

A b s t r a c t s

Peter Burschel

How people are possible. 20 volumes of „Historische Anthropologie“.

This contribution uses the twentieth anniversary of the journal “Historische Anthropologie” as an occasion to take stock and offer future perspectives by following up on earlier “interjections”. Setting out from the “Anthropological turn in historiography”, it primarily inquires about the development of the concept of culture in the journal. It pleads (indirectly) for an “empirical Anthropology” that aims at establishing and making comprehensible the fundamental historicity of man in the process of historical research.

Ute Luig

Spaces of death: commemoration, representation, politics

Spaces of death constitute an important part of cultural memory. As memorials of past violence they represent the interface between past and present. Their interpretation reflects the very divergent interests of the state, the diaspora communities and the local people. This article compares two different kinds of memorials. On the one hand there is the Tuol Sleng museum which used to be the central prison and torture institution in Cambodia during the reign of the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979. It was turned into a museum by a Vietnamese General who represented the victorious PRK government and its desire for political legitimization of the invasion. On the other hand there are the various mass killing fields in the Cambodian hinterland which the PRK state ordered to conserve. They embody the suffering of the local people under the Khmer Rouge regime but due to the financial support of the Khmer diasporas in the US and Europe some of them have become symbols of trans-national power politics regarding the interpretation of the past. In addition to their political testimony, these mass killing fields represent important places of worship, of local and national identities and have become foci of international tourism in the recent past. They thus symbolize not only a contested past but a very dynamic present which constantly undergoes new interpretations and searches for new forms of representations.

Aloys Winterling

Problems of Writing Historical Biography Using the Example of Emperor Caligula

Starting from a biography of the Roman emperor Caligula (AD 37–41), this contribution explores five major problems concerning the writing of historical biography in general. Firstly, the problem of collecting and assembling historical data is to be taken into consideration, while secondly, the social context has to be dealt with. Thirdly, reconstructing the social and the anthropological background poses another field of the historian’s engagement. Fourthly, attention has to be paid to self-references of the writer. Last but not least, the arrangement and the presentation of the text marks a point which this contribution will touch upon only briefly. It is argued that these methodological problems are basically the same as for every other historiography.

Keith Thomas

Bodily Control and Social Unease: The Fart in Seventeenth-Century England

In this contribution the author explores a huge range of situations in which seventeenth-century people farted, talked about farting and conceived of farting as social or anti-social behaviour. Based on a wide variety of evidence, the contribution renders insights into the making as well as into the porosity of “norms” in early modern England. By exploring the situations in which people, referring to farts, argued about what struck them as irregular, and even unacceptable the contribution also illuminates some surprising similarities with as we as differences between early modern perceptions and our own.