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Rethinking Burckhardt and Huizinga. A Transformation of Temporal Images¹

Harry Jansen

ABSTRACT

Burckhardt's *The civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* has been very influential regarding views on European history from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. It gives the impression that Renaissance Italy was the cultural birthplace of modern Europe. Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* is that work's counterpart, stating that Northwest Europe in the same period showed strong medieval features. Both authors agree that Italy was the most modern region in Europe and that the North-West was backward. They also concur in their metaphorical approach and homogeneous temporality. However, their studies contradict recent historical research of the past fifty years, which has demonstrated a new view of developments in that period, when Europe changed from a Mediterranean-oriented to an Atlantic-oriented continent. This new research reveals new images and new temporalities, making use of a heterogeneous perception of time and focusing on the coevalness of the non-coeval that leads to metonymical images of Italy and Northwest Europe. Thus the development of the old to new research switches from a metaphorical to a metonymical representation in the historiography of the aforementioned period.

KEYWORDS: Mediterranean-oriented Europe, Atlantic-oriented Europe, Burckhardt, Huizinga, the Renaissance, the Burgundian Netherlands, Metaphor, Metonym, Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Temporality.

THE main aspect of the contemporary crisis in Europe is a clear predominance of the North over the South. The historical question arises whether this domination has always existed. The answer is: once the reverse was true. A quote by the well-known Italian historian Carlo Cipolla confirms this: "there is no doubt that from the fall of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the thirteenth century, Europe was an underdeveloped area in relation to the major centres of civilization at the time [...] clearly a land of barbarians".²

Where and when can we find the historical roots of the contemporary dominance of the North? Modern research displays a shift from Southern to Northern Europe already in the period 1250 to 1650. In *The First Modern Economy*, Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude argue that a modern economy developed for the first time in sixteenth-century Holland, not in eighteenth-century England.³ French historian Fernand Braudel refers to the fact that in the sixteenth century, the Dutch and the English took over significant aspects of Spanish and Venetian trade in the Mediter-

¹ I would like to thank Val Kidd for her help in editing this paper.

² Cipolla's quote is taken from Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 106.

³ Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy. Success, Failure and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy 1600-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

anean.⁴ Jonathan Israel comes to a similar conclusion by comparing the French and Dutch trading yields to those of the Venetians between 1604 and 1613. Venetian revenues declined by a quarter in that period, while the French doubled and the Dutch even tripled theirs.⁵ Thus the final shift to an Atlantic Europe came within sight in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Looking back to the thirteenth century, American historian Janet Abu-Lughod shows the importance of Mediterranean trade from 1250 to 1350, although at the same time she brings this into perspective. She observes that its survival depended on several other systems. In the first part of her book, she elaborates on a system that evolved in the direction of Northwest Europe.⁶ In her dissertation, Charlotte Weeda asserts that the shift to an Atlantic Europe likely started even earlier than the period from 1250 to 1650.⁷

The Renaissance of the twelfth century, and even perhaps the Carolingian Renaissance, already displayed a certain emancipation of Western Europe compared to the still dominant Mediterranean part of the European continent. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, this emancipation was vigorously pursued, ending in a final shift to an Atlantic Europe by around 1650. Consequently, it is clear that from 1250 to 1650, Northern Italy was the last bastion of a downward spiralling Mediterranean culture. At the same time, Northwest Europe became the nucleus of a new, Atlantic civilization.⁸

Despite these new insights, the old images remain. The Italian Renaissance is etched in our collective memory as the source of the modernization of Europe. The reason for the persistence of these old representations can be found in Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.⁹ Moreover Dutch historian Johan Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* unintentionally underlines it.¹⁰ The latter sees France and the Burgundian Netherlands of the same period as still strongly medieval. The image of Europe from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century

⁴ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York: Collins, 1972): "The new element was the massive invasion by Nordic ships after the 1590s", 119 and "How the Dutch took Seville after 1570 without firing a shot", 636.

⁵ Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade 1585-1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 99.

⁶ Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 43-136 and map at 34.

⁷ "The ramification of the convergence of classical and patristic geographical concepts effected the belief that the heart of western Europe – northern France, was the home of Christendom, chivalry and learning. Earlier, in the ninth century, Carolingian intellectuals had articulated the concept of *translatio imperii* and *studium*, asserting that power and knowledge had migrated from east to west, from Athens, via Rome to France": Claire Weeda, *Images of Ethnicity in later Medieval Europe* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 2012), 326.

⁸ This involves new ideas about periodization. The current tripartite periodization of European history in Ancient, Medieval and Modern is simple and tough but not so innocuous as the Chicago professor Constantin Fasolt sees it. It originates from a Europe-centric view, that does not fit very well with contemporary post-colonial history and globalization. See Constantin Fasolt, "Breaking up time – Escaping from time: Self-assertion and knowledge of the past", *Breaking up Time. Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past and Future*, ed. by Chris Lorenz and Berber Bevernage (Göttingen-Bristol: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2013), 176-196, especially 195. See also Harry Jansen, "The Little Dog of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. On Nations, Globalization and Periodization in the History Curriculum", *World History Connected* 9, 3 (2012), <<http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/whcindex.html>>.

⁹ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (London-New York: Penguin Books, 1990).

¹⁰ Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (New York: Mineola, 1999).

is therefore determined by Italian modernity and the backlog in Northwest Europe.

The current periodization of European history is in line with Burckhardt's and Huizinga's studies. The Middle Ages still end around 1500 and the modern era begins with Burckhardt's Renaissance around 1300. Although there is a fierce contradiction here, it is hardly of any concern to most Western historians.¹¹ Moreover, that periodization has clearly a single European focus, which, in the context of the above-mentioned modern research, can be replaced with a more global European time format.¹²

We should not perceive the persistence of Burckhardt and Huizinga's images as a reproach to either author. Rather, we must admire the brilliance of their visions, which still endure the storms of modern research.¹³ This article will not lift them from their deserved pedestals. I only wish to stress that modern research needs new representations with new foundations. Thus my first aim is to examine how Burckhardt and Huizinga acquired their images.

I also think that Burckhardt's and Huizinga's representations are based on special forms of temporality. In the first part of this paper, I discuss that new representations of the period 1250 to 1650 have to begin by insightfully examining Burckhardt's and Huizinga's presuppositions of history writing and the associated notions of time.¹⁴ The second half of my paper discusses that the new research on this period should be based not only on new historiographical insights, but also on new philosophical views of temporality.¹⁵ Cambridge professor of cultural history Peter Burke in his *The Renaissance* criticizes Burckhardt's study.¹⁶ Dutch historian F. Hugenholtz in *Ridderkrijg en burgersvrede* (Knights' War and Civilians' Peace) does the same with Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages*.¹⁷ Their critique gives us several clues concerning a new, in fact more spatial comprehension of time on which we can base a new periodization.¹⁸

¹¹ As far as I know, only the Dutch medievalist Peter Raedts has attempted to construct an alternative periodization. See Peter Raedts, "Tussen oud en modern. De periodisering van de middeleeuwen", *De ongreijpbare tijd. Temporaliteit en de constructie van het verleden*, ed. by Maria Grever and Harry Jansen (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2001), 49-64.

¹² Harry Jansen, "The Little Dog of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi".

¹³ As Peter Burke states: "Burckhardt's view of the Renaissance may be easy to criticize, but it is difficult to replace". Peter Burke, "Introduction", in Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 14.

¹⁴ Huizinga and Burckhardt did not have explicit notions of time. However, implicitly they did, and this paper deals with these perceptions. Only recently have time perceptions and experiences returned to the historians' agendas, yet there are already numerous publications such as Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979); Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vols. I, II, III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-1990); David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Peter Burke, "Reflections on the Cultural History of Time", *Viator*, XXXV (2004): 617-626; *Breaking up Time. Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past and Future*. Especially the last-mentioned study focuses on a heterogeneous temporality next to a homogeneous one.

¹⁵ For the relationship between philosophy of history and historiography, see Harry Jansen, "Is there a Future for History? On the Need for a Philosophy of History and Historiography", *BMGN - LCHR* 127, 4 (2012): 121-129.

¹⁶ Peter Burke, *The Renaissance* (New York: Palgrave, 1997).

¹⁷ Frederik Willem Nikolaas Hugenholtz, *Ridderkrijg en burgersvrede. West-Europa aan de vooravond van de Honderdjarige Oorlog* (Haarlem: Fibula-Van Dishoek, 1980).

¹⁸ Space is a widely debated topic. The October 2013 edition of *History and Theory* highlights this topic. Participants in the discussion even speak of a 'spatial turn'. I do not wish to take sides, but use the term space "as a universal or infinite [...] plane on which locations are situated. This is the sense of space as most

1. BURCKHARDT AND HUIZINGA

The Waning of the Middle Ages and *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* elaborate on a great multitude of subjects. Huizinga's work contains 22 chapters, while Burckhardt's has 6.¹⁹ In Burckhardt's study, some chapters are sub-divided into more than a hundred items.²⁰ Theoretician of literature Herman Northrop Frye refers to this encyclopaedic avalanche of subjects as a Mennipic satire. Hans Kellner applied Frye's concept on historiography in his analysis of Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. He sees the Mennipic satire as an instrument to convince readers of the author's enthusiasm for his subject. According to Frye and Kellner, he overwhelms his readers with a large amount of erudition.²¹

The question arises how the two historians bring unity and coherence to their informative excess. The answer is: with a metaphoric approach. For all the items Burckhardt discusses, he shows their Renaissance character; Huizinga does the same by displaying the waning and autumnal aspects of the subjects he describes.

Burckhardt sees the Italian Quattro, Cinque and Seicento as a modern period with all kinds of non-medieval and pagan phenomena. In the first chapter of his book, he states: "a new fact appears in history – the state as the outcome of reflection and calculation, the state as a work of art".²² In a comment on Petrarch's passage about the Lord of Padua, Burckhardt epitomizes his modernity approach: "Here follows, worked out in detail, the purely modern fiction of the omnipotence of the state".²³ Burckhardt's own time, the nineteenth century, contributed to this image, because by then that 'almost omnipotent' state was generally accepted as the result of an artistically designed constitution.

In his first chapter entitled "The state as a work of art" Burckhardt also displays modernity in the battles, murders and the nepotism of popes, princes and states. The second chapter deals with "The development of the individual", in his eyes also a modern phenomenon. Only in the third chapter does "The revival of Antiquity" come to the fore. That seems rather late for a subject like 'Renaissance' which earmarked an entire period. It demonstrates that Burckhardt perceives 'modernity' not 'Antiquity' as the essential benchmark of the Renaissance.²⁴ Since Burckhardt, the metaphor of the late Middle Ages as a Renaissance has become almost commonplace.²⁵

Huizinga perceives the history of the Burgundian countries and France of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the slow decline of the Middle Ages. This period "re-

geographers mean it [...]". See Leif Jerram, "Space, a Useless Category for Historical Analysis?", *History and Theory* 52, 3 (2013): 400-420, esp. 405-406. This does not mean that I want to reinvent history by a spatial turn. I agree with Gerhard Schwerhoff's quote by Karl Schögel: "spatial turns" mean "an enhanced attention to the spatial side of the world – not more, but not less"; see Gerhard Schwerhoff, "Spaces, Places and Historians: a Comment from a German Perspective", *History and Theory* 52, 3 (2013): 420-432, especially 424.

¹⁹ The English edition calls them parts, not chapters.

²⁰ There are fewer items in the English edition.

²¹ Hans Kellner, "Disorderly Conduct: Braudel's Mediterranean Satire", *History and Theory* 18, 2 (1979): 197-222, especially 205.

²² Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 20.

²³ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 23.

²⁴ See also Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 258.

²⁵ Burke, "Introduction", in Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 12.

veals itself as an epoch of fading and decay".²⁶ Ideas, dreams, orders of chivalry, conventions of love, visions of life and death, types of religiosity, forms of thought, art and aesthetics are examples of the waning culture of the Burgundian Middle Ages. Huizinga captures the late Middle Ages with the metaphor of the Autumn.

Both authors' metaphoric approach also exhibits an aesthetic background. Burckhardt developed a great admiration for the Renaissance arts of architecture, sculpture and painting on his travels to Italy. Huizinga was struck by the medieval aspects of the paintings of Jan van Eyck and his Flemish contemporaries at an exhibition in Bruges in 1902.²⁷ Metaphoric representation provides a pictorial approach to the past. "Where others want to tell a story, Burckhardt's aim was to paint the portrait of an age".²⁸ The same is true for Huizinga. He portrays the age as a bunch of flowers. "In their variety and their difference in value, new notions added to the conception of a historical context are like newly found flowers in the nosegay: each one changes the appearance of the whole bouquet".²⁹ Both historians want to present images of the past.

A picture usually has a frame. In historiography, a frame means strict periodical borderlines. Phenomena appear all of a sudden and disappear unexpectedly.³⁰ Contrary to Ranke, Burckhardt and Huizinga do not want to write history with the intrigue of rise and fall.³¹ They see transitional periods in the light of synchronicity and discontinuity.³² *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* and *The Waning of the Middle Ages* are perfect examples of Mink's 'configurational thinking'. The authors perceive time as Mink does in his say, that time is like a "river in aerial view, upstream and downstream in a single survey".³³

By omitting a diachronic temporality of rise and fall and using a metaphoric survey, Burckhardt underlines the modernity of the Renaissance. He refers to the huge distress and dissension in Italy and the impact of foreign powers (France and Spain) in Italian politics, but does not want to perceive this as a decline. He points at the disunity in Germany, France and Spain to see Italian dissension in perspective and as a common phenomenon of the time.³⁴

²⁶ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, V.

²⁷ See *Herfsttij der middeleeuwen*, the Dutch version of *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, in Huizinga, *Verzamelde werken*, vol. III (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1949), 4.

²⁸ Burke, "Introduction", in Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 5.

²⁹ Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 39.

³⁰ Nietzsche, who has sat in Burckhardt's lecture hall, makes a statement that perfectly matches a pictorial approach to phenomena: "sie kommen wie das Schicksal, ohne Grund, Vernunft, Rücksicht, Vorwand, sie sind da wie der Blitz da ist, zu furchtbar, zu plötzlich, zu überzeugend, zu 'anders' um selbst auch nur gehasst zu werden". Terms like "plötzlich", "ohne Grund" and "sie sind da wie der Blitz da ist" illustrate Burckhardt's and Huizinga's historical writing as they did not intend to sketch the Italian Renaissance or Burgundian Autumn in their nascence, rise, greatness and decline.

³¹ Steven Smith describes Ranke's philosophical views of intrigue as: "The historian has to observe in one nation or another how men's enterprises begin, increase in power, rise and decline". Steven Smith, "Historical Meaningfulness in Shared Action", *History and Theory* 48, 1 (2009): 2, note 2.

³² On Burckhardt, see Frank Ankersmit, *Historical Representation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 134 and Frank Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 166-179.

³³ "To comprehend temporal succession, means to think of it in both directions at once and then time is no longer the river which bears us along, but the river in aerial view, upstream and downstream in a single survey". Louis Mink, *Historical Understanding* (London: Ithaca, 1987), 56-57.

³⁴ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 96-97.

The Preface of Huizinga's English edition states: "And it occasionally happens that a period in which one had, hitherto, been mainly looking for the coming to birth of new things, suddenly reveals itself as an epoch of fading and decay".³⁵ Thus *The Waning of the Middle Ages* seems to be more influenced by an intrigue of rise and decline. Yet in an epoch, Huizinga does not perceive a development of coming into being, growth and efflorescence, ending in decline and fall. He sees periods as epochs of either birth or fall. The perception of the fourteenth and fifteenth century as an autumn is not an organic view, but an expression of a nostalgic feeling (see the following section).

In another study, Huizinga explicitly rejects organic history writing; in his opinion, even the concept of development must be dismissed in historiography.³⁶ The autumn metaphor should not place Huizinga in Ranke's camp of romantic historicism. His work is as metaphoric and visual as Burckhardt's.³⁷ Both authors dislike and admire cultural phenomena in the epochs they study and perceive them from different perspectives: every phenomenon is like a sparkling drop of water, clinging to Indra's web. They are, in Leibnizian terms, monads forming together the colligatory concepts of Renaissance and Autumn.

2. NOSTALGIA

According to Frank Ankersmit, there is a rather narrow relationship between Huizinga's individual historical experience and his representation of the past in *The Waning of the Middle Ages*.³⁸ He even explains that someone struck by a sublime historical experience wants to display the past in a new and unexpected light. That is why the nostalgia mentioned above deserves closer attention.

Both Huizinga and Burckhardt show a longing for the past they study. Huizinga acknowledges this by stating that it is crucial for the historical researcher to achieve "the living contact of the mind with the old that was genuine and full of significance".³⁹ Burckhardt displays his affection for the past by saying that a historian's subject "needs to cohere sympathetically and mysteriously to the author's inmost being".⁴⁰ Burke attributes Burckhardt's affinity with the urban culture of the Renaissance to being a descendant of a patrician family in Basel, who continued to rule that city until the 1830s. The city-states of Renaissance Italy held a strong attraction for him. There was "an elective affinity between Burckhardt and his subject [...] stained by nostalgia for the world of his childhood [...]".⁴¹

Nostalgia does not always lead to glorifying the past as a lost paradise. Burckhardt's zest for Renaissance Italy is characterised by his interest in its disunity as a

³⁵ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, V.

³⁶ "The concept of evolution is of little utility in the study of history, and frequently has a disturbing, obstructive influence", Johan Huizinga, *History, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 29-39. See also Wessel Krul, *Historicus tegen de tijd* (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 1990), 228-229.

³⁷ See Bert Hoselitz, "Introduction", in Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 12. Hoselitz states: "The Waning of the Middle Ages may be likened to a vast canvas which, like the great altarpieces of the brothers Van Eyck, contains a prodigious variety of detail, yet does not distract from the central theme of the picture".

³⁸ Frank Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth and Reference in Historical Representation* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012), 205.

³⁹ Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 24.

⁴⁰ Burke, "Introduction", in Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 6.

⁴¹ Burke, "Introduction", in Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 9.

modern phenomenon. Therein he detects “the modern spirit of Europe, surrendered freely to its own instincts, often displaying the worst features of an unbridled egotism, outraging every right, and killing every germ of a healthier culture”.⁴² To this he adds, “it is due to the fact that he [Renaissance Italy] was the first-born among the sons of modern Europe”.⁴³

Burckhardt’s nostalgia leads to a misconceived perspective on Renaissance Italy. Huizinga and Burke reject the notion of Italian disunity as a source of modernity.⁴⁴ They perceive it the other way around: Renaissance Italy’s disunity and individualism lead to nostalgia for ancient Rome. Huizinga and Burke perceive the Italians in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth century as wanting to restore ancient Rome’s power. Both authors change Burckhardt’s reflective nostalgia, making it historical and restorative, namely the nostalgia of the Renaissance-Italians for ancient Rome.⁴⁵

Burke points at Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy* with its political and military arrangements, which according to its author, should be imitated by the states of his time. Renaissance Italy wanted “nothing less than restoration to life of ancient Rome”.⁴⁶ He underlines the sentiment of Renaissance nostalgia by referring to a cyclical approach to history in those days: “Like the ancients, many humanists believed in a cyclical interpretation of history, according to which, one age could be a kind of recurrence or rerun of an earlier one”.⁴⁷ Obviously, Burckhardt is not completely blind to these arguments. He bases Part III of his book, “The revival of Antiquity” on them.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the overall thesis is the modernity of the Renaissance.⁴⁹

For Huizinga the reverse is true: nostalgia is the source of the Renaissance. He links it with the political impotence of the Renaissance states to restore the Roman Empire and its glory. Huizinga refers to Rome’s tribune of the people in 1347, Cola di Rienzi (1313-1354), who called for the unity of Italy and the foundation of a universal empire. He “transformed that obsession with ancient Rome into a basis for political action”.⁵⁰ Huizinga mingles Renaissance nostalgia for Antiquity with a pious desire for a primitive Christianity. Both were “a longing to go backward in time: *renovatio, restitutio, restauratio*”.⁵¹

More than for Burckhardt or Burke, the Renaissance is for Huizinga a culture of nostalgia. With his underlining of the *restauratio* of ancient Rome as the main theme of the Italian Renaissance, he seems to relate it to the last flare-up of an age-old Mediterranean culture. Is Huizinga referring here to the well-known candle, burning brightly before it goes out?

This would confirm his view on *The Waning of the Middle Ages*; in that study, however, it is not nostalgia for Antiquity, but a longing for old chivalry and Christendom. The Burgundian elites of the fourteenth and fifteenth century are, according to Huizinga, more medieval than their predecessors were in former ages, just like the

⁴² Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 20.

⁴³ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 98.

⁴⁴ Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 281; Burke, *The Renaissance*, 57-58.

⁴⁵ For the difference between reflective and restorative nostalgia, see Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth and Reference*, 153-188.

⁴⁶ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 16.

⁴⁷ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 16.

⁴⁸ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 120-184.

⁴⁹ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 98. See also Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 257.

⁵⁰ Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 276.

⁵¹ Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 277.

Renaissance elites in the same centuries regarding their ancient ancestors. Huizinga's nostalgia is imbued with *restauratio*, while Burckhardt's is a mixture of a slight longing for Antiquity and a yearning for modernity.

3. BURCKHARDT AND HUIZINGA. AGREEMENTS IN THE DIFFERENCES

By stipulating the modernity of the Renaissance, Burckhardt articulates discontinuity between the Renaissance and the Middle Ages and underlines continuity with Modern Times. According to him, the Renaissance is the beginning of new perceptions of the world, of the individual and of the state. Burckhardt's view is in stark contrast with Huizinga's perception of the fourteenth and fifteenth century in Burgundy, France and the Netherlands. Huizinga stresses the strong medieval character of these ages, which were even more chivalrous and scholastic than earlier ages. He seeks discontinuity between the Middle Ages and Modern Times, stressing continuity (in discontinuity) between the fourteenth and earlier centuries.

Huizinga confirms this thesis in his *The Problem of the Renaissance*. There is no gap between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. "On closer inspection", he claims, "the great dividing lines might [...] prove to lie at least as clearly between Renaissance and modern culture".⁵² In Huizinga's view, the Renaissance is a "Sunday suit" and as such, a rather superficial phenomenon. "The [*medieval – Author's Note*] cultural development flows on underneath the Renaissance".⁵³ Individualism and paganism are extremely overstated in Burckhardt's Renaissance study, and binding authority underestimated.⁵⁴ Huizinga: "The spirit of the Renaissance is indeed much less modern than one is constantly inclined to believe".⁵⁵

Burckhardt captures the late Middle Ages with the metaphor of the Renaissance, seeing them as a starting point for modernity. Huizinga uses the metaphor of the Autumn to portray these ages as being still medieval. Notwithstanding all these differences, there are similarities in Burckhardt's and Huizinga's views. Both take linear modernity as a norm for developments in history. Modernity determines continuity or discontinuity. Burckhardt displays discontinuity about 1300, Huizinga around 1550, but both conceive the period of the fourteenth to the sixteenth century in a homogeneous temporality of continuity.

A homogeneous temporality is a form of time in which an epoch of transformation, like the Renaissance or the end of the Middle Ages, features endurance that dominates discontinuity. Within the transformation period, there are never sudden and abrupt changes, an entire civilization is never overthrown. Change in continuity evokes an image of waves, and indeed Huizinga describes the end of the Middle Ages as "a long succession of waves rolling onto a beach, each breaking at a different point and a different moment".⁵⁶

Ricoeur says a waving temporality shows concordance in its discordance, but after all, it is a homogeneous time.⁵⁷ Ricoeur is Augustinian in his conception of time, which means defining time as a *distentio animi* and *intentio animi*. For Ricoeur as for

⁵² Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 268.

⁵⁴ Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 271-273.

⁵⁶ Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 282.

⁵³ Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 270.

⁵⁵ Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, 271.

⁵⁷ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. I, 38-51.

Augustine, time is a distance in the mind as well as an intention of the soul to reach eternity.⁵⁸ Therefore Ricoeur's time is an idea that has no spatial connotation.⁵⁹

A time that encloses space in its conception becomes heterogeneous. It is a temporality that stems from Ernst Bloch, Reinhart Koselleck and Louis Althusser, and is applied by Braudel and Wallerstein in their historical studies.⁶⁰ Their works display a composite temporality, which we also find in the earlier mentioned modern historical research.

4. BURKE'S CRITIQUE OF BURCKHARDT

Burke's critique of Burckhardt and Hugenholtz's of Huizinga have spatial time as their common denominator. Hugenholtz shows more modern developments in the Burgundian Netherlands than Huizinga wants to see. Burke's *The Renaissance* shows that Burckhardt's Renaissance is not only less modern than the Swiss historian demonstrates, but also hints at a more fundamental transformation outside Italy. He sees Burckhardt's Renaissance as a metaphor of awakening and rebirth.⁶¹ Awakening and rebirth were originally tropes with a religious connotation, according to Burke. He states, that in Burckhardt's view, these tropes in the Renaissance were applied anew, but now to scholarly and artistic movements. Hence he added to the notion of reviving classical antiquity, new formulae like individualism, realism and modernity.⁶² Rebirth and awakening thus became a mixture of the revival of old times and the expectation of new ones. In Burckhardt's Renaissance, expectation won from revival, whereas for Burke the reverse is true.

Burke sees the Renaissance as a revival of classical forms, most obviously in architecture and sculpture. There was some innovation in art, without reference to antiquity, namely the discovery of linear perspective. In the *bonae literae* however, there was no rise of the vernacular as innovation, but a revival of classical Latin. Also humanism was an effort to imitate the education system of ancient Rome.⁶³

Renaissance and humanism were urban elite movements. More than their medieval predecessors, these elites were conscious of the cultural distance between themselves and the classical past, evident in the corruption of language and the arts.⁶⁴ This distance brought them to such a restorative nostalgia, that they considered themselves 'patricians' or even 'consuls'. Consequently, they spoke of their town councils as 'senates' and their city as a 'new Rome'.⁶⁵

Unlike Burckhardt and Huizinga, Burke highlights the dispersion of Italy's Renaissance ideas into the rest of Europe. Especially between the 1430s and 1540s, there was a humanist 'brain drain' to Spain, Portugal, Poland, France, England and Hungary.

⁵⁸ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. I, 16-30.

⁵⁹ Harry Jansen, "Time, Narrative and Fiction: The Uneasy Relationship between Ricoeur and a Heterogeneous Temporality", *History and Theory* 54, 1 (2015): 1-24.

⁶⁰ For a summary of the heterogeneous temporality of these philosophers, see Berber Bevernage, "Time, Presence and Historical Injustice", *History and Theory* 47, 2 (2008): 149-167, especially 157-158.

⁶¹ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 1-2.

⁶² Burke, *The Renaissance*, 3.

⁶³ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 14.

⁶⁴ This is a different nostalgia, an experience of distance between past and present; a reflective nostalgia, not based on an experience in the past itself, as is the case with Burckhardt and Huizinga, see Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth and Reference*, 185.

⁶⁵ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 24.

Foreigners came to Bologna and Padua to study law and medicine, among them probably Copernicus and Vesalius. Artists like Albrecht Dürer, Jan van Scorel and his pupil, Martin van Heemskerck, developed their own Renaissance view of the world in Italy.⁶⁶ Burke underlines that the non-Italians made their own Renaissance, “shaped by their own needs and desires”.⁶⁷

Often the Northern Renaissance took on an anti-Italian or an anti-papist form. It rested on the (however false) assumption that the Italian Renaissance was pagan, which did not suit the more religious humanism of transmontane Europe. On the other side of the Alps, early Christianity was more a field of interest than Cicero or Seneca. Erasmus was the protagonist of Christian humanism at its height in the first two decades of the sixteenth century. Although Luther and other Reformers were seen as anti-humanists because of their denial of free will, they were not enemies of the *studia humanitatis*. Luther even saw the revival of ancient learning as willed by God to prepare the reform of the Church.⁶⁸

The most noteworthy statement by Burke concerns the end of the Renaissance. He even asserts that “End” is “too decisive a word in this case”.⁶⁹ The Renaissance does not end, in his view, but “disintegrates”.⁷⁰ Burke thus opposes Burckhardt’s metaphoric approach to this subject, so characteristic of his and Huizinga’s history writing. As I showed earlier, metaphoric historiography has in fact discontinuing beginnings and endings. Burke situates the end of the Renaissance in what is called the ‘Scientific Revolution’ of the 1620s and 1630s. It brings:

a new picture of the universe in which the earth was no longer central, the heavens were no longer incorruptible, and the workings of the cosmos could be explained by the laws of mechanics. [...] Classical and Renaissance views of the universe were now rejected.⁷¹

And Burke adds an important sentence: “It should now be obvious why it has become impossible to share Burckhardt’s view of the Renaissance as obviously modern”.⁷²

The Renaissance is, according to Burke, an interval that disintegrates gradually. It thus becomes a period that is neither medieval, nor modern. By seeing the Renaissance as a topple era, he joins the research after the Second World War, mentioned in my introduction. Moreover, he confirms Huizinga’s view, that the Renaissance is not as modern as Burckhardt presumes.

Even more important is Burke’s remark that the Renaissance is not a modernizing era, but a period of ‘westernization of the west’. Then Europeans experienced a different development than people in other continents. They replaced the study of ancient and authoritative texts with systematic observation and experiment. New discoveries corroborated the superiority of Europeans over other parts of the world and in addition, the superiority of the ‘moderns’ over the ‘ancients’.⁷³ Just like Huizinga, Burke rejects the idea of a simple evolutionary model of cultural change. Time is not as homogeneous as that. Aristotelian learning could be a good test case. Aristoteles was the master of a score of European intellectuals “from his discovery in

⁶⁶ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 31-33.

⁶⁸ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 40.

⁷⁰ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 55.

⁷² Burke, *The Renaissance*, 56.

⁶⁷ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 33.

⁶⁹ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 49.

⁷¹ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 56. See also 58.

⁷³ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 56 and 59.

the thirteenth century to his rejection some four hundred years later".⁷⁴ Thus there is a period from 1250 to 1650, an 'Aristotelian epoch' so to say, covering revival and awakening.

It is in this period that Europe transformed from an Antiquity-minded to a Humanist- and Reformation-minded continent. By using the term "westernization of the west", Burke sees Europe transforming from a Mediterranean to an Atlantic-oriented continent.⁷⁵ Thus, Burke takes a first step towards a more spatial temporality. In any case he abandons a temporal view of the Renaissance as still modern, fiercely defended by Burckhardt. Implicitly he also rejects the notion that the end of the Middle Ages was medieval, as Huizinga insisted. Both authors make use of temporalities which are homogeneous and linear. Burke replaces them with a more Northwest-European 'time-space', which is neither modern, nor medieval.⁷⁶ It is a time-space with a mix of traditional and new insights, a mix of revival and awakening.

5. HUGENHOLTZ'S CRITIQUE OF HUIZINGA

In *Ridderkrijg en burgervrede*, Hugenholtz elaborates on the nostalgia in Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. He doubts the exclusively medieval characteristics in this work by Huizinga. Hugenholtz begins with the so-called *Gulden Sporenslag* (the Battle of the Golden Spurs) in 1302. The significance of that battle does not lie in its military consequences, but in the role urban citizens have played on the political stage since then. The battle of 1302 was not only a feudal uprising by a vassal, the Flemish count, against his French suzerain, but also by the citizens of Ghent and Bruges against the French king's arbitrary taxation.

Hugenholtz places the victory of the Flemish count and his people in the context of the rising power of the Dutch principalities in the run-up to the Hundred Years War (1337-1453). His study covers its starting point and he refers to the successful endeavours of the English king in getting the Dutch principalities on his side, or preventing them from taking the side of the French king. Hugenholtz highlights Huizinga's misconception in explaining the English king's triumph. This success was not, as Huizinga claims, down to the fact that the English king managed "to convince (the Dutch princes) of his genuine claim to the French throne". The real reason was not an agreement between aristocrats, but as I will show hereafter, economic needs. Hugenholtz argues that Huizinga's fallacy originates in his choice of sources. His main informants are the chroniclers Jehan le Bel, Froissart and Chastelain. They have a feudal worldview, in which it is all about a knight's honour, the *faits et gestes* of feudal courts and the importance of political, ideological and military aspects of the Hundred Years War.

Hugenholtz underlines that the English king claiming the French throne was an argument used by those chroniclers.⁷⁷ He finds that Huizinga relies too much on them for presenting the causes of the great Anglo-French War. Indeed, the discussion in the chronicles regarding the causes of the Hundred Years War is about feudal rights. The English feudal argument is that, when the last king of the house of Capet died in 1327, Philippe de Valois wrongly acquired the French throne. Edward III, king

⁷⁴ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 59.

⁷⁶ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 57-61.

⁷⁵ Burke, *The Renaissance*, 59.

⁷⁷ Hugenholtz, *Ridderkrijg en burgervrede*, 35-36.

of England from 1327 until 1377, had a closer consanguinity to the last French king than Philippe. The French chroniclers argue that the French suzerain's English vassal refused to meet his feudal obligations.

However, the English feudal arguments did not, according to Hugenholtz, persuade the Flemish and Dutch princes. The English king won them over because he "buys his allies with economic advantages, especially with wool".⁷⁸ Hugenholtz perceives Edward III as a merchant-king, who forced Flanders and other Dutch principalities to take his side. He promised potential Dutch allies wool staples and threatened enemies with halting wool exports.⁷⁹

Huizinga ignores, according to Hugenholtz, archive material like contracts and treatises.⁸⁰ If you study these sources alongside those of the chroniclers, a different picture emerges, of towns in the Burgundian Netherlands displaying economic growth. In the Southern parts of the Low Countries, connections were formed with cities in Northern Italy. The Champagne fairs in Northern France connected these two major economic zones of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth century. In the early fourteenth century, trade over sea replaced overland trade. Hugenholtz comments:

The new meeting place is the North Sea. That is where the North and the South's trading systems encounter each other. In the North, the German Hanseatic League organizes trade, making London and Bruges international seaports. Goods from everywhere are exchanged, unhampered by the fixed times and places of trade fairs. Foreigners get their permanent representatives or trading offices, such as the *Stahlhof* (Steelyard), the Hanseatic League's main trading base in London, Italian commercial houses and banks in Flanders. Economic relations become stable and traffic and transport continuous.⁸¹

Hugenholtz is joined by Braudel, who sees the Netherlands and Italy as the two potential core zones of a European world-economy.⁸² Abu-Lughod in her *Before European Hegemony* confirms Braudel's idea. She outlines eight world systems which functioned between 1250 and 1350. The first system is between Northern Italy and the Low Countries.⁸³ Abu-Lughod's book ends in 1350 and Hugenholtz describes the working of that system after 1350.⁸⁴ He stipulates, as we saw above, the significance of Bruges and the Hanseatic League on one side and the Northern Italian cities on the other.

Hugenholtz also points at the political consequences of the growing economic significance of the Low Countries. In the fourth chapter of his book, "Va-et-vient at Valenciennes", he discusses the role of Count William I of Hainout and his court at Valenciennes. William is also Count of Holland, where he had the title William III. (Hereafter I will refer to him as William III.) By his marriage to Jehanne, the French king's sister, he was initially on the side of France. As the French-English war was increasingly inevitable, he gradually became friendlier with the English. This Anglo-

⁷⁸ Hugenholtz, *Ridderkrijg en burgervrede*, 36.

⁷⁹ Hugenholtz, *Ridderkrijg en burgervrede*, 36.

⁸⁰ Hugenholtz, *Ridderkrijg en burgervrede*, 111.

⁸¹ Hugenholtz, *Ridderkrijg en burgervrede*, 33. Quote translated by Harry Jansen.

⁸² Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism 15th-18th century*, vol. II *The Wheels of Commerce*, translation by Sian Reynolds (London: Collins; New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 111.

⁸³ Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 51-101. Chapter 2 is about the first system.

⁸⁴ Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, Part I "The European subsystem", 43-136.

mindedness led to the marriage of William's daughter Philippa to the later English king, Edward III. However, Jehanne remained faithful to her brother, the French king, and that is why the court at Valenciennes became an important meeting place for diplomats.⁸⁵

To this diplomatic adroitness, William added an extended form of family politics. Apart from Philippa marrying the English king, another daughter, Margaretha, married Louis of Bavaria, Roman Emperor and king of Germany. Other children married important princes in the Netherlands and the German Empire. That is why William III is called "the father-in-law of Europe". Ultimately, the *va-et-vient* at Valenciennes enabled Edward III, with the help of William, to gain a stronger position in the Low Countries than any English king had ever enjoyed. This put a halt to France's dominance.

The German philosopher Walter Benjamin could have used the concept of *Jetztzeit* to describe William's role in the Low Countries of his time, however, there is no indication that he did. *Jetztzeit*, according to Benjamin, is the announcement of a promise, which will be fulfilled at a later time. If we adopt for a moment Benjamin's *Jetztzeit*, Count William III can be seen as the forerunner of that other William III, the Stadholder-King, also a promoter of good relations between Britain and the Low Countries. Thus Benjamin's concept applied to William III, puts us on the track of a new epoch in European history.⁸⁶

With his criticism, Hugenholtz displays a picture of Northwest Europe that is less medieval than Huizinga sketches in his *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. Hugenholtz's critique makes the Burgundian Netherlands not immediately modern. In the space around the North Sea, the knights' yearning for war and the citizens' desire for peace existed alongside each other. Older, more traditional thoughts and experiences coexisted with newer ones. This was a composite time. A time when nostalgia had been brought into perspective. Nostalgia in both forms is very much related to metaphor, as the studies by Burckhardt and Huizinga show. Composite time is closely connected to place and, as we will see in my final paragraph, therefore metonymical in character.

The German philosopher Ernst Bloch, in the footsteps of Marx, stated that composite temporality synchronizes non-synchronical times:

A single sentence of Marx contains almost the entire theory of non-synchronism: however this sentence is far from a uni-linear succession (and nothing but succession) of an idealistic dialectic. In the Introduction to his *German Ideology*, Marx noted the development of a productive force: "It goes further, but slowly: the different [losing] levels and interests are never completely overcome, they drag on continuously next to the winning ones, even for centuries".⁸⁷

Such a perception of time applied to France, England and the Low Countries is more accurate than Huizinga's Autumnal image. Synchrony of non-synchronic times or

⁸⁵ Hugenholtz, *Ridderkrijg en burgervrede*, 63-77.

⁸⁶ See also Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Monadology* (1714), 22: "And as every present state of a simple substance is naturally a consequence of its preceding state, in such a way that its present is big with its future".

⁸⁷ Ernst Bloch, "Ungleichzeitigkeit, nicht nur Rückständigkeit", in Id., *Philosophische Aufsätze zur objektiven Phantasie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969), 41-49.

coevalness of the non-coeval conjure up a picture of a mixed society with a successful future. It is an Atlantic orientation of Western Europe and that picture will slowly, but irresistibly expunge the medieval past. Hugenholtz confirms Burke's "westernization of the west".

6. ITALY, AN 'INN OF SORROW'

The developments in Italy confirm Burke's and Hugenholtz's views. Europe's orientation from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic is mirrored in a corresponding South-North process on the Italian peninsula. To substantiate this, I would like to refer once again to Cipolla's statement, that from the fall of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Mediterranean was the major centre of the world.⁸⁸ In that world, an orphan from the Hohenstaufen family was raised, who would become King of Sicily and Emperor of the Holy German Empire. This orphan, Frederick II (1194-1250), was the personification of a longing for a remote Roman past. He even tried to restore the old Roman Empire. However, that same nostalgia made him partly responsible for the decline of Mediterranean culture in Italy.

The realization of his nostalgic dream urged Frederick to make money, thus he reformed the mint, built his own fleet and concluded a trade agreement with Al Kamil, the sultan of Egypt.⁸⁹ All these actions brought him in conflict with the pope, the feudal princes in his Sicilian kingdom and most of the cities in Northern Italy. Burckhardt draws a Mediterranean picture of Frederick's economic and institutional policy, which displays Burckhardt's rather islamophobic view.⁹⁰ He writes:

His acquaintance with the internal condition and administration of the Saracenic states was close and intimate. [...] The taxes, based on a comprehensive assessment and distributed in accordance with Muhammedan usages, were collected by those cruel and vexatious methods without which, it is true, it is impossible to obtain any money from Orientals. [...] It was after the example of Muhammedan rules that Frederick traded on his own account in all parts of the Mediterranean, reserving to himself the monopoly of many commodities, and restricting in various ways the commerce of its subjects [...].⁹¹

Despite the islamophobia, Burckhardt's statement makes it clear that the kingdom of Sicily is part and parcel of a long lasting Mediterranean culture. Abu-Lughod writes about the Italian dominance in Mediterranean long distance trade and the four cities that thrived as a result: Venice and Genoa as commercial cities, Milan as an industrial centre and Florence as the financial Wall Street of its time. However, her book elaborates on the Mediterranean economy after 1250, the year Frederick II died. If she had begun her research in for instance 1200, she surely would have spoken of the Italian big five. Sicily would have been the fifth economic power in the Mediterranean at that time.

Abu-Lughod's omission of Sicily after 1250 corresponds with Burckhardt's criticism of Frederick II. Burckhardt is convinced that the decline of Southern Italy started

⁸⁸ See the introduction to this paper and Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 106.

⁸⁹ Wolfgang Stürner, *Friedrich II. Der Kaiser 1220-1250*, Teil 2 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003), 30-39.

⁹⁰ Although Burckhardt did not like Hegel's philosophy of history, he certainly adopted Hegel's islamophobic view.

⁹¹ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 20-21.

with Frederick's reign, especially after 1230. He shows the effect of Frederick's economic policy on Southern Italy, not in his *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, but in his *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*. He states there, that "Frederick's general crime is that Lower Italy, notwithstanding how this may go against civilization, has been closed off from the western world since then".⁹² Burckhardt is not the only one who highlights the decline of Southern Italy after Frederick's death. Eberhard Horst, sixty years after Burckhardt published his *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, asserted about the kingdom of Sicily, that "one of the wealthiest and best governed regions of Europe has become one of the poorest and most underdeveloped".⁹³

Abu-Lughod correctly does not include Sicily among the economic superpowers in Italy after 1250. Genoa remained a commercial power till the end of the thirteenth century. Around 1290, having taken over the Genoese Egyptian trade, Venice then became the only agency connecting the Mediterranean economic system with the Indian Ocean, and thus grew to be the sole commercial superpower in Italy.⁹⁴ The Black Death in the middle of the fourteenth century was fatal for Genoa and Venice also suffered severely. However, Venice survived thanks to its good relationship with the Egyptian Mameluk sultans. The galley service from Venice to Alexandria, established in 1346, continued even in the fifteenth century.⁹⁵

The economic contraction from Southern to Northern Italy was accompanied by a loss of political influence from Rome. The emperor, still a Roman prince through his papal coronation, saw his universal claims vanish in thin air during the Interregnum from 1256 to 1273. The popes lost their universal authority when the papal seat was removed to Avignon from 1309 until 1378. After respectively 1273 and 1378, neither the emperors nor the papacy could reaffirm their prestige in the world.

This loss of universal political entitlement along with the contraction of economic wealth in Northern Italy, especially in Venice, make the Italian Renaissance an exclusively cultural phenomenon, based on nostalgia for ancient glory. Dante's words: "Ahi serva Italia, di dolore ostello" ("Thou inn of sorrow, ah trampled Italy") provide a forceful description of Italy's painful loss of all universal dominions.⁹⁶

7. NEW REPRESENTATIONS

In their Renaissance studies, Burke and Huizinga focus on the nostalgia in Italy. Nostalgia for a world in which the Mediterranean was still 'mare nostrum' and Rome the capital. The Renaissance is not a real yearning for modernity, as Burckhardt wished, but an unrealistic dream of a minority of Italian citizens. More an utterance of nostalgia than a movement of modernity, it was, as we have seen before, what Huizinga calls "a Sunday suit". Against the backdrop of economic decline and political distress, Italy was more an "inn of sorrow" than a breeding ground for modernity.

In order to erase Huizinga's image of Burgundy and France in the fourteenth and fifteenth century as a medieval, rather backward region in Europe and Burckhardt's

⁹² "Das grosse Generalverbrechen aber ist die Kulturwidrige Absperrung Unteritaliens vom Abendlande", Jacob Burckhardt, *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (Berlin-Stuttgart: W. Spemann, 1910), 92.

⁹³ "Aus dem reichsten und bestverwalteten Land Europas ist eines seiner ärmsten und rückständigsten Gebiete geworden". Eberhard Horst, *Friedrich II, der Staufer. Kaiser, Feldherr, Dichter* (Düsseldorf: Claassen, 1990), 14.

⁹⁴ Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 127-129 and 215-216.

⁹⁵ Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 215.

⁹⁶ A quote borrowed from Johan Huizinga, "Patriotism and Nationalism", *Men and Ideas*, 113.

view of Italy as the incubator of modernity, we need to replace them with new images. I would like to base the new representations on a 'space-time' approach where there is a Mediterranean Europe, which is part of a world system as Abu-Lughod calls it. Referring to Cipolla, Abu-Lughod asserts that this world system had a long history and reached its apogee from 1250 to 1350. In Italy, it led to the dominance of the big four, Venice, Genoa, Milan and Florence. After 1350, the Mediterranean system deteriorated, at least for Italy. In Abu-Lughod's words: "In the fifteenth century, the connection between Venice and Egypt was all that remained of the world system created in the thirteenth century".⁹⁷

In the meantime, a new world system arose around the Baltic and the North Sea with the German Hanseatic League. It became the breeding ground for an Atlantic world system, as described by Hugenholtz and Abu-Lughod as well as Wallerstein, Braudel, Israel, De Vries and Van der Woude. Such a world system approach does not imply that the Mediterranean system was completely backward and the Northwest-European system fully modern, presented as linear time in the works of Burckhardt and Huizinga. A space-time approach has the advantage of a composite temporality. Such a temporality is more heterogeneous than the homogeneous time of "still medieval or already modern" that inhibits the Burckhardt-Huizinga discussion around the Renaissance and the waning of the Middle Ages.

Consequently, I would like to claim that historiography has a new representation regarding the period from 1250 to 1650. We can now see that epoch as a period of Italian economic contraction, accompanied by the last flare-up of an age-old Mediterranean culture, visible in a predominantly nostalgic Renaissance, with an occasional vision of modernity. The period 1350 to 1650 has a mixed image of Northwest-European economic expansion, with the expectation of a new Atlantic civilization on the one hand and waning aspects on the other.

The economic and systematic approaches adopted by Braudel, Hugenholtz and Abu-Lughod give us a temporality of coevalness of the non-coeval. In this temporality, space almost takes the place of time itself. In every way it is a reduction of time in which past and future are juxtaposed. As such, it can be called metonymical. This brings us to the field of tropes, explored by the American philosopher of history Hayden White.

8. DIFFERENT REPRESENTATIONS, DIFFERENT TROPES: A CONCLUSION

As I previously showed, Burckhardt's and Huizinga's approach to Europe from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century is clearly metaphorical. White describes a metaphorical approach as follows: "By identifying the dominant mode of discourse, one penetrates to that level of consciousness on which a world of experience is constituted prior to being analysed".⁹⁸ In my view, Burckhardt and Huizinga capture their experiences with two European regions in the period from 1300 until 1600 with two different metaphors, Renaissance and Autumn.

⁹⁷ Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 215.

⁹⁸ Hayden White, *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 33. See also Alun Munslow, *The New History* (Harlow, London, New York: Pearson, Longman, 2003), 169.

Braudel, Abu Lughod, Burke and Hugenholtz are the most outspoken inaugurators of a new, more analytical research programme. We have seen that in the first half of the thirteenth century, Sicily was still the most important region for long distance trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Abu-Lughod describes an economic-geographical contraction process in the second half of that century and the fourteenth century. The contraction spread from Sicily to the big four in Northern Italy, ending with Venice. The explanation using contraction and expansion is 'metaphoric', although it leans towards a rather systematic and therefore reductionistic approach to reality. That differs from my analysis of Burckhardt and Huizinga's metaphoric approach, which reveals an avalanche of subjects. In White's terms, the reductionistic mode of discourse means the tropological protocol of the metonym.⁹⁹ The metonym is a trope in which a part represents the whole, a *pars pro toto*. A common example is a fleet of fifty sails where sail is the part that stands for an entire ship. Abu-Lughod takes a part of Italian history, the economic contraction from South to North, as the fundamental development of the entire history of Italy from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century.

The most important thing is that Burke, Abu-Lughod and Hugenholtz relate their metonymical view to a time-space approach. From a temporal point of view, we can link the economic awakening of North-Italian cities with the nostalgia of the Italians regarding an age-old Mediterranean civilization. These developments are concentrated in Italy. Burke sees a non-Italian Renaissance North of the Alps. Hugenholtz juxtaposes old feudal wars and new civilian peace in France and the Netherlands. They all 'translate' time into space. White perceives such translation as an elevation of 'scene' over 'agent'.¹⁰⁰ And indeed Burke's, Abu-Lughod's and Hugenholtz's approaches are very 'scenic', so to say.

Dutch historian and psychologist Eelco Runia connects the scenic perception of reality with 'presence'. The translation of happenings into places makes what is absent more present, than transferring meaning in 'common' historiography. Runia associates transfer of meaning with the metaphor *tout court* and translation from time to space as metonymic, and so prefers the metonym to the metaphor.¹⁰¹

We can say that from White's tropological point of view, there is a sequence in historical research from a metaphorical (Burckhardt and Huizinga) to a metonymical approach (Abu-Lughod and Hugenholtz). Regarding temporality, this metaphoric-metonymical shift is articulated by a transformation from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous and composite temporality.

In his *Tropics of Discourse*, White comments on Foucault's *épistèmes* and sees the Renaissance as an epoch of the metaphor and the 'Classical' period thereafter as a metonymical era.¹⁰² This means an epistemological approach with no preference for one trope or the other. Viewed from Runia's metonymical 'presence', we could say that the historiography moving from Burckhardt and Huizinga onto Burke and Hugenholtz not only displays a shift from metaphor to metonym, but also that the met-

⁹⁹ White, *Metahistory*, 34-38.

¹⁰⁰ White, *Metahistory*, 310.

¹⁰¹ See for the importance of the metonym in contemporary historiography: Eelco Runia, "Presence", *History and Theory* 45, 1 (2006): 1-29, especially 28-29. Runia also links the metonym with space-time: 4-22.

¹⁰² Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 11.

onymical approach results in a more real presence than the metaphorical one. Who is right: Runia or White?

Whatever the case, the transition from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous temporality implies a shift in images. It is a shift from a Europe where Italy is perceived as modern and the Northwest as lagging behind, to an image showing Italy as the last outburst of an old Mediterranean civilization and the Northwest as the harbinger of a new, Atlantic one.

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