

Hémecht

Revue d'Histoire luxembourgeoise

transnationale, locale, interdisciplinaire

Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte

transnational, lokal, interdisziplinär

69. Jahrgang

2017

Heft 3-4

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Histoire mondiale du Luxembourg ... et autres défis

Les 6^{es} Assises de l'historiographie luxembourgeoise, consacrées à l'Histoire du temps présent, ont permis de faire le bilan des recherches dans quelques domaines de l'histoire du temps présent. Ils ont rappelé en même temps quelques défis et chantiers de la recherche sur l'histoire du temps présent au Luxembourg.

Si la création du Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH), fondé officiellement en décembre 2016 comme troisième centre interdisciplinaire de recherche de l'Université du Luxembourg, a fait débat (voir l'introduction d'Elisabeth Boesen), un consensus a existé dès 2013 au sein même de l'Institut d'histoire de l'UL sur l'orientation de l'axe de recherche consacré à l'histoire contemporaine luxembourgeoise dans cet institut d'histoire du temps présent. Il y avait consensus qu'il s'agirait d'étudier l'histoire politique, économique, sociale et culturelle du Luxembourg des 20^e et 21^e siècles, avec l'ambition de produire de nouvelles connaissances scientifiques sur des phénomènes historiques qui ont profondément imprégné le pays et sa population et dont l'intérêt et la valeur comparative dépassent le cadre national.

C'est le cas pour les grands thèmes de recherche évoqués au cours des différentes contributions des Assises et qui devront être creusés au cours des années prochaines :

- le développement du Grand-Duché comme état-nation, comme état-providence, comme démocratie parlementaire ;
- les guerres mondiales et les héritages des occupations, des résistances, des collaborations, héritages en termes de structures, mais aussi de cadres mentaux, de mémoires ;
- la transition d'une économie basée sur l'industrie sidérurgique vers une économie mixte et de services avec des secteurs financiers et audiovisuels dominants ainsi que les transformations sociétales et culturelles qui l'accompagnent depuis un demi-siècle ;
- le développement du Grand-Duché comme espace migratoire façonné par les industrialisations successives, un espace qui dépasse le territoire national et qui englobe la Lorraine, la province belge du Luxembourg, la Sarre et la Rhénanie.

Les Assises ont montré qu'un des défis principaux consiste à étudier à l'avenir ces phénomènes dans une optique transnationale et comparative. Alors que le poncif du petit pays au carrefour des influences les plus diverses est régulièrement mobilisé, la perspective historiographique a jusqu'à présent été avant tout nationale, fortement imprégnée par un « nationalisme méthodologique ». Optique transnationale : les connaissances sur les thèmes évoqués ne progresseront que si, pour tous ces objets de recherche, l'étude de l'impact des politiques des états voisins et des grandes puissances, des relations de pouvoir internationales ainsi que des phénomènes globaux (industrialisations, guerres, révolutions, démocratisation ou remise en cause de la démocratie, ouverture ou fermeture des frontières, mise en place de l'état-providence, construction européenne, mondialisation financière, révolution digitale, etc.) est dorénavant mise au centre de la recherche historique sur le Luxembourg contemporain. Optique comparative : que l'on traite de l'évolution du système d'assurances sociales, des politiques économiques publiques, de l'histoire de l'immigration ou de l'histoire du droit de vote, l'originalité ou la normalité du cas d'études luxembourgeois ne ressort que si on les compare aux évolutions dans d'autres pays ou d'autres régions d'Europe et du monde.

En écho à l'*Histoire mondiale de la France* (2017), ouvrage collectif dirigé par Patrick Boucheron qui a trouvé un large public, c'est – non seulement pour l'histoire du 20^e siècle d'ailleurs – une « Histoire mondiale du Luxembourg », tenant compte des dimensions transnationales, interrégionales, européennes voire globales de l'histoire de l'Etat-nation luxembourgeois qu'il convient d'envisager.

Les Assises de 2015 ont eu lieu en plein milieu d'un autre débat, celui autour du rapport sur l'attitude des autorités luxembourgeoises face aux persécutions antisémites sous l'Occupation allemande, connu sous le nom de « Rapport Artuso ». Parmi d'autres aspects, les réactions ont montré qu'au Luxembourg comme ailleurs l'histoire et la mémoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale avec ses mythes fondateurs nationaux ont été transmises de génération en génération. Ce débat a également révélé à quel point le passé continue d'être appréhendé à travers ce que Marc Bloch appelait le « satanique ennemi de la véritable histoire : la manie du jugement »¹. Comme Ismee Tames l'a relevé pour les débats et publications sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale aux Pays-Bas – mais cela vaut également pour le Luxembourg –, la recherche scientifique, p. ex. sur les collaborations et les résistances, est asphyxiée par des questionnements moralisants, explicites ou implicites, des descendants, des politiques, des citoyens, des sociétés d'aujourd'hui : « Are we to blame ? Should we feel a sense of shame, whether as a nation, a community, or a family, for our cowardice, for looking the other way, for complicity? Does this apply to me personally? Or am I among those who can feel a sense of pride? Were 'we' on the side of 'right' ? »². L'autre manie « ennemie de la véritable histoire » consiste à enfermer les acteurs historiques dans des boîtes – « collaborateurs »,

¹ BLOCH, Marc, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou Métier d'historien*, Edition annotée par Etienne Bloch, Paris : Armand Colin, 1997 (première édition: 1949), p. 55.

² *About Thresholds. Liminality and the Experience of Resistance*. Inaugural lecture given by Ismee Tames, marking her professorship in the Faculty of Humanities at Utrecht University, on 17th May 2016, URL: <http://www.niod.nl/en/news/inaugural-lecture-given-ismee-tames-now-online-available> (consulté le 20.7.2017).

« résistants », « victimes » « bourreaux » –, dans des catégories statiques, immobiles, simplistes – et donc a-historiques – au lieu de s'intéresser à la complexité des expériences historiques auxquelles les hommes et les femmes étaient confrontés dans leur époque.

Le débat confirme le constat fait par Patrick Boucheron dans son « Ouverture » à l'ouvrage collectif cité : « Faut-il dire à nouveau qu'il ne s'agit ici ni de célébrer ni de dénoncer ? Que l'histoire soit, depuis bien longtemps déjà, un savoir critique sur le monde et non un art d'acclamation ou de détestation est une idée qu'on pouvait croire acquise ; elle rencontre tant d'adversaires aujourd'hui qu'il est peut-être bon de la défendre à nouveau »³.

Un deuxième défi pour l'histoire du temps présent, confrontée à des objets de recherche souvent liés à des enjeux politiques et sociétaux actuels, s'inscrit dans ce cadre. « Défendre à nouveau » une pratique scientifique qui entend à la fois sortir d'une histoire portée essentiellement sur les pages dramatiques, sur les « pages sombres » à dénoncer,⁴ et sortir d'une historiographie acclamative, imprégnée de complaisance, d'une attitude de révérence à l'égard des acteurs historiques. Une complaisance qui ne sert à rien, parce qu'elle empêche de comprendre le sens que les acteurs de l'époque donnaient à leurs actes. Une complaisance qui empêche surtout de comprendre le monde qui nous entoure. Rappeler encore et encore que la science historique s'inscrit dans une démarche explicative et non de jugement, productrice d'intelligibilité, susceptible d'« éclairer les différents passés présents dans le présent »⁵.

Les contributions aux Assises centrées sur la *public history*, « aujourd'hui une discipline planétaire qui considère la présence du passé – et l'histoire – en dehors des milieux universitaires »⁶, m'amènent à un troisième chantier pour l'histoire du temps présent au Luxembourg, connexe au précédent. D'un côté, la plupart des intervenants et intervenantes des Assises combinent depuis longtemps leur pratique scientifique de l'histoire avec la transmission des savoirs dans la sphère publique. Au Luxembourg, ils et elles sont actifs tant dans les colloques entre pairs que lors des discussions publiques sur le passé. L'« histoire publique » comme travail sur le passé avec les communautés locales est bien ancrée dans les mœurs historiennes luxembourgeoises. D'un autre côté, la multiplication des lieux physiques et, avec le *digital turn*, *virtuels* – musées, médias, réseaux sociaux, web – où l'histoire est racontée, pose d'une façon nouvelle, aussi pour l'histoire du temps présent au Luxembourg, la question de la concurrence entre producteurs fort variés de discours sur le passé dans l'espace public.

La réorientation des recherches en histoire luxembourgeoise du temps présent dans une optique transnationale et comparative devra aller de pair avec une réflexion sur

³ BOUCHERON, Patrick (dir.), *Histoire mondiale de la France*, Paris : Seuil, 2017, p. 12.

⁴ LAGROU, Pieter, De l'histoire du temps présent à l'histoire des autres. Comment une discipline critique devint complaisante, in: *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* 118 (2013), p. 101–119.

⁵ DROIT, Emmanuel/REICHERZER, Franz, La fin de l'histoire du temps présent telle que nous l'avons connue. Plaidoyer franco-allemand pour l'abandon d'une singularité historiographique, in : *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 118 (2013), p. 121–145, ici p. 143.

⁶ NOIRET, Serge, L'internationalisation de l'histoire publique, in : *Public History Weekly. The International Blogjournal* 2/34 (2014), URL : <https://public-history-weekly.degruyter.com/2-2014-34/internationalizing-public-history/> (consulté le 20.7.2017).

les façons de raconter une histoire scientifique et critique à des publics cibles de plus en plus hétérogènes et sur les nouveaux moyens, notamment numériques, pour le faire et pour être entendu.

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ABSTRACTS

Arnaud SAUER, *Écrire la guerre au Luxembourg : Le premier conflit mondial dans l'historiographie luxembourgeoise* [Writing about the war in Luxembourg : The First World War in Luxembourgish historiography]

This article seeks to assess the variety of approaches used by historians when dealing with the First World War in the Grand-Duchy in the context of the construction of a grand national narrative. The study describes a process of gradual maturation of historical discourse revealing several phases of consecutive construction, which the author links to the careers of various national historians, the evolution of Luxembourg society in the 20th and 21st centuries and the advancement of research on a subject that was for a long time confined to a blind zone of Luxembourgish historiography. In the context of the centenary of World War One, which has stimulated the international academic community, an appraisal of the still limited state of research regarding that period is proposed and related to the development of the young University of Luxembourg.

Josiane WEBER, *Der Erste Weltkrieg in der luxemburgischen Literatur* [The First World War in Luxembourgish literature]

This article on the First World War in Luxembourgish literature emphasizes the relationship between literature and history. Following the approach of cultural literary studies, or “cultural poetics”, this article tries to identify relationships between the historical event and its literary representations. In contrast to the small number of publications in the field of literary history, there are numerous fictional works by Luxembourgish authors on the First World War. Prose predominates, examples being the novel *Anna* by Jean-Pierre Erpelding, the collection of stories *Heimat* by Joseph Tockert, the publications by journalists Batty Weber and Frantz Clément, or the many recollections by contemporary witnesses. Poetry is exemplified by Poutty Stein and Willy Goergen, who both write in Luxembourgish, as well as by writers who express themselves in German or French like Nikolaus Welter, Paul Palgen or Marcel Noppeney. And in theatre, it's particularly Max Goergen with his Luxembourgish language dramas, that comes to mind.

To conceptualise Luxembourgish writers' interpretation of the First World War, this essay focuses on three topics: the German invasion on the 2nd of August 1914, the famine and its consequences, and the debate concerning war guilt. The literary examples analysed here allow us to define a number of general patterns of description, interpretation and treatment that point to a specific Luxembourgish discourse concerning the First World War. Excerpts from various works by different

authors show that the function of literature does not consist solely in the mimetic representation of experienced reality. On the contrary, literature participates in the interpretation of experience, shapes perspective and develops strategies for coping with the complexity of the world. In this respect, literature can compete with historiographical discourse, especially as it is less restricted in its choice of topic and use of language. Literature thereby offers more than a complement to historical sources: By telling stories, it explains history.

Renée WAGENER, Die „Königsrose“ und die „Revolutionäre“. Historische Darstellungen der Krise von 1918/1919 [The „royal rose“ and the „revolutionaries“. Historical representations of the crisis of 1918/19]

Against the backdrop of the Luxembourgish historiography on World War I, this contribution focuses on the historical representation of two actors, one individual and one collective: Grand-duchess Marie Adelheid, whose short reign came to an end in January 1919, and the revolutionary movement of 1918/1919, whose pressure for the abolition of monarchy and the instauration of a republic played a certain role in her abdication. A brief outline of the political developments in Luxembourg at the end of the war is followed by an analysis of the Luxembourgish historiography. In the first decades, historians concentrated mainly on the political crisis that peaked at the end of the war, mostly refraining, however, from placing the Luxembourg case in the context of the revolutionary movement that took place all over Europe. Their main objective was the ideological justification of the attitude and actions of different political actors; a more detached approach was rare during this phase. The analysis of chosen extracts from historiographical descriptions distils a picture of Grand-duchess Marie Adelheid as a young, beautiful and blameless, but fragile and unexperienced heroine who had been sacrificed on the altar of political intrigues. The revolutionary movement was often characterized as a chaotic accumulation of infantile and aggressive agitators who had no political impact. Only from the 1960s onward, Marie Adelheid was increasingly seen as a self-determined actor, whereas the revolutionary movement was described, mainly by historians from the Left, as the expression of a social class struggle. In general, the focus of Luxembourgish historiography has moved from the politics of the revolutionary period to a broader analysis of everyday life during wartime.

Vincent ARTUSO, La Collaboration dans l’historiographie luxembourgeoise [Collaboration with Nazi Germany in Luxembourg historiography]

The topic of collaboration with Nazi Germany was ignored by mainstream Luxembourg historians until the end of the 2000s. It did not fit into the dominant national narrative of WW2, in which resistance to German occupation was interpreted as the key phenomenon that sealed the nation-building process. This narrative rooted in a Nation-State model that was adopted in the late 1930s and was consensual within Luxembourg society until the end of the 1990s, the “parliamentary *Volksstaat*”. In this state form, democratic rights were reserved to a body of citizens defined along very strict *völkisch* (ethnic, essentialist) criteria. The Luxembourg nation was considered as an organism with a particular identity shaped by history. Collaboration

was not strictly speaking taboo, it was worse than that: it was an incoherence that reactivated the painful memories of the post-war purges when mentioned. In the past ten years, however, collaboration has not only reappeared in historical memory it has become the core issue associated with WW2. This was illustrated on 9 June 2015 when the Government and the Chamber of Deputies officially apologized towards the Jewish community for the participation of Luxembourg authorities to the anti-Semitic persecutions of the Third Reich, during the occupation period. This dramatic evolution can be explained by what French philosopher Michel Foucault would have called a shift in *épistémè*, thus a change in the way a society perceives the world and ordines the knowledge it produces. Since the late 1990s Luxembourg elites have tended to abandon the old-fashioned national model. This has led to a history and memory update in line with current international trends.

Elisabeth HOFFMANN, La médiation de l'histoire de la « Résistance » au Luxembourg : une lente émancipation (de 1945 à nos jours) [The mediation of the history of “Resistance” in Luxembourg: a slow emancipation (from 1945 until today)]

The essay analyses the public discussion of the “Resistance” in Luxembourg since the end of World War Two and asks why there is still no scientific overview of the subject, although there have been major developments in historical research since the 1970s. The study shows that the perspective on the “Resistance” is tightly embedded in a founding myth, which claims that the Luxembourgish nation as a whole heroically withstood the Nazi regime. Since the 1970s this image has been slowly deconstructed and qualified with the emergence of a young generation of historians. However, this development is also held back by major obstacles such as a lack of research institutions and publications, as well as the opposition of former resistance members, which explain why the process of emancipation from the founding myth has been slower in Luxembourg than in France or Belgium.

Eva Maria KLOS, Die Zwangsrekrutierung in Westeuropa: Deutungskämpfe in der Geschichtsschreibung von 1944 bis heute [Forced recruitment in Western Europe: Conflicts of interpretation in historiography from 1944 until today]

During the Second World War, approximately 149,000 men from Luxembourg, Eupen-Malmedy, Alsace and Lorraine were drafted into the German army. To this day, these men have been known as ‘forced recruits’ within the memory cultures of Western Europe. In reconstructing the historiography related to the ‘forced conscripts’ in Luxembourg, Eastern Belgium, Alsace and Moselle, this article is specifically concerned with the effect of the associations’ fight for recognition of the subjects determining historiography. It states that the associations of former ‘forced recruits’ in Luxembourg and France established a coherent narrative of their multiple war experience, which dominated the way their own story was written, told and transmitted to future generations. In Eastern Belgium, however, the associations failed to provide a common and coherent narrative of the former ‘forced recruits’

war time experience; they were thus unable to build up the same pressure as in Luxembourg and France in their quest for official recognition.

In conclusion, this article shows that historiography flourished especially in those areas where associations managed to emphasize the particularity of the ‘forced conscripts’ in collective narratives as well as in their fight for recognition in a publicly effective manner.

Stefan HEINZ, Hubert Ritter, der Luxemburger Generalbebauungsplan und die NS-Architektur. Eine kritische Einführung in den aktuellen Stand der Forschung [Hubert Ritter, the General Development Plan for Luxembourg and National Socialist architecture. A critical introduction to the current state of research]

The article examines the scientific debate on the National Socialist architecture over the past 70 years, with a focus on the German architect Hubert Ritter, who developed a general development plan for the city of Luxembourg during the Nazi-occupation between 1941 and 1944. His (never implemented) plan can be reconstructed with the help of archival material.

The comparison of the scientific approaches and topics of research in Luxembourg and Germany reveals certain differences. The scientific exploration of the political structures and artistic implications of NS-architecture began in Germany in the mid-1970s and in recent years intensive research results have been made in this field. In Luxembourg, however, Ritter’s plans were scientifically acknowledged only in the late 1990s, although they had been known for a long time. One of the current tendencies is to concentrate on the ostensible contradiction of tradition and modernity in NS-architecture. The overly generalised antagonism between a progressive (and hence democratic) modernity and a traditionalistic Nazi-architecture can be discarded by analyzing Ritter’s work. In terms of ideology, the Luxembourg plan represents a special case among the numerous urban development plans of the Third Reich, as one of its core intentions was to extinguish the specificity of Luxembourg’s identity and make the city a German „cultural bulwark“ (a so-called „Kulturbollwerk“) of the West.

Marie-Paule JUNGBLUT, Who owns the past? Überlegungen zur Repräsentation der Geschichte Luxemburgs während des Zweiten Weltkrieges in zwei ausgewählten Ausstellungen [Reflections on the representation of the history of Luxembourg during World War II in two exhibitions]

This article compares two exhibitions focusing on Luxembourg during the German occupation in World War II. The first is a permanent exhibition at the Musée régional des Enrôlés de Force in Dudelange. The museum opened in 1984 to present the perspectives of the Luxembourgers conscripted into the Wehrmacht during the German occupation. The exhibition remains essentially unchanged today.

The second exhibition entitled “It wasn’t that easy... 10 Questions about the History of Luxembourg during World War II” opened in 2002 as a temporary exhibition at the Musée d’Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg. It reflected a variety of perspectives with the author of this article as curator.

The content of the first exhibition was heavily influenced by those who experienced World War II. They regarded Nazi-occupied Luxembourg as a victim with conscripted soldiers (*enrôlés de force*) being on a par with résistance fighters. The stories told and the objects selected made sense to most Luxembourgers who had firsthand memories of the War years. Today, this exhibition gives the impression of being a memorial.

With the passing of the World War II generation, the second exhibition was free to bring multiple perspectives to the past. It challenged Luxembourg's comfortable self-image as a hapless victim of German aggression.

Régis MOES, *La Guerre froide au Luxembourg* au Musée national d'Histoire et d'Art. Comment présenter un sujet peu étudié dans l'historiographie à un grand public ? [The Cold War in Luxembourg at the National Museum for History and Art. How to present a topic little explored by historiography to a large public?]

The article by Régis Moes, curator of an exhibition about Luxembourg during the Cold War presented at the National Museum for History and Art in Luxembourg (MNHA) in 2016, shows how the museum tried to display a scientifically accurate presentation of a subject not yet well researched in Luxembourg. Nonetheless, in the last years, contemporary Luxembourgish history has increasingly attracted the interest of scholars as well as of the general public. Even if research about the impact of the Cold War on political, social and economic history in Luxembourg is still limited, the exhibition allowed to give a first glance of a complex history that shows that the master narrative of a politically appeased country after Second World War needs to be nuanced. After a short historiographical review, the article illustrates how deeply Luxembourg, as a founding Member of NATO, was involved in the Western Bloc. The introduction of compulsory military service between 1944 and 1967 had, for example, a real impact on everyday life. The Cold War shaped national politics, even at the local level in certain municipalities, but also Luxembourgish foreign policy. The Cold War made it possible to marginalize certain political forces that were not enough tough on Communism. However, over time these approaches changed. The exhibition also provided an opportunity to collect new oral histories testimonies of the time of the Cold War in Luxembourg that will allow new research to delve further into this subject.

Nicole KERSCHEN, *Des Assurances sociales à la Sécurité sociale. Influences des modèles étrangers et Européanisation* [From Social Insurance to Social Security. Influences from foreign models and Europeanisation]

The general outlines of the evolution of the Luxembourg social security system from its origins to 2015 are indicated through the influence of foreign models and Europeanisation. The analysis focuses on three relevant historical moments: the creation of the system under the auspices of Bismarck and his social insurance model at the beginning of the 20th century, its extension to the whole working population after World War II thanks to the universality principle of the Beveridge Report and the current paradigm change under the pressure of the European Union.

Furthermore, a research program, whose aim it would be to deepen and improve the knowledge of the Luxembourg Welfare State model and its transformations, is suggested. The main objectives of this project would be to create a multidisciplinary team of researchers in Luxembourg, to establish an exhaustive bibliography on the Luxembourg model, to elaborate fundamental issues for a multiannual research program and to start comparative and European studies with foreign research institutes.

Fernand FEHLEN, Les migrations au cœur des mutations sociales et démographiques de la société luxembourgeoise [Migrations: A question at the heart of social and demographical transformations of Luxembourg society].

This contribution provides an overview of the most important publications on migration in Luxembourg, published since the second *Assises de l'Historiographie* in 2007. This period is characterized by a large number of qualification works and other academic publications, focusing among others on the Portuguese migration and the role of the Jewish community in the Grand Duchy. Besides this overview, the following topics are elaborated: emigration to the new world, especially in the United States; a controversy over statistics, in particular the demographic importance of emigration in the nineteenth century and the generally over-estimated emigration to the U.S.A.; the balance between emigration and immigration over the last 150 years, etc. The last section discusses the conceptualization of migrations beyond 'methodological nationalism'.

Daniel THILMAN, La participation des Juifs au Luxembourg à la vie politique dans l'entre-deux-guerres [The political participation of Jews in Luxembourg between the two World Wars]

Apart from Marcel Cahen, deputy mayor and member of the Luxembourgish Parliament, little is known about the political engagement of the Jewish Community in Luxembourg.

Intrigued by these observations, Daniel Thilman decided to research the political involvement of the Jewish Community in Luxembourgish cities and villages with an elevated population of Jews, focusing on the time period from 1920 to 1940. In contrast to Cerf and Lehrmann's reports, the current research indicates that Luxembourgish Jews were regularly represented as candidates in local elections. They won elections in Differdange, Luxembourg-City and Ettelbrück and received votes from both Jews and Non-Jews, demonstrating their acceptance in society. Not only Luxembourgish Jews but also foreign Jews who had been living in Luxembourg for more than 10 years showed political involvement. Unable to stand as candidates in elections due to their foreign nationality, they would act as supporters or sympathisers of (left wing / socialist / communist) labour unions and political parties. Three of these individuals went as far as volunteering in the Spanish Civil War.

Furthermore, Thilman's findings indicate different political affiliations between these groups with the Luxembourgish Jews leaning towards moderate left- or centre-left parties and the foreign Jews leaning more towards the left or radical left.