

The Empire of Periodicals

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▶ **To cite this version:**

Florence Renucci, Irene Gonzalez Gonzalez. The Empire of Periodicals. Clio@Thémis : Revue électronique d'histoire du droit, 2017. halshs-01510465

HAL Id: halshs-01510465
https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01510465

Submitted on 19 Apr 2017

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Clio Themis
Revue électronique d'histoire du droit

The Empire of Periodicals

1. Are journals famous unknowns? Omnipresent within the scientific, institutional and political realms and even everyday life, periodicals comprise abundant and interesting, but disparate international scientific literature. This is likely due to the fact that behind the apparent homogeneity of the object, a plurality of forms, temporalities, contents and actors is concealed. A number of sociologists[1], specialists of Literature[2], History[3], Political sciences[4] and jurists[5], *inter alia,* have published numerous works about periodicals. Within the literature, their study is quite developed in Belgium[6], where it is often associated with a sociological approach[7]. In Anglo-Saxon countries, such as England, an autonomous field of research has been built around periodical studies[8]. This historiography reveals the relationship between periodicals and politics, their gender implications, and their structuring role.

2. This structuring role should be examined since it initially appears to be based on a paradox: reviews, often ephemeral with regard to their life span, with a more or less coherent editorial line (the legitimacy of which is less than that of other works, such as novels, essays, patents or texts of law) are particularly effective organisational vectors. Applied to the colonial context, this hypothesis means that specialised journals (scientific or popular) produce political, social, legal or ideological unity. How? By what means? Do magazines collectively create networking? To what extent do they transmit homogeneous representations? Do they organise content to be a decisive element in the construction and dissemination of knowledge or a discipline?

1 For example, R. Boure, « Sociologie des revues de sciences humaines et sociales », *Réseaux*, 1993/2, n°58, pp. 91-105 ; E. Gérard et M. Kleiche-Dray, 2009, « La revue scientifique : un élément d'analyse des sciences humaines et sociales », *African sociological Review*, 2009, p. 168-183.

2 See in particular C. Bazerman, par ex., *Shaping Written Knowledge: The Genre and Activity of the Experimental Article in Science*. WAC Clearinghouse Landmark Publications, 2000 (réédition), https://wac.colostate.edu/books/bazerman_shaping/ Dans une perspective différente, voir les travaux sur les périodiques et la presse espagnole dans *El Argonauta Español* (https://argonauta.revues.org).

3 M.-A. De Suremain, *L'Afrique en revues, des « sciences coloniales » aux sciences sociales (anthropologie, ethnologie, géographie humaine, sociologie, 1919-1964)*, Paris, Université Paris Diderot, 2011 (thèse d'histoire).

4 J. Baudouin, F. Hourmant (dir.), *Les revues et la dynamique des ruptures*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, coll. « Res Publica », 2007.

5 P. Grossi (dir.), *Riviste giuridiche italiane (1865-1945), Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno*, vol. 16, 1987 ; M. Stolleis (dir.), *Juristische Zeitschriften. Die neuen Medien des 18.-20. Jarhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1999, http://data.rg.mpg.de/bibliothek/ToC/ToC200501/277013.pdf ; D. Heirbaut, « Law reviews in Belgium (1763-2004) : instruments of legal practice and linguistic conflicts », dans M. Stolleis et T. Simon (dir.), *Juristische Zeitschriften in Europa*, Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 2006, http://data.rg.mpg.de/bibliothek/ToC/ToC200602/441631.pdf. See also the thesis of Fatiha Cherfouh and Sebastiaan Vandenbogaerde.

6 P. Aron et P.-Y. Soucy, *Les Revues littéraires de langue française en Belgique de 1830 à nos jours. Essai de répertoire*, Bruxelles, Labor, coll. Archives du futur, 1993. More recently the creation of the *Journal of European Periodical Studies* and the association ESPRit (https://ojs.ugent.be/jeps).

7 See the special issue of COnTEXTES, *L'étude des revues littéraires en Belgique. Méthodes et perspectives/De studie van literaire tijdschriften in België. Methodes en perspectieven*, 2008/4 (https://contextes.revues.org/2983).

8 Cf. in particular S. Latham and R. Scholes, « The rise of Periodical Studies », *PMLA,* Vol. 121, n° 2, 2006, p. 517-531 and the creation in 2010 of *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*.

Community and networking

3. Periodicals are peculiar, in relation to other intellectual works, in that they are collective, both with regard to their format and organisation (editorial committees, correspondents, etc.) as well as the diversity of the works published within. Their actors are relatively little investigated, except for when they are famous authors. This is possibly due to the fact that they are considered technicians or "cogs" of a technical system rather than an intellectual system. It is unclear whether this is more in line with the multiplicity of this actors or the difficulty of highlighting the role of each.

4. The editors and/or founders are considered important and legitimate figures, which justifies their centrality. In fact, "average" actors, who are, occasionally, not even considered legitimate, founded a number of periodicals. An analysis of major colonial law journals, for example, has allowed us to identify, without claiming to be exhaustive, three types of founder[9]. The *institutional founder* derives his legitimacy primarily from his function, as is the case with the director of the Algiers School of Law, Robert Estoublon. The *traditional founder* is associated with the legitimacy of the function, the quality of belonging to the body and the expertise of the subject, such as Pierre Dareste. Finally, the *illegitimate founder*, can neither boast of his function nor belong to tradition or be considered an expert; Delphin Penant represents this model. The Delphin Penant journal is one of the most recognised in colonial and post-colonial law, suggesting that the legitimacy of the actors and/or contents may prevail over that of the editor or director in a number of cases. Moreover, a closer examination of the archives and testimonies indicates that, behind the tutelary figures of the editors-in-chief and the editors, sometimes there are "men in the shadows" who informally ensure a magazine's continuity or development, their editorial lines and their decision-making aspects, as Emile Larcher in the *Revue algérienne*[10]. This observation tends to relativize Diana Crane's idea that the editors-in-chief were the only decision-makers in the first half of the 20th century periodicals[11].

5. These first observations lead to an interest in all of the journal's actors and their strategies. In fact, periodicals appear to be areas in which to organise individual and collective interests. Their goal can be to support an ideology, such as "Africanism" in the *Revista de tropas coloniales* studied by Irene González González[12]. The multiplicity of players also justify testing the links between them and thus, move towards the question of networks, such as H. Ferrière and I. Thiébau with *the Annales de Hygiene et de Medecine Coloniales*[13]. The two authors concluded that this approach is particularly relevant within the context of colonial journals, which are vectors, intermediaries or points of origin for multiple networks. These networks vary according to the case: polymorphic or homogeneous, intuitive or counter-intuitive, local or global, inclusive or exclusive, and articulated at the micro- or macro-territorial level. They combine the vast majority of specialists within a given field because of the limited number of experts within these "micro-worlds." This specialisation does not automatically mean that networks operate within a vacuum however: periodicals such as the *Revue africaine* or the *Rivista coloniale* bring lawyers, historians, journalists and occasionally scientists together around a common object that is always connected to colonisation.

9 Cf. F. Renucci, « Naissance et développement des grandes revues de droit colonial (1885-1918) », dans F. Audren et N. Hakim (dir.), *Les revues juridiques aux XIXe-XXe siècles*, Paris, éditions « La mémoire du droit », forthcoming (2018).

10 F. Renucci, « La *Revue algérienne, tunisienne et marocaine de législation et de jurisprudence* (1885-1916). Une identité singulière ? », *Faire l'histoire du droit colonial cinquante après l'Indépendance de l'Algérie*, J.-P. Bras (dir.), Paris, Karthala, 2015, p. 181-201, https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01241189/document

11 D. Crane, « The gatekeepers of science: Some factors affecting the selection of articles for scientific journals », *The American Sociologist*, 2, 4, 1967, p. 195-201.

12 This process of creation is also called "genetics" or "ethnogenetics" of journals.

13 In addition to the contribution of these two authors in this issue, cf. the thesis of I. Thiébau about the *Annales d'hygiène…* (*Apports et limites des humanités numériques dans la construction, la reconstruction des réseaux d'acteurs à partir de l'exploitation d'une revue numérisée : l'exemple des* « Annales d'hygiène et de médecine coloniales » (1898-1940), Université de Bretagne occidentale, 2016).

6. These networks have sometimes similar interests. In this regard, Julie d'Andurain's article is enlightening. The author has highlighted the creation and use of numerous periodicals by the colonial party in the French empire for purposes of homogenisation, circulation and propaganda. This network is organised into several sub-networks (parliamentary, financial, military and publicist) which have their own journals. A variety of periodicals are supported; they originate, for example, from the administration or from a pressure group, such as the French colonial union. Actors, networks and journals serve certain colonial ideas and partisan interests by playing on forms and content.

The influence of representations

7. The article by Simona Berhe on the "immagine della libia nelle riviste turistiche italiane degli anni Trenta" illustrates how periodicals can be used to convey stereotypes. These stereotypes reveal more about the perception that the metropolis holds about the colonial terrain than the reality of it. In this way, the journals structure what constitutes colonisation in the imagination of European metropolises: exotic territories with high potential (for example, tourism for Italians and Libya) where women are subjected and marked by a strong hierarchy of populations often produced or exacerbated by the colonisers. Thus, magazines convey a certain aesthetic of colonisation, accentuated by layout and illustrations.

8. These representations invite to focus on the target audience, which essentially comprises European audiences in metropolitan areas or within the colonies. Colonial periodicals derive directly from the metropolitan administration and aim to give instructions to its agents: the main, or only, public. Conversely, military journals strengthen the "esprit de corps." Others, such as literary, tourism and political periodicals, appeal to a wider audience in metropolitan France as well as within the colony. Thus, the language of the coloniser prevails, giving the illusion of linguistic assimilation to the metropolitan public and therefore, a perception of the colonies as an extension of the metropolis or as places of "managed" exoticism. Moreover, minority journals are written in local languages, either entirely or in part, whether they are political, military (Nsango ya Bisu[14]) or legal periodicals (*Revue marocaine de législation, doctrine, jurisprudence chérifiennes, droit musulman malékite, coutumes berbères, lois israélites*/ المجلة المغربية للتشريعات, العقيدة), which are occasionally at the center of identity strategies between the colonised and the colonisers[15].

9. Thus, it appears that journals are a means of controlling these audiences. Indeed, journals have direct control over colonial agents through the metropolitan directives and control over an indigenous elite by publishing periodicals in its own language and directing its own concerns. However, this is only one aspect of the supervision exercised on magazines, since certain passages may be required by local administrative censorship, even for so-called "scientific" periodicals[16].

14 D. Hanson (dir.), *Lisolo na Bisu, « Notre histoire ». Le soldat congolais de la Force publique, 1885-1960*, Bruxelles, Musée royal de l'Armée et d'Histoire militaire, 2010. The history of this journal published for the "European" members of the Public Force has to be set in a separatist context (C. Leloup, « Maintenir une hiérarchie des races ? La Belgique face à la question de l'africanisation des cadres de la Force Publique du Congo belge (1908-1960) », *Revue belge d'histoire contemporaine*, 45, 2015, p. 46-79).

15 Competition particularly visible for Belgium due to the national divisions between Walloons and Flemings. On these aspects, P. Halen, « Une revue coloniale de culture congolaise : Brousse, 1935-1939-1959 », *Actes de la première journée d'études consacrée aux littératures « européennes » à propos ou issues de l'Afrique centrale*, documents de travail, Universität Bayreuth, 1994, p. 68-91, https://www.academia.edu/7299902/Une_revue_coloniale_de_culture_congolaise_Brousse_1935-1939-1959_ ; and, « Une revue wallone de culture coloniale au Congo : *Raf* (1943-1958) », *L'Afrique centrale dans les littératures européennes*, Universität Bayreuth, 1995, p. 63-78, https://www.academia.edu/6534642/Une_revue_coloniale_de_culture_wallonne_au_Congo_Raf_1943-1958_

16 F. Renucci, « La revue algérienne… », *op. cit.*

Construction, development and dynamics of disciplines

10. Finally, journals not only have consequences for representation, but also for knowledge, disciplines and genres. As Monica Venturini has explained, colonial terrain is where the exotic novel retreats against the constitution of a literary journalism that focuses on the territories under Italian domination[17]. Similarly, periodicals serve the constitution, development and legitimisation of a discipline due to their characteristics: *aggiornamento* of the data, rapid reaction to the debates and controversies, transcription of these debates, a multitude of readings offered within the same field, plasticity, information flow, etc. This structuring dimension has greater repercussions when the discipline in question is insufficiently institutionalised (absence of chairs, even lessons, for example, weak legitimacy of the discipline or debates on its recognition and its modalities). The article by Toussaint Réthoré on the *Rivista di diritto coloniale* is a robust example of this. In the first review of colonial law in Italy[18], *stricto sensu,* there was a significant controversy over the nature and foundation of Italian colonial law.

11. Periodicals contribute to the development and legitimacy of a discipline by combining its main experts and presenting scientific guarantees. In the absence of an archive, researchers have access to little information on internal evaluation procedures (Is this evaluation only at the level of the editorial board? Is there an external expertise?). It should be noted however, that many reviews from this period (including colonial magazines) regularly published replies to their own articles. It is unclear whether this post-evaluation, which is presented as a public debate, is more transparent than that of current periodicals. Finally, rumours of plagiarism circulated, thus questioning the evolution of scientific ethics according to the epochs[19].

12. Periodicals can also promote a certain concept within a discipline, in a manner that is more open to other knowledge than it would be in Metropolitan France. The limited character of the interlocutors and the pluralism specific to the colonial situation reinforce the actors' dialogue and the magazines' knowledge about, for example, indigenous medicine or the interactions between law, history and ethnology. This consideration for other knowledge (intellectual openness that does not presuppose an ideological or political opening) is contextual. It is not clear how to heal, judge, observe and administer without, at minimum, such knowledge. According to periodicals and epochs however, openness to pluralism occurs in unequal proportions. It is also marked by the presupposition of the coloniser's superiority. Therefore, this question concerning the superiority of knowledge or of science over others must be placed within a more general, centre-periphery sphere of logic. In Metropolitan France as well, French law is considered superior to custom, a stigma inherited from what might be referred to as the "provincial autochthony" of the ancient regime. Similarly, the great Parisian medical institutions despise marginalised medical practices, as evidenced by their reluctance to recognise the nature of scabies despite what has been learned from the practices of Corsican women. This general mechanism is superimposed within the colonial context of the influence of racial prejudice.

13. To determine whether journals, created with the aim of producing knowledge, are partisan, one must first differentiate between adherence to a colonial policy and adherence to the principle of colonisation. Silvia Falconieri[20] and Sebastiaan Vandenbogaerde[21] have observed that colonial periodicals can be places of debate, divergence and scientific or political criticism. Thus, it is necessary to determine how far this

17 « Al di là del mare. Letteratura e giornalismo nell'Italia coloniale, 1920-1940 », dans le présent numéro.

18 Il existe des revues plus généralistes en droit qui incorporent cette dimension coloniale sans être centrée dessus comme *Il giornale del Medio ed estremo oriente*.

19 About this question, see the article of D. Pontille and D. Torny, « The Blind Shall See! The Question of Anonymity in Journal Peer Review », *Ada. A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*, n°4, 2014 http://adanewmedia.org/2014/04/issue4-pontilletorny/) which demonstrates that the objectivation of evaluation by means of anonymity may produce perverse effects. This problematic more generally refers to the confidence placed in the evaluator's judgement and to the evolution of scientific criteria over time.

20 « Le *Recueil Penant*, le *Recueil Dareste* et la *question des métis*. Deux approches différentes du droit colonial (1891-1946) ».

criticism can extend; specifically, to what extent periodicals are governed by public or private interests, which support them and subsidise them either directly or indirectly. In other words, does the economic system of journals and the colonial political context influence the objectivity of scientific content? With regard to these unresolved questions, we can only observe that certain authors have violently critised colonial policies and practices, but that they rarely question the principle of colonisation itself.

Conclusions and perspectives

14. This first work on colonial periodicals, from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, highlights their paradoxes and complexity. Indeed, specialised reviews have barely been studied although they play an important role. They are heterogeneous and are considered the "structuring objects" of representations, knowledge and disciplines. Placed within a colonial context, it is necessary to determine whether this observation means that magazines create imperial unity.

15. Rather, the reviews confirm that colonisation must be understood in terms of interlinked, complementary or opposing sets of scales, and not only according to local, national or imperial centre/periphery logic. In the *Revue algérienne*, for example, the Maghreb is perceived as an empire that could coexist alongside the French colonial empire, which comprises all of the other territories. The *Penant* or the *Quinzaine coloniale*, conversely, possess an inclusive and globalising imperial perspective. This observation of periodicals induces to take distance with a binary or purely pyramidal logic when analysing colonisation – which does not mean that this type of logic does not exist. Instead, the logic of the motive for which each element is connected to another should be adopted to explain why the unit moves the whole and why the whole fluctuates.

16. These first results, as well as the texts gathered within this special issue, are the result of an international project that led to the development of databases, seminars and joint work[22]. This project primarily targets the Belgian, Spanish, French and Italian colonies due to the colonial dialogue that exists between these territories and the models or counter models of each other, especially in the Mediterranean region. It was also intended not to be disciplinarily restricted in order to characterise colonial periodicals, which explains why a legal history review, such as *Clio@Themis*, also includes articles that concern subjects other than law. Finally, journals are treated as a first-level instrument for researchers, both as a central object and as a primary source, since they renew the desire to associate the substance and the form, rather than separate them[23].

17. Our research group would like to continue this work in a interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary way and by developing a methodological, decentred vision that would also be spatial and temporal.

18. The study of so-called "specialised" periodicals must be freed from monodisciplinarity. Periodicals from various specialties must be put into perspective to obtain general mechanisms of organisation. In a prospective dimension, which would go beyond what is presented here, the objective is to compare periodicals with the press, because there are close links between these two types of media, which sometimes play complementary roles. Scientific journals have often been radically dissociated from the press, which they oppose, due to the legitimacy of their contents intended for a chosen audience. In the case of scientific journals, the methodological rigor of their contributors would prevents them from

21 « 'Une telle apathie est presque coupable'. How in Belgium's *Journal des tribunaux* the interest for the Congo Free State sparked off (1885-1908) ».

22 This project is being coordinated by David Gilles (Université de Sherbrooke), Florence Renucci (CNRS), Nathalie Tousignant (Université Saint-Louis de Bruxelles) and Sebastiaan Vandebogaerde (Universiteit Gent).

23 To distinguish from other approaches (J. Julliard, « Le monde des revues au début du siècle. Introduction », *Cahiers Georges Sorel*, n°5, 1987, p. 9).

propaganda attempts, while certain newspaper would be entirely devoted to them. However, this statement deserves to be radically challenged because these specialised periodicals, regardless of their fields of action, are profound vectors of the modes, representations and culture or counter-culture of an era[24]. Their power resides in the fact that they are perceived as guardians of knowledge, which they grant themselves. No doubt the discourses they convey are not as visible as those of the press, but they are no less important because they elaborate upon public policies, legal reforms, literary genres, health choices.

19. 19. The decentred vision to be operated is also temporal. A number of colonial periodicals survived after the independence of the European colonies by transforming themselves. The publication of the *Rivista coloniale di biologia*, for example, continued until 1958, while the *Rivista di diritto coloniale*, like a majority of Italian colonial law reviews, disappeared with the fall of the Mussolini regime. Similarly, the *Dareste* ceased to be published at the end of the Second World War, while the *Revue algérienne de legislation et de jurisprudence* and the *Penant* evolved during the time of decolonisation and continue to exist. Thus, it is necessary to determine whether the origin of these variations lies in the utility of the review for the colonial powers or in economic or human logic. However, since we are unable to follow this approach within this issue (because the articles primarily concerned the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century), it is necessary to study periodicals over a long period of time from a future perspective to transcend traditional historical categorisations (colonial/post-colonial). Similarly, it's necessary to extract ourselves from the intellectual frontier between the modern period and the contemporary period when studying periodicals whose publication extends over several centuries, following the example of publications such as the *Journal des savants*[25] and *the Philosophical Transactions*[26]. This methodological, decentred vision does not aim to create an inventory of the continuities and discontinuities of periodicals according to the epochs, but to perceive them as being "fluid" and thus, able to change their course and adapt themselves to the material forms they traverse.

20. Finally, we must extend our spatial perspective to all the colonial territories that are currently subject to a nation, as well as to other European and even extra-European experiences, such as the Japanese and the Korean occupation[27].

21. In this way, we hope to spark a debate about what this triple decentred vision would provide for the history of law.

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24 J. Baudouin, F. Hourmant (dir.), *Les revues et la dynamique des ruptures*, *op. cit.*

25 The *Journal des savants* is mostly studied for the XVII[th] et XVIII[th] cent., in particular in an European approach (See the works of J.-P. Vittu). To our knowledge, only a relatively old essay tries a long time approach (H. Cocheris, *Histoire du journal des savants depuis sa fondation jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris A. Durand, 1860).

26 In addition to the book of C. Bazeman already mentioned (chapter 5 is about *Philosophical Transactions*), see the work of Aileen Fyfe.

27 In line with the approach of L. Babicz, « Japan-Korea/France-Algeria. Colonialism and post-colonialism », *Japanese studies*, vol. 33/2, 2013, p. 201-211.