

Kosmopolitismus demonstrieren. „Die Einheit ‚Nation‘ scheint vielmehr überlagert (nicht verdrängt!) zu werden von einer größeren, multinationalen Einheit“ (S. 164). Um die These, in der Sportfotografie hätten sich zeitgenössische Diskurse um nationale Zugehörigkeit nicht abgebildet, zu belegen, wäre eine Einbindung von Sport generell in politisch gesellschaftliche Formationen notwendig gewesen. Die Auseinandersetzung mit der dezidiert nationalistisch ausgerichteten Turnbewegung und deren Vorstellung der Erziehung des „Volkskörpers“ durch Leibesübungen wäre hierfür sicherlich gewinnbringender gewesen als eine kaum begründete Ausgrenzung des Turnens aus der Untersuchung. Des weiteren sollte eine Arbeit, die sich der Fotografie bis in die 1920er Jahre hinein widmet und Fragen nach Nationalisierung stellt, den Ersten Weltkrieg nicht mit der Bemerkung „hinsichtlich der Illustrierung seien keine gravierenden Unterschiede festzustellen“ (S. 109) außer acht lassen. Darüber hinaus bleibt die Begrifflichkeit unscharf. Europa, erweitert durch Amerika und Neuseeland (!), wird zu einer „westlichen Enklave“ (S. 165). Angeblich fehlender Nationalismus und ein stattdessen konstatiertes Kosmopolitismus homogenisieren Europa zu einer Einheit und konstruieren „ein gemeinsames Selbstbild“ (S. 150) ohne Rückbindung an historisch-politische Konstellationen.

Die Arbeit von Christine Walther leistet einen Beitrag zur Sportgeschichte, indem sie die Genese einer Bildsprache zur Visualisierung von Sportstars aufzeigt und diese mit der technischen Entwicklung der Fotografie verknüpft. Historisch bleiben jedoch Lücken zurück. Leider werden Wechselwirkungen zwischen Fotografie, Sport und

historisch-politischer Entwicklung kaum behandelt. Statt die Entwicklung der Fotografie aus der Geschichte heraus abzuleiten, wählt Walther den umgekehrten Weg und ergänzt spezifische Darstellungsmuster lediglich durch mögliche historisch bedingte Erklärungen. Dies ist soweit legitim, wie der Fokus auf die Sportfotografie gerichtet bleibt; wo aber dadurch notwendige Kontextualisierungen fehlen, geht den Forschungsergebnissen ihre Relevanz teilweise verloren. Eine stärkere Einordnung des Sports bzw. der Sportfotografie in gesamtgesellschaftliche Entwicklungen wären notwendig gewesen, um Kontinuitäten aufzuzeigen, und Wechselwirkungen plausibel zu machen.

Leonard Blussé: Visible Cities. Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the Coming of the Americans, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2008, 148 S.

Rezensiert von
Paul A. Van Dyke, Macau

This book is a collection of three lectures given by Leonard Blussé during his stay at Harvard University in 2005–2006, as Erasmus Lecturer, and deliverer of the Reischauer Lectures. Stemming from his many years of research of the Dutch in Asia, Blussé compares three ports the Netherlands encountered in the eigh-

teenth and early nineteenth centuries: Batavia, Canton, and Nagasaki. The title “visible cities” was chosen “because they are represented visually in maps and drawings of the time more than any other cities in Asia, but also because they laid bare the regional impact of global developments” (p. 98).

In delivering the series of Reischauer lectures at Harvard, it was necessary to “come up with a balanced and well-timed menu in order to feed the audience with information in easily digestible chunks” (p. x). The three chapters are thus intentionally very broad in scope, with the text sprinkled throughout with colorful examples of the personal feelings and observations of contemporaries. The book is thus more of a gathering of anecdotes about the three ports, with a lively narrative connecting the points, than a systematic analysis of the cities in question.

The first chapter entitled “Three Windows of Opportunity” begins the discussion by introducing Monsoon Asia and sketching a broad background of historical literature, maritime encounters, Chinese perceptions of the aquatic world, and the arrival of Europeans. The author walks the reader through a fascinating and rapidly changing world beginning with Thomas More’s perceptions of Utopia, Marco Polo, and Zheng He’s expeditions, to Catholic and Protestant nations expanding their empires in Asia and the interactions and conflicts that emerged from those encounters.

Chapter two entitled “Managing Trade across Cultures” explores how the three cities responded to shifting movements of cultures, peoples, trade, and commodities in Monsoon Asia from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. Batavia entered

the eighteenth century still very much the “Queen of the Orient”, but then experienced ethnic strife in the Chinese massacre in 1740; a decline in trade owing partially to direct Netherlands-to-China voyages being commission from 1757; and ended the century with “depression and despondency on the face of most people” in the city (p. 43). That outcome is explained as the result of circumstances with the city falling victim (as is suggested in the subtitle “Batavia Betrayed”) to shifting trading patterns, international wars, politics, and an unhealthy environment. In the end, Americans dominate.

After Nagasaki’s emergence as an international emporium in the 1570s, the port city went through many changes with the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1639, the Chinese and Dutch traders being relocated to the port a couple years later, and then a series of restrictions on trade by the Japanese shoguns that greatly reduced international commerce by the end of the eighteenth century. The trade at Nagasaki was later seen by Japanese politicians as a threat that needed to be brought under greater control, so although the port continued to be a window of knowledge from the outside world, it fell victim to the fears of the Japanese Court and a consequential restriction of trade policies. It was not until the Americans arrived in the mid-nineteenth century that things began to change.

In comparison, Canton thrived while the others declined. The author attributes this success largely to the Chinese world monopoly on tea, the huge demand for that product in the West, and the unscrupulous behavior of British private and company traders in advancing opium into China

for the sake of a quick profit, all of which enabled the tea trade to expand. The rise of rampant smuggling and gradual loss of control of trade (and eventually Opium Wars) is seen as partially a result of foreign greed and the inability of the Qing administration to adjust effectively to the needs of trade. But here again, the author sees the Americans as the real winners. Although peripheral to the argument, the author also discusses shifts in the junk trade between China and Southeast Asia, and changes in Qing policies towards that commerce.

Chapter three entitled “Bridging the Divide” does not go well with chapters one and two or with the flow of the narrative. It retraces personal opinions and experiences of people who were involved in the three ports and the countries in question, but in the end, adds little to the overall argument of the book. But by the end of the chapter, the author again sees the Americans as the real benefactors of the changing environment in Asia. They filled voids in international commerce, in the three port cities, that were left by European wars and the collapse of the large East India companies. The author provides some clues as to how this happened, but does not provide an analysis of why it happened.

Keeping in mind that this study is a compilation of three lectures given to audiences of varying knowledge and backgrounds, we should not expect the book to be all-inclusive, in-depth, or comprehensive. But it is an important stepping stone, which now shows more clearly how the study needs to be broken down into smaller components and analyzed separately. And the book makes clear that the focus needs to be expanded beyond those who were in-

volved in all three ports (namely, Chinese, Dutch, and Americans, with British scattered throughout), and many other factors need to be brought into the picture.

The private traders from India, who predate the East India companies and Americans in Canton, such as Armenians and Muslims and later, Parsees, played an enormous role in financing trade in Macao, China, Manila, Southeast Asia and later Singapore and Hong Kong. The capital market, which drives trade and is the foundation upon which all international commerce develops and expands, needs to be central to the discussion. If there is no capital or credit, then tea and opium are irrelevant, because there is no means of purchasing them. And of course, everyone was involved in trading opium in Asia, including the Dutch and Chinese, so there is much more to say about that, and rice from Batavia, Singapore and Manila was central to the opium-tea exchanges in Canton as well. All of these factors need to be part of the analysis. Also the expansion of the press (newspapers) and dispersion of commercial knowledge across Asia and the world helped enormously in lowering risks in international commerce and made it possible for private Americans to move in when the large companies pulled out. And of course, steamships were central to the collapse of the Canton system, changes in global commerce and maritime supremacy. Thus, we could say the greatest value of this collection of anecdotes is not what it says (because the “visible cities” have too many “invisible parts” that still need to be addressed), but rather the many questions it raises, as well as holes it illuminates, which future researchers can now explore.