterised as cultural and functional groups because other attributes, such as "social class", certainly apply but only partially and inaccurately. Perhaps, "intellectual" would be appropriate, but that would mean employing a term from the 19th and 20th centuries for an earlier period. 6

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Migration has had – and continues to have – a considerable impact on European history, and thus the development of European culture. The *Imperium Romanum* underwent fundamental transformation as a result of such migrations, known as the barbarian invasions. Cultural transfer took place in both directions, from the Roman Empire to the migratory tribes and back again, although the tribes took more from Roman culture in the sense of acculturation than the other way round. This would develop into a process of transformation that would extend over several centuries, an important element of which was the cultural transfer and exchange between the wandering tribes. The most important were the Alemanni, Angles and Saxons, Burgundians, Franks, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Visigoths, Lombards, Marcomanni, Suebi and Huns (who soon disappeared). These groups or peoples gradually shifted the cultural centre from the Mediterranean area to north of the Pyrenees and the Alps, while the Eastern Roman Empire created its own cultural context. The creation of the empire of Charlemagne (747–814) (→ Media Link #al) temporarily represented a common expression of the geographical shift and the cultural transformations arising from cultural transfer, processes of exchange and acculturation.

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In Eastern Europe, there were the Gepids and Avars,⁸ as well as the many different Slavic groups, who at the end of the epoch of migration in the 9th and 10th centuries could be divided into the three large groups of the Western (the Polabians, Poles, Kashubians, Polen, Kaschuben, Lusation Sorbs, Czechs and Slovaks), Southern (Slovenes, Serbs, Croats, Bulgarians, and Macedonians) and Eastern Slavs (Belarusians, Russians and Ukrainians). In addition, there

were Arabs, who in the 8th century conquered about two thirds of "Spain" and intermittently crossed the Pyrenees, as well as the Magyars of the 9th and 10th centuries. Undoubtedly, the Normans also brought about cultural transfer (during the 9th and 11th centuries). However, leaving aside the North and the Baltic, one can state that with the 11th century this type of ethnic migration disappeared in the centre of Europe. Over the long term, other forms of migration with religious, social, economic and professional motivations replaced it. One must differentiate here those social groups characterised by spatial mobility that do not come under the category of migration, for example seasonal workers and migration in the sense of emigration and immigration.

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Forced ethnic migration began in the 19th century. The result of this was often ethnic cleansing, and thus the opposite of cultural transfer and transcultural history. This type "arose" as a result of the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the extension of the Russian Empire and the end of the Habsburg Monarchy. It continued in the interwar period, the Second World War and the post-war population displacements (Media Link #ao). Benjamin Lieberman places the Armenian genocide of 1915 under the category of ethnic cleansing as it differs noticeably from the course of the genocide of Jews in the Second World War. The most recent cases of ethnic cleansing in Europe took place in the 1990s in the wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The Holocaust cannot be compared to ethnic cleansing not only because it was a systematic, industrially organised murder of six millions human beings within a short period, but also because it, and only it, led to the destruction of the most important mediatory population of culture in Europe – the Jews.

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The transcultural history of Europe up to the end of the 1940s consists of three epochs: the development of transcultural technologies and mechanisms, or, to put it another way, of transcultural behaviour, as a result of the migrations from about the 4th to the 10th and 11th centuries; the consolidation of transculturalism in the following 800 to 900 years; the partial destruction of the foundations of transculturalism, above all in the late 19th and 20th centuries, by ethnic cleansing, which produced 60 to 80 million refugees and millions of massacre victims, and by the period's two genocides.

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The institutionalisation of European integration since 1948 (the Council of Europe!) raises the question as to whether this is a new form of transculturalism or a regional European variant of globalisation. On the other hand, Europe has been experiencing a new epoch of migration since the early 20th century: in Western Europe, there was barely any immigration from outside Europe after the end of rampant migratory movement around 1000 AD. The only non-Europeans - the Arabs - were expelled from Europe during the so-called *Reconguista*. Only a few immigrants from the colonies settled in Europe permanently before the late 19th century/20th century; instead, the current went overseas from Europe, above all the American continent, and later to Australia and New Zealand. The situation in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe was different, where the population of the Ottoman Empire intermingled. This was later bloodily reversed by ethnic cleansing. In the West (i.e. Atlantic Europe), however, immigration from the colonies only began with decolonisation, and thus primarily after 1945, which achieved extremely large proportions (Maghrebs in France, Indians and Pakistanis, amongst others, in Great Britain, Indonesians etc. in the Netherlands, and so on). In addition, there was state-sponsored migration of foreign workers, which was partially inner-European (Italians, Greeks, Spaniards, Portuguese etc.) and partially encompassed the European periphery, as in the case of the Turks who arrived, above all, in Germany and Austria, which lacked colonial or postcolonial immigration. After the initial flow of colonial or postcolonial immigration of Africans to Atlantic Europe, this gradually moved to encompass Central and Northern Europe. Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and other groups immigrated here in the twentieth century, some due to the result of wars, some as a result of a complex bundle of reasons as in the case of the Chinese. 10

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Immigration in the 20th and 21st centuries is not automatically connected with the initiation of transcultural processes. There are too many mechanisms of segregation emanating both from the migrants and the host populations. Nevertheless, the potential for cultural exchange, cultural transfer and hybrid cultures continues to exist.

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There is no subdiscipline that undertakes the task outlined in this article of an examination of the transcultural history of Europe that cuts across geographical space and historical epochs. The research is generally divided by period. Studies of migration do not automatically address transculturalism and there is barely any examination of the issue in different historical epochs. Their spatial specialisation (Western European, Eastern European, South-East European, Scandinavian history etc.) represents a further problem.

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Over the last 30 years, a body of research has developed around the concept of cultural transfer that focuses on transculturalism as a result of cultural transfer. The impulse came from Michel Espagne and Michael Werner in the mid-1980s in Paris. 12 Under the influence of Peter Burke, *cultural exchange* has recently become established as a key concept. 13 However, it does not mean anything different to cultural transfer because this research concentrates on processes of exchange, even if there were and are cultural transfers that primarily went in one direction. Other concepts such as "entangled history" and *histoire croisée* 14 are tied up to the key concept of "networks", 15 which could give direction to an overview of cultural transfer. Hereafter, the umbrella term "the research on cultural transfer" will be used.

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Contributions to the research on cultural transfer generally deal with more recent history, but they have increasingly begun to turn to the mediaeval and early modern periods. In the study of the 20th century, it is often understood as the Americanisation of Europe or of individual countries. So far, the focus has been on the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the period of modernism around 1900. Cultural transfer presents an obvious counterweight, or even corrective, to nationalism. Herein lies an important motor driving the research, as it can free national history from the biases with which nationalism has imbued it. The national cultural spaces between which transfer took place certainly reached back into the Middle Ages and were not the only categories of observation. As described above, religions, confessions and even ancient civilisations formed cultural spaces which entered into relationships with one another through cultural transfer. The concept of space is not necessarily tied up with geography. It can also be understood intellectually or as part of the imagination, for example (or typically) in the case of followers of a religion or confession, as in the case of the Jews or, after 1685, the exiled French Huguenots, who were spatially dispersed. The concept of cultural space can be connected to a building or building complex, as in the case of court culture, or with a recurring "dichotomy", such as that of town and countryside. It can mean the "lifeworld" (*Lebenswelt*) of a particular social group such as the Jesuits which is replicated in many places that are not geographically contiguous, but rather connected by ideas and imagination, for instance through mobility, behaviour, rituals, etc.

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In the end, cultural transfer always takes place via people, even when they require material and/or intellectual "objects" to undertake it. Those who are mobile can become the agents of cultural transfer, as can those who communicate over distances without actually being mobile. Thus, cultural transfer took place both through the exhaustive correspondence of the 16th-century Humanists, whose writing was often accompanied by objects, as well as via German nannies and maidservants in the Netherlands during early 20th century¹⁶ who were physically mobile. This is not to say that the Humanists were not physically mobile, but that their correspondence (which promoted cultural transfer) replaced personal mobility, leaving this to the post and other travellers.

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The Outlines of a Transnational History of Europe

Certain social groups were particularly "predestined" for cultural transfer: merchants and traders, the members of persecuted religions and confessions, groups active in culture such as scholars (Humanists, Enlighteners etc.), professionals of the broader artistic and cultural sphere (music, theatre, opera, visual arts, architecture, literature), members of highly specialised professions such as miners, young highly born knights, slightly older nobles on the grand tour or representatives of the middleclass undertaking a *bildungsreise*, administrators, specialised soldiers such as Swiss mercenaries (who served not only the Pope, but also, amongst others, the French king) or Irish officers in the service of the Habsburg army. The restriction of women's activity to the realm of the home and household, the family and private sphere, which lasted well into the 20th century, made them key agents of cultural transfer. This aspect has been investigated with regards to women at court¹⁷ and professional groups such as nannies in the 19th and 20th centuries, although there are still enormous gaps in the research.

Certain spaces were particularly suited to cultural transfer: the courts of rulers, cloisters and the institutions of religious orders, universities and other places of education such as schools, libraries and studies, political and academic chambers, large cities (and ports in particular) that were often pronouncedly multicultural, and homes and households in different social groups. In Europe, spaces consciously (but not exclusively) defined by membership of a particular group played a unique role. This is true not only of Jewish ghettos, but also of the closed settlements of, for example, Albanian soldiers in southern Italy and Sicily in the second half of the 15th century, who settled areas where there were already Albanian refugees, who, in turn, were followed by further refugees escaping Ottoman expansion in the first decade of the 16th century. Their presence is still evident today, although Karl Markus Gauß counts the *Arbëreshë* in Calabria among the "dying Europeans". It is also true of the Huguenots, around 300,000 of whom left France following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 by Louis XIV (1638–1715) (→ Media Link #bb) and were accepted in the Netherlands, England, Brandenburg and other countries, not least because of their professional skills. The Huguenots were responsible for the many transfers of French cultural assets to the host countries. This took place to an extraordinary degree in the Electorate of Brandenburg.

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In the large cities and ports, the members of the same ethnic groups normally lived in the same quarter, even where there was no compulsion to do so. In this way, their original culture became concentrated and was frequently rejuvenated and extended by newcomers. This could often lead to segregation, but also to the opposite, i.e. permanent cultural transfer and processes of exchange. What would the Italian renaissance be without the "Greek" refugees of the 15th century, who brought with them manuscripts and copies of ancient texts? What would Europe have been without Italy's master builders, craftsmen, architects, artists, musicians, thespians, merchants and bankers between the 15th and 17th centuries? How would Europe have developed demographically without the import of foodstuffs from beyond the continent such as maize and potatoes (just to mention two of the dozens of examples) which – partially in the 18th and partially in the 19th century – became mass staple foods? What would have happened to the agriculture of many Central-Eastern, South-Eastern and Eastern European regions without the "German" peasants and craftsmen who were brought into the countries? What would the end of the 17th century and the 18th century been without the transfer of French culture as far as St. Petersburg? In what direction would European democracy have developed without the transfer from North America, the United States of America, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries? What would 19th-century industrialisation have been without the great Jewish banking families? What would the so-called modernism of around 1900 have been without Jewish intellectuals? The questions could go on and on.

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Because immigration and emigration, as well as the mobility of professional groups, was above all dependent on political decisions, and thus not simply abandoned to arbitrary fate, every political community in Europe could develop for itself its own profile of cultural transfer, which to date still have not dissolved. Some aspects of cultural transfer were expressly welcomed and, as far as possible, encouraged, while others were unplanned or unplannable and were halted. This is often evident when certain skilled workers were brought into a country for a certain task, who then stayed because there were further tasks or no one considered sending the foreign workers back. They integrated themselves, married, called upon their countrymen to follow them to meet the further demand for specialist skills originating in a particular region²¹ etc. This can be observed on a massive scale in reference to the Italian cultural transfer from the 15th to the 17th centuries and the Italian music and theatre as late as the 18th and 19th centuries, but was also evident in many different transfer processes.

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The period of European integration in which we live today raises the question of transcultural history anew. In many cases, this is an enormous process of acculturation. The culture of the integrated Europe, including European law, can be rightfully be called "culture". New members are called upon to accept it. This now requires many years of conformance and negotiation with the European Union before an entry can be considered. The best example for this is Turkey, which has undergone an often underestimated process of transformation and acculturation. While this certainly is not only aimed at the desired entry to the EU, it does have very close ties to this political goal.

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Appendix

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Notes

- 1. ^ The following sentences are based on Schmale, Kulturtransfer 2003.
- 2. Battenberg, Juden 1990.
- 3. Diner, Paradigma 2002.
- 4. Cardini, Islam 2000.
- 5. Hobson, Eastern Origins 2004.
- 6. Charle, Intellektuelle 1997.
- 7. Geary, Völker 2002; Postel, Ursprünge 2004; Pohl, Völkerwanderung 2005.
- 8. Pohl, Awaren 2002; idem, Barbarians 1998; idem, Distinction 1998.
- 9. Lieberman, Terrible Fate 2006.
- 10. ^ Bade et al., Enzyklopädie 2007; Bade, Bewegung 2000; Sassen, Migranten 1997.
- 11. Bade et al., Enzyklopädie 2007; this extends from the 17th century into the present, the individual articles refer back into the 15th century or even earlier.
- 12. ^ Espagne / Werner, Kulturtransfer 1985.
- 13. Burke / Hsia, Cultural Translation 2007.
- 14. Werner, Histoire croisée 2004.
- 15. Schmale, Erkenntnisinteressen 2006.
- 16. [^] Henkes, Dienstmädchen 2007.
- 17. Nolde / Opitz, Familienbeziehungen 2008.
- 18. Gauß, Die sterbenden Europäer 2001/2009; Bartl, Albanische Siedler 2007.
- 19. ^ Asche, Hugenotten 2007.
- 20. ^ Karady, Juden 1999.
- 21. For example, Dmitrieva, Sarmatien 2008.

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Industrialization (http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/backgrounds/industrialization/richard-h-tilly-industrialization-as-an-historical-process)

Link #al

Charlemagne (747–814) VIAF (http://viaf.org/viaf/57406729) DNB (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118560034)
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Link #ao

 Flucht und Vertreibung (1938–1950) (http://www.ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/europa-unterwegs/ethnische-zwangsmigration/detlef-brandes-flucht-und-vertreibung-1938-1950)

Link #bb

Louis XIV of France (1638–1715) (http://viaf.org/viaf/89583139)





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