

# **The little dog of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi**

## **Europe between Mediterranean and Atlantic**

Present-day history education is still national oriented, although there is in European countries some interest in common subjects as Greek and Roman history, the ecclesiastical history of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, French and Industrial Revolution. There is lip service to global history but nothing of it is found in the history curricula. So there is no money put to where one's mouth is. At the 17<sup>th</sup> Euroclio conference of 22-28 march 2010 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands 'A bridge too far?' the main theme was the teaching of a common European history. The conference discussed a nationalistic canon approach and a ten era curriculum with national and European features. Both approaches were of Dutch origin and without any global perspective. I presented an alternative with the title mentioned above. My main purpose was to show that national and European history can be combined with a global perspective.

One of the main rules in history education must be that we have to give our pupils insight in the great peregrination of mankind through history. Therefore a history curriculum cannot function without some kind of periodization. The Dutch canon approach does not give any periodization. Moreover, periodization is important, but one of the criteria for curriculum building. The ten era curriculum with national and European aspects only consists of ten logo's without any fixed content. We have to be aware that a curriculum needs more than a periodization benchmark. It needs guide lines for subjects. My proposal will be a five era periodization with a content of several subjects based on three types of benchmarks.

Benchmarks and periodizations are rather abstract concepts and history education is most of all about telling concrete stories and giving illustrative pictures. Therefore I made room in my talk for pictures and stories like the one of the little dog of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. Moreover benchmarks and periodization on one side and pictures and stories on the other are related. Why is that and how is the relationship? Story telling is not a purpose in itself. Stories have to illustrate the main events of the history of mankind during its rove across the surface of the globe. Periodization is therefore the necessary frame of reference for making choices in story telling and selecting pictures.

In what follows I shall first discuss the three types of benchmarks. Thereafter comes the narrative of the little dog and other significant stories and pictures. After a short return to the benchmarks I will present a five era periodization. The five periods I present consist each of three or four subjects. It is not possible for human cognition to comprehend much more than five periods with more than four subjects each. In the end I will make some conclusive remarks.

### **I. Three types of benchmarks**

A good history curriculum has to comply with three different types of benchmarks:

1. Benchmarks to augment the interest in history
2. Benchmarks for history as a discipline
3. Benchmarks regarding the society we live in today

**1. The benchmark regarding the interest in history** consists of three criteria, related to the core business of history: imagination. Historical imagination and the interest in history can be attained by convincing young people that the past is not yet over. History is certainly not about dredging up long-forgotten matters. Therefore young people must be made aware of the presence of the past by

a. Telling stories

Without knowledge of our own history we are mentally disabled. This also regards the history of the culture and society we live in. This type of benchmark has to do with the idea that the past is extending into the present. That means that the past has to be made present in the present. This goal can best be attained by showing pictures and telling imaginative stories, especially small stories.

b. Those ‘small’ stories, have to be chosen carefully. By small stories I mean stories about ordinary human beings and ordinary events. These small stories should open up windows on the bigger parts of history. This implies that we need to choose those small stories carefully.<sup>1</sup>

c. Stories have to be illustrated by pictures of the past.

The past should be made visible. To demonstrate that the past is present in the present, we have to give pictures of the past.<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Benchmarks concerning history as a discipline.**

History has to be taught ‘holistically’. That means that it has to be taught in single issues and in plural explanations. By single issues I mean that in teaching we must focus on one single historical problem at the time. In this paper that will be a period of transition. By ‘plural explanations’ I mean that we must be aware that history is a three-tiered discipline. It consists of:

a. political and institutional history (history of states, international relations, national assemblies, town councils etc.)

b. social and economic history (history of rich and poor people, settled people and people on the move, rural and urban people, but also of technological developments, economic resources as agriculture, commerce and industry)

c. cultural and mental history (history of writers, painters, scientists, philosophers etc.)<sup>3</sup>

Why should history be plural in its explanation? *Reduction of historical phenomena to one simple cause or motive is most of the time the deathblow to historical thinking.* It leads to theories of *conspiracy* and to *discrimination*. Young people have to learn that in history as in life most events have more than one cause. Plural also means that explanations come from different spheres: from politics, from economy, from culture or mentality etc.<sup>4</sup>

## **3. Benchmarks regarding the society we live in**

From a societal point of view the history curriculum has to deal with current problems in the world. I think there are three important areas of current problems that pupils of today have to explore:

a. Europeanization

b. Globalization

c. Nationalism

### **Ad a. Europeanization**

The process of European integration started in 1951 with the European Coal and Steel Community, but its real start was the treaty of Rome in 1957. France, Germany, Italy, The

---

<sup>1</sup> See D. Shemilt, ‘Drinking an ocean and pissing a cupful’, in: L. Symcox and A. Wilschut, *National history standards. The problem of the canon and the future of teaching history* (Charlotta, North Carolina 2009) 141-209, esp. 179-189.

<sup>2</sup> In the Netherlands history teaching focuses too much time on exercises. Exercises concerning historical concepts and exercises with regard to periodization for instance. That may be important too, but I prefer to spend more time on story telling. Moreover I prefer to tell small stories.

<sup>3</sup> Shemilt, ‘Drinking an ocean and pissing a cupful’, 161. Shemilt speaks of a four tiered instead of three tiered framework. Nevertheless between his framework and mine are less differences than one would say at first sight.

<sup>4</sup> Criminal behaviour for instance is most of the time an economic, as well as a mental problem. Economic because of unemployment, mental because of neglect in childhood for instance.

Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg wanted cooperation on political grounds, but mainly with economic targets. Politically the six countries wanted to confirm the state of peace between France and Germany and to prevent war in Europe in the future. Therefore the treaty of Rome asked for European cooperation on political grounds (never again war in Europe), but with socio-economical and cultural targets. Thus the cooperation took a mainly economic form: free movement of commodities, persons and ideas. The most visible effect of this principle is the treaty of Maastricht (1991) by which a large number of European countries accepted the Euro as their common currency. This event stipulates the importance of economic history for Europe. Most teachers pay a lot of attention to political and cultural history. I think economic history is a bit neglected in the curriculum. That is the reason why I shall focus on economic problems. Yet I hope I do not forget the political and cultural aspects.

#### Ad b. Globalization

Globalization means

- Global migration, people migrate for they want to 'go from rags to riches'
- Global communication via the world wide web and other media.
- Global ecological problems, like global warming, and last but not least
- Global economic development with its immanent economic crises.

Globalisation is also a historical issue. Although global distances have become very short, they still need to be bridged. Even in a world connected by the internet, seas and oceans still form the boundaries around different civilisations. Goods, people and even ideas have to cross all these wide seas and oceans. So it is now and so it was in the past. That means that seas and oceans are centres of civilizations. More than landmasses seas and oceans are borders but also lines of connection between civilizations. Moreover, seas and oceans are also important ecological subjects.

Centres of civilizations change in two ways:

- by
1. internal shifts and by
  2. transitions

An internal shift took place from the 19th to the 20th century. In the 19th century the British Empire was dominant in the world, in the 20th century the USA rose to world power. It is an internal shift because it happened inside in what I would call the Atlantic civilization. It was a shift over the Atlantic and this Atlantic shift played a role in the life of our parents and grandparents. Our generation, I think, is experiencing not a shift, but a transition. By transition I mean a shift from one sea or ocean to another. Is not the turning from the 20th century to the 21st century a transition from the Atlantic to the Pacific? Tokyo, Shanghai, Singapore and Vancouver are nowadays as important as, or even more important than New York, London and Rotterdam. From a societal point of view it is important that in the history curriculum there is room for these shifts and transitions across the globe.<sup>5</sup>

My central theme in this paper however is not the current shift from an Atlantic civilization to an Asian one, but the turning that took place in the Middle Ages and in Early Modern Times. The central issue of my talk is the transition from a Mediterranean to an Atlantic civilization. Before making my point, I would like to say something about national history. In other words, I come to my final benchmark.

#### Ad c. Nationalism

---

<sup>5</sup> I fully agree with Joke de Leeuw-Roord in 'Yearning for yesterday' when she takes a stand against politicians and intellectuals in Europe, who 'instead of trying to come to terms with the needs of young people to cope with the globalising society (...) are afraid of losing control and want to increase the national approach, using the old arguments'. See J. De Leeuw-Roord, 'Yearning for yesterday', in: Symcox and Wilschut, *National history standards* 73-94, esp. 86-87.

The focus on shifts and transitions of civilisations in world history does not leave the national state unimportant. This has to do with the participation of people in the communities they live in nowadays, esp. in the nation-state. That state remains important. It shows the significance of a country with people of different origins. It can stimulate participation in the *public affairs* of that country. With national public affairs it is the same as with a well known football club. Great football players want to play with a club which has a successful history, although money is not unimportant. Therefore Dutch football talent is playing in clubs like Bayern Munich, Real Madrid, Manchester United, Liverpool, AC and Inter Milan. When political, social and cultural domains of a country have an important history, it is attractive to participate in those domains. This does not mean that European history or global history is irrelevant. It means that in the history curriculum a thin form of nationalism not only is allowed, but is also a must. You must ask yourself and your students always what did your country contribute to European history or even to world history. That is the most important message of this paper. Why is a history of national contributions so important? Not because of national singularity or uniqueness, but because it manifests trends that we can see in other countries too. In this manner it shows what is going on in the history of the world. I will give you an example. My lecture has as its subtitle the transition from a Mediterranean to an Atlantic civilization. In that transition the Netherlands played an important role. But... I leave out the part played by Spain and Portugal. Their contribution may be even greater than that of the Dutch. The contribution of the Netherlands is only an example of a trend. That trend is the transition from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. It is an example with a thin flavour of nationalism. Teachers of other countries must in their own curricula find the same thin form of nationalism. It is nationalism in favour of insights in European and global history.

## **II. The little dog of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi and other stories**

My story about the transition of civilization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic starts in Venice in the year 1483. At the Canal Grande near the Rialto bridge a little dog is making a stroll. Our little dog yaps furiously to every Italian he meets. When he sees a German, a Dutchman or a person from Scandinavia he yaps friendly and wants to be petted. Why is that dog doing this? Before I give you an answer I want to add that its behaviour marks a crucial moment in a period of transition in the history of Europe.<sup>6</sup>

Another important event. A wedding. The marriage of the rich banker Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami. We know of this wedding because it was painted by the Flemish master Jan van Eyck in 1434 in Bruges. Van Eyck's painting marks the same transition as the yapping dog in Venice. The names of the couple indicate that two Italian families are acquainted with a Flemish painter in a Flemish city. We know for sure that Van Eyck was the painter for he was present at this event. He wrote it down himself on the painting above the mirror: 'Johannes de eyck fuit hic'. 'Johannes van Eyck was here'. Van Eyck was a friend of the Florentine banker's family of the Arnolfini, that is the reason why he painted it. Why are the dog near the Rialto bridge and the wedding of Giovanni and Giovanna examples of a transition in European history? An answer to this question leads us to a third event: the battle of Lepanto in 1571. It is a battle between the Turks on one side and the pope, Venice and Spain on the other. It is a well known battle for two reasons:

---

<sup>6</sup> This story was told by Felix Faber (originally Schmied/Schmid), member of the Dominican order, born 1441 in Zürich, died 1502 in Ulm. He travelled to France and Rome and twice 1480 and 1483 to Jerusalem. About the second pilgrimage to Jerusalem he wrote *Evagatorium* in which the story about the little dog was written down. See: Gerhard E. Sollbach, *In Gottes Namen fahren wir* (Essen 1990). I am grateful for this note to Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Erdmann, Vorsitzende der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Geschichtsdidaktik in Germany.

1. Pictures of that battle show that naval technology from 500 b.C. until the sixteenth century hardly changed. The triremes of Athens, the Roman, Byzantine and Venetian galleons and the ships of the Turks manifest few differences from a technical point of view. We can see that when we compare a picture of the Athenian trireme (above left) with a picture of a Roman galleon in a villa in Pompeii (below the trireme on the left side; beside that we see a reconstruction of that Roman galleon). We can also compare the trireme with a mosaic of a Byzantine galleon in the Aya Sophia mosque in Istanbul (above on the right side). All these ships show many similarities with the ships of the Lepanto battle (below on the extreme right) They are all fighting ships under sail and under oar. Naval techniques hardly changed in the twenty one centuries from Athens 500 b.C. until 1600 of the common era.

There is a second reason why the battle of Lepanto is important. The development in the Mediterranean area from Athens to Rome to Constantinopel, Istanbul and the Italian big four, Genoa, Milano, Florence and Venice, are only shifts in one great Mediterranean civilisation. Lepanto marks a point of transition. It made an end to these great centres of the Mediterranean civilisation that lasted for more than 20 centuries. From then on the North sea and the Baltic were more important than the Mediterranean. The French historian Fernand Braudel elaborated this point in his famous: *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. His book was published in French. It has been translated in a score of other languages. Whether he is right is less important than the fact that gradually the centre of European civilization did indeed turn towards North-West Europe.

This turn already began around 1250. From that time on two other seas beside the Mediterranean were on the rise: the North Sea and the Baltic. Merchants from Bruges, London, Lübeck, Hamburg, Bergen in Norway, Visby in Sweden and Novgorod in Russia were all members of the Hanseatic League. Bruges owes its importance in the 15th century to the transition in civilization from the Mediterranean to the North Sea and the Baltic. Now it becomes clear why a Florentine banker's family had an office in that city. Florence, Fiorentina, was at that time what Wallstreet is nowadays. Bruges was one of the main commercial cities in Northern Europe. Now we also understand why the Flemish painter Jan van Eyck painted the Florentine citizens, Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami.

Since the middle of the 13th century the two streams of merchants, those of the North and those of the Mediterranean met each other in Bruges as well as in Venice, especially in Venice at the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*. Now it also becomes clear why our little dog yaps furiously at Italians and yaps friendly at North Europeans. His owner is a German merchant who is staying at the Venetian Fondaco around 1480. Fondaco comes from an Arab and Turkish word 'Funduq' and means place to exchange goods. Tedeschi is Italian for Germans. The fondaco is a warehouse of North European goods. The fact that the Venetians could use northern products for their trade in the Mediterranean shows that not only in the Mediterranean area, but also in Northern Europe commodities of high quality were produced and traded.

### Image 3

The ships with which the riches of North and West Europe were gathered, differed fundamentally of the Mediterranean galleons. These Northern ships had much more place for cargo, because of the fact that oarsmen were of very little use in seafaring across the Atlantic. I would like to mention the 'kogge', the flute and a boat that the Dutch called the VOC ship. This is the ship the famous Dutch East India company used for their trade with South East Asia and Japan.

Until 1571 one might say that the North sea and the Baltic on one side and the Mediterranean on the other, were two separate but equal commercial regions. After 1571 Europe gravitated to the North-West and especially to Amsterdam as a new commercial city. Northern Italy remained important, but Amsterdam became the new centre for world trade. What happened? In the 15th century the Dutch gained free passage through the Sont, the strait between Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Amsterdam pushed other Baltic cities aside and Dutch merchants overpowered their German and Scandinavian colleagues. The so called Dutch 'moedernegotie', (mother commerce), was born.

In the 17th century Dutch merchants also superseded the Venetian merchants in the Levant. How could that occur? We know from the battle of Lepanto that Turkey and Spain were enemies. The Dutch and the Spaniards were enemies as well. The Dutch fought an eighty years war against the Spanish king. Thus Turkey and the Dutch Republic had the same enemy. The main reason for the Dutch Revolt was freedom of religion for the protestants. From this time dates the statement: 'liever Turks dan paaps'. That means: 'We prefer the Turks above the roman catholics.'<sup>7</sup>

#### Image 4

The Dutch even struck a medal with that saying on it. By 'paus' or 'paaps' they not only meant the pope, but all kinds of roman catholic countries. In those countries the pope had so much authority that there was no freedom of religion. Turkey, though it was an islamic country, had religious freedom. That is the reason why many protestants in Europe preferred the Turks above the roman catholics. It is a matter of fact that Turkey was the first country that acknowledged the Dutch Republic as an independent state. It did so in 1613 in the middle of the Dutch Eighty Years War.<sup>8</sup>

The Dutch had, apart from religion, a second reason for their battle cry: 'liever Turks dan paaps'. Dutch trade in the eastern part of the Mediterranean was increasing. The Venetians there had to be pushed away. Thus good relations with the Turks could help. The ambassador in Istanbul came to be the most important ambassador of the Netherlands. Haga was the name of the first Dutch ambassador at the Sublime Porte, as Istanbul was called at that time. This 'ambassadeur bij de Hoge Porte', had to procure free access for Dutch merchants to the most important harbors in the empire of the sultan. Thus the battle cry of the Dutch 'liever Turks dan paaps' did not only have religious but also economic reasons.

With their conquest of the commerce in the Levant, the Dutch created their economic system of the staple market. From the Baltic they got timber, fur, wheat and barley and put that in their Amsterdam storehouses. From the Mediterranean they collected salt, wine and spices and put those also in their storehouses. French, Venetian, and most of all Dutch merchants brought the timber, fur, cloth, dairy products etcetera from Amsterdam to the Mediterranean; English, German, Scandinavian and again Dutch merchants transported cloth, herring, salt and spices from Amsterdam to the Baltic. From the Baltic they brought products to the Mediterranean and from the Mediterranean they brought products to the Baltic. This is the way the Dutch created the foundations of their Golden Age.

That we can see, among other things, in Amsterdam. After a big fire the town council replaced its old, shabby and worn out town hall by a more modern one. This new town hall is still in the centre of Amsterdam. It marks Amsterdam's development from town to an early

#### Image 5 and 6

---

<sup>7</sup> It was the battle cry of the so called watergeuzen; in English the 'water beggars' the name of a group of Dutch rebels against the Spanish rulers.

<sup>8</sup> I can add to this that the Dutch government in 2004 as president of the European Union in return proposed to start negotiations with Turkey to admit that country to the European Union

modern metropolis. Note also that in front of the town hall, a weighhouse is situated. Here the commodities from the Baltic and the Mediterranean are weighed and inspected for quality. Prices were fixed and acknowledged all over Europe. Note also the foreigners which are present almost everywhere in the city of Amsterdam. Those foreigners often wear Russian and Turkish clothes. They are the representatives of the two directions of the Amsterdam staple market: Russia on the eastside of the Baltic and Turkey on the eastside of the Mediterranean. (We see a Russian merchant on the backside; we see a Turkish merchant in the face.)

#### Images 7 and 8

Those strangers you can also see on the Amsterdam stock exchange. Amsterdam was not only a staple market, but also the economic information center of the whole of Europe. Especially the Amsterdam stock exchange and the Amsterdam exchange bank were the strongholds of that information. European civilization became more and more Atlantic since England in the 19th century rose to world power. The coming and going in London's financial centre, Fleet Street, marks the rise and fall of the British Empire from the 19th to the second half of the 20th century. Maybe the same can be said of Wallstreet and the USA in the 21st century. It is for

#### Image 9

sure that the stock exchanges of Tokyo, Singapore and Shanghai now are as important as Wallstreet in New York.

We have arrived where we started. Is there a transition in civilization from the Atlantic to the Pacific? My answer is: it is certainly possible and even most likely.

### **III. Return to benchmarks**

We started with three types of benchmarks: 1. benchmarks to augment the interest in history of our students, 2. benchmarks of history as a discipline and 3. benchmarks regarding the society we live in. The stories about the little dog at the *fondaco*, the marriage of the Florentine couple in Bruges, the remarks on and the pictures of ships and the medal saying 'we prefer the Turks above the pope' etc. were intended to recount micro histories that can illuminate larger developments in European history. They are so to say the tiny built-in windows of my curriculum. Built-in is important here. These windows illuminate the developments of the periodization of the history curriculum I will present to you.

Regarding the second type of benchmarks I *stressed* the economic aspects of it, but I did not give only an economic history, I also paid attention to political, technical and cultural aspects as power, wars, ships and paintings. It is important to choose a point of view that makes it possible to integrate political and institutional, social-economic, and cultural and mental spheres of life.

The third type of benchmarks regarded three fields of problems: Europeanization, globalization and nationalism. Concerning Europeanization I have shown you the previous history of it, or as the French used to say, I have shown you *l'histoire de l'Europe avant la lettre*. In hindsight the European economic integration started as a matter of fact in 1957 with the treaty of Rome. Its commercial foundations began already around 1483 with the little dog of the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*. Regarding the benchmark of globalization I gave you the history of a transition esp. the transition from a Mediterranean to an Atlantic civilization. This transition is part of a bigger peregrination of mankind. About the participation of people in the communities

they live in today, esp. in the nation-state, I would like to stress that although I told you a lot about Dutch history, it was only about the Dutch contribution to European and world history.

Here I would like to make four remarks about what I, following a Dutch philosopher of history, would like to call *thin* nationalism: Firstly I can imagine that my paper makes the impression of a rather Dutch nationalistic view on European history. I must admit that I deal with, what the Germans call, *Sternstunde* in Dutch history. Every nation, country, culture or state of Europe has its finest hour. It is nice to tell your pupils and students in which way your country, nation etc. contributed to European history or even to the history of the world.

Secondly I have a warning: you need to avoid false heroism. You must ask yourself: Is your nation the only hero or did other nations or other states help in that contribution. Dutch history played an important part in my story, but other countries and people were enclosed. In my story it is not difficult to underline for example the significance of Turkey and the Turks in the development of the Netherlands. Turkey played a role in the histories of many other European countries. In Dutch history it is a white page, for other countries it sometimes means a black page in their history books.

Speaking about black pages, I must make a third remark: Do not forget the black pages in the 'contributions' your own country made to world or European history. For Dutch history I can give you the following example. The Dutch are so proud of the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, that their former prime minister, Jan Peter Balkenende, once shouted in the Dutch house of representatives: 'we need a new VOC mentality'. He forgot that many people of the former colonies of Indonesia, Surinam and of the Dutch Antilles, with or without good reason, associated the Dutch East India Company with colonization and slave trade. They protested against the statement of the Dutch PM. And their protest was justified. So nationalism is allowed, but do not forget to enclose the drawbacks of your national history.

The benchmarks I summed up can help to build in every country a curriculum that is national, but European and global as well. Less relevant from this point of view is a curriculum that only deals with the inner development of a country. The attention paid to this in many national history curricula is founded on a nineteenth-century nationalistic view on history education.<sup>9</sup> For the history curriculum the question is more important whether it enables a look at the history of your country from the outside. What I mean by that, has become obvious in my story, I hope. Most important is to minimize the history of internal developments and to maximize the stories of the positive and negative contributions of your country to the history of Europe and the world.

#### **IV. Periodization**

What are the consequences for the history curriculum of the benchmarks I presented?

In other words what kind of periodization has to be taught in primary and secondary education? Here I want to present a simple concept for the history curriculum. It is not only West-European but East-European too and it has many possibilities to link European history to world history.<sup>10</sup> It consists of 5 periods:

- 1. From hunters to citizens:** [Prehistory and Antiquity ] 10.000 B.C.- 500 B.C.
- 2. The Mediterranean civilization:** [Antiquity and early Middle Ages ] 500 B.C.- 1250 C.E.
- 3. From Mediterranean to the Atlantic:** [Middle Ages and Early Modern Times ] 1250-1650  
This is the period I have been commenting on.
- 4. The Atlantic civilization:** [Early Modern Times and Modern Times] 1650-1950
- 5. From the Atlantic to the Pacific:** Modern Times 1950-

---

<sup>9</sup> J. Van der Leeuw-Roord, 'Yearning for Yesterday', in: Symcox and Wilschut, *National history standards* 73-94, esp.: 87.

<sup>10</sup> The ten era periodization aims mainly on Dutch and West European contents.



There are three periods in which *transitions* are the central issue and two periods in which *shifts* play a dominant role. In period 1, 3 and 5 we speak of transitions, because they are of global importance. In period 2 and 4 the *shifts* are very important too, although I would not call them global.

### Image 10

The main source of my rather simple partition in five periods comes from a book of Janet Abu-Lughod: *Before European hegemony*.<sup>11</sup> With a map in that book I can show you the background of my curriculum. When I leave out for a moment the first period 'from hunters to citizens', this map shows with system II the first world civilisation centre. It is period 2 in my concept: the period of the Mediterranean civilization. It also shows the start of the third period that I called 'From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic'. With system I Abu-Lughod points at that transition and to that period. It is the period I have been discussing above. At this map you can also see how my story about the *transition* from a Mediterranean to an Atlantic civilization is connected to histories of other parts of the world. Those parts have to build their own curriculum, but it would be nice when they also gave room to an approach like the one of Abu-Lughod. As a matter of fact there are many possibilities to link European history to the histories of African and Asian people. Note also system III of Abu Lughod. That system can be important for the history of the eastern part of Europe.

I am aware that each of the five periods still needs an enlarging comment. Each period consists of 3 or 4 subjects, no more and no less. I give here the five periods once more, but now with the added subjects:

#### **From hunters to citizens**

This period consists of three subjects:

1. *From hunters and food finders to peasants.*
2. *From peasant and farmer to city dweller.*

In prehistory two global revolutions took place: an agrarian revolution and an urban revolution. The agrarian revolution made hunters and food finders into peasants and even into farmers. Farmers are peasants producing not only for private consumption but also for a market. Existence of a market implies division of labour and division of labour means the rise of villages, towns and even cities.

3. *From city dweller to citizen.* This period shows differences in participation, which can be illustrated by an Asian and an European city. In the middle east we know cities like Ur in Chaldea, Babylon in Mesopotamia and Jericho in Palestine. The administration of these cities was in the hands of kings, war lords or aristocratic families. Participation of the people existed only in Greek and Roman cities. There were assemblies of the people to control government.

#### **The Mediterranean civilization**

Above I sketched the main topics of this period by mentioning Athens, Rome, Constantinople/Istanbul and the Italian big four. Of course they need further comment:

1. *Athens, a democracy?* Here it is about commerce, naval technology, warfare, philosophy and art. This subject leads to the question whether Athens can be seen as a modern democracy. [500-200 b.C]
2. *Rome's mare nostrum.* It is about topics like the empire and its enemies, polytheism-monotheism, Jews and Christians, Roman law. [200 b.C-500 C.E.] This subject speaks for

---

<sup>11</sup> J. L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European hegemony. The world system A.D. 1250-1350* (New York, Oxford 1989) See for the map 34.

itself. Concerning the topic 'the empire and its enemies' I can recommend for French and German colleagues the stories of Vercingetorix and Arminius and even of Asterix and Obelix.

3. Three worlds around the Inner Sea.<sup>12</sup> This subject consists of topics like latin and orthodox Christendom; Islam (Aya Sophia), Crusades, Feudalism in West and East Europe [In Russia and Poland we see strong and long lasting forms of feudalism; in Western Europe a moderate form did exist, dissolving already after the Middle Ages with its definite end in 1789 with the French Revolution; in South East Europe there was no feudalism]. In western countries the item of orthodox Christianity and the difference between western and eastern feudalism often has been forgotten. In these differences we may find the origins of a different development between Western and Eastern Europe. [500-1250]

4. The Italian big four: Genoa, Milan, Venice and Florence. Here we find the three c's.: commerce, capitalism and connections. Long before the connections with West-European regions, Genoa and Venice maintained regular seafaring with Constantinople and Egypt. By this the Mediterranean civilization was connected with civilizations around the Indian ocean. [1000-1250] Here you see another link between European history and world history.

### **From Mediterranean to the Atlantic**

This period consists of four subjects

1. From Genoa to Sevilla and Lisbon. This subject contains the topics: discoveries and colonization. It is the counterpart of the developments with Venice, Bruges and Amsterdam in the north. [1250-1500] Columbus discovered America for Spain but came from Genoa.

2. From Venice to Bruges. As we already know this subject is about commerce, naval technology and Hanseatic league. I think that teachers of countries in Eastern Europe maybe want to change this subject by stressing next to the Hanseatic league the role of Mongols for their regions. The connection between Venice, East Europe and more eastern parts of the world even into China, can be made with the journeys of Marco Polo. I would like to remind you for this subject of the world system III of Abu Lughod. [1250-1500]

3. Renaissance, Reformation, state formation and religious wars. From my point of view you can see the Renaissance as the last great flicker of the old Mediterranean civilization but also as the great legator to the new Atlantic one. From the Italian Renaissance states for instance Europe learned to form their own states. The Reformation can be seen as the first religion or (if you want) the first ideology of the new Atlantic civilization. I would like to remind you that protestantism played an important role in the histories of the Netherlands, Great Britain and the USA. [1400-1600]

4. Dutch Republic. This will be a subject in a Dutch history curriculum. Topics are: freedom of religion, painting, scientific revolution and Radical Enlightenment.<sup>13</sup> For non Dutch colleagues I can imagine, that they want to exchange a part of the topics mentioned here for other ones. I would like to suggest a subject like Turkey and Europe. [1500-1700]

### **The Atlantic civilisation**

1. Four enemies Netherlands versus England versus Spain and versus Portugal: wars in Asia and America: Similarities and differences in colonization. [1600-1700]

The Netherlands had help from England in their wars against Spain and Portugal. But they fought also against each other. Do not underestimate this item for peoples outside Europe. See for instance the notorious war museum in Tokyo. At the entrance there is a big map with the conquest of Asian territory by western powers. It is a kind of justification of Japan for their participation in World War II.

---

<sup>12</sup> This title I borrowed from Peter Rietbergen, *Europe. A cultural history* (London, New York 1998).

<sup>13</sup> See for this last topic J. Israel, *The radical enlightenment*

2. Britain versus France. This subject encloses topics like a constitutional versus an absolute monarchy, Enlightenment and French Revolution. A great part of the history of early modern Europe can be viewed in terms of the opposition between Britain and France. Speaking about the rise of 'isms': this topic concerns the 'isms', regarding the French Revolution: liberalism, conservatism, radicalism, feminism. [1650-1800]

3. Industrial Revolution This subject leads to issues like child labour and other 'isms': socialism, capitalism, racism, national socialism and fascism; also: French and British Empires and the race for raw materials and market areas. You can also deal here with the USA, with modernization of communication and economic crises. The last topic reminds us to the first great economic crisis in the world, a crisis that started with the crash at the Wallstreet stock exchange in New York in 1929. [1750-1950]

4. Atlantic v. Continental Europe. Here I see the main topics: World Wars I and II, Holocaust, Cold war, Reconciliation of Europe. The history of the 20th century can be seen as a continuous struggle between the Atlantic part of Europe, esp. the USA, Britain and France, against the continental parts, esp. Germany and Russia. [1900-2000]

I am aware that countries in the eastern part of Europe would like to exchange subject 1 for another one. Subject 2, 3 and 4 have to remain for a large part, although there may be some changes regarding them too. This period and the next one take more time in the curriculum than the previous three.

### **From the Atlantic to the Pacific**

Although the Atlantic powers did win the Second World War, the Atlantic civilization lost her predominant place in world history. Japan rose to an economic world power and so did China after Deng Chao Ping.

1. Japan versus China. It is important to pay special attention to the comparison of the Meiji Revolution (1868) versus the Communist Revolution (1949). Further: World War II in the Pacific, atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, aristocratic versus communist capitalism; Shintoism and Buddhism. It is important to see how in the far east two different religions get on very well together, without war or struggle. [1850-

2. (De)colonization of India and Indonesia. In the 19th century colonialism underwent an important reform. The Indian companies that ruled British India and the Dutch East Indies were changed in colonial governments. It was in both cases an indirect colonial government: The top of the colonial government was British and Dutch, lower governmental organizations were indigenous. There was also a slight difference between British and Dutch indirect rule: the British did chose more non-aristocratic and more liberal elites for their lower, indigenous governmental organizations, the Dutch did chose out of the more existing feudal elites. In both countries there exists a controversy between Hinduism v. Islam, but for India this is much more important than for Indonesia. [1800- ...] The decolonization of India and Indonesia was also an effect of the Second World War.

3. The Middle East. The main topics of this subject are: islamic states versus Israel, rich versus poor islamic states, Oil in Iraque, Afghanistan and Al Qaida. Maybe a better name for this topic is 'unsolved problems' of the Atlantic civilization that as a shadow does accompany the way to a new civilization. [1950-...]

4. Decolonization and migration. Dutch multicultural society. [1950

Another unsolved problem is decolonization. It leads to migration and multicultural societies. So does poverty and oppressive regimes in several islamic states. The differences of opinion between Israel and the islamic states have consequences for migration and multicultural societies. This topic is important for Dutch teachers. For other countries it can be replaced by other subjects.

## V. Conclusive remarks

In his ‘Canonical standards or orientational frames of reference?’ the Dutch didactician Arie Wilschut takes a stand against canonical thinking. He wants pupils and students not to think in national prides and prejudices but to think in time. I fully agree with that. He himself develops the ten era system that I mentioned above. It is less nationalistic than the canon and intend to be more European and global. That has to be praised, but Wilschut also must admit that he failed more or less. He acknowledges that his approach is ‘too Western, too European, too much of a “closed” narrative to be able to really function as a scaffold...’ I agree with his self-criticism for indeed his ten era concept is too Western. However I do not agree with his excuse about that. West-European history, he states is ‘inevitable’. ‘If we come up with something completely strange and abstract, the associative support of learning to think in historical time might be lost’<sup>14</sup> I think that La Villette - a village near Paris and an item in the ten era curriculum - is for most Dutch pupils as strange as Singapore. The opposite is also true: Kabul (very often in the news nowadays) is as nearby as London or Rotterdam. It is not about strangeness but about the necessity to tell concrete and illustrative stories about events that illuminate big pictures and big stories of the past. Wilschut’s excuse does not correspond either with a citation of Jerome Bruner he gives in the introduction of his article: ‘any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development’.<sup>15</sup>

Concerning teaching about the past Shemilt has made a very important remark. ‘Pictures of the past are most meaningful to students when they extend from the distant past (what was) to the present (what is) and contemplate possible futures (what may be).’<sup>16</sup> That is what I tried to do with my five era construction. Coming from the Mediterranean we are going via the Atlantic to a future that will be most probably in the Pacific. A concrete rove through time is at the same time a peregrination across the globe. As Aristotle and Kant already remarked, time experience cannot exist without experience of space.<sup>17</sup>

Wilschut is also wrong concerning the closeness of his concept. History teachers and the Dutch Institute for Test Constructing (Cito) are just complaining about the openness of Wilschuts era’s. According to a lot of history teachers the ten era system does not give any content that can be tested. They just praise the canon for giving real historical content. In my five era approach there are lots of possibilities to give content that can be tested. Therefore we even do not need a canon.

There is another advantage of my five era periodization above Wilschut’s ten era approach. The number of parts in which the past can be divided seems unlimited. But the American historian Phillippe Carrard in his *Poetics of the new history*<sup>18</sup> has shown that for most texts of his ‘new’ historians three periods are normal. He adds to that an important point. He states that given the nature of human cognition seven periods are the upper limit for comprehension. A partition in ten era’s is too much, most certainly when it comes to children or young people.

In a final remark I want to stress that pupils and students have, as Shemilt states ‘to articulate “little picture” materials into coherent and usable “big pictures”’.<sup>19</sup> All the subjects of my five era’s need to be taught with small events illustrating big developments. You have to find for every subject and for every topic of my five era system examples like the little dog of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi.

---

<sup>14</sup> A. Wilschut, ‘Canonical standards or orientational frames of reference?’ in: Symcox and Wilschut, *National history standards* 117-139, esp. 135.

<sup>15</sup> Wilschut, ‘Canonical standards or orientational frames of reference?’ 119.

<sup>16</sup> Shemilt, ‘Drinking an ocean and pissing a cupful’ 174.

<sup>17</sup> That is one of the things I elaborated in my *Triptiek van de tijd* (Triptych of time) that will be published in august of this year.

<sup>18</sup> Ph. Carrard, *Poetics of the new history. French historical discourse from Braudel to Chartier* (Baltimore 1992)

<sup>19</sup> See Shemilt, ‘Dinking an ocean and pissing a cupful’ 179.

Nijmegen, the Netherlands,

Harry Jansen