

Editorial: Pretoria in/im print: *Textual and print cultures and text-as-image in the Capital City*

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1. Members of the South African Book History Group first got together for a themed conference panel in 2005, and it has since then produced a number of special issues in scholarly journals in a variety of disciplines: *South African Historical Journal* 55(1), 2006; *Innovation* 25, 2007; and *Critical Arts* 28(5), 2014. Besides a handful of monographs, the following books contained contributions by the authors associated with the group: Solani Ngobeni (ed.), 2010, *Scholarly publishing in Africa: Opportunities and impediment*, Pretoria; Nigel Penn & Adrienne Delmas (eds.), 2011, *Written culture in a colonial context. Africa and the Americas 1500-1900*. Cape Town: Double Storey & UCT Press; Andrew van der Vlies (ed.), 2012, *Print, text, & book cultures in Southern Africa*. Johannesburg: WUP; Benwell [et al] (eds.), 2012, *Post-colonial audiences: Readers, viewers and reception*. Oxford; Nigel Worden (ed.), 2012, *Cape Town between East and West: Social identities in a Dutch colonial town*. Johannesburg: Jacana; Caroline Davis and David Johnson (eds.), 2015, *The book in Africa. Critical debates*, London: Palgrave MacMillan. Also see the website of the British Academy sponsored project Print Culture and Publishing in 20th Century South Africa: <http://www.printculturesouthafrica.org/>

The articles featured in this themed section of *Image & Text* resulted from a one-day workshop with this title, held at the University of Pretoria on 8 May 2014. The event was a collaboration between two initiatives: The then recently launched Andrew W Mellon Foundation-funded Capital Cities Institutional Research Theme of the University of Pretoria, and a markedly loosely-constituted (yet remarkably prolific) decade-old conception which those who freely associate with it, like to call the South African Book History Group.¹

The 2014 workshop was a follow-up on a very successful conference on print, publishing and cultural production in South Africa which the Department of Information Science at the University of Pretoria had presented with colleagues from Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom. In 2014 these partners convened again, teamed up with new participants. This time hosted by the Department of Visual Arts, the workshop organisers aimed to narrow down the focus on the role that the city in which the University of Pretoria is situated, has played and currently plays in the production of print culture. Contributions were invited from visual arts and culture, information design, editing and publishing, history, literature and new technologies. Experimental and interdisciplinary approaches were encouraged, as well as comparisons between Pretoria and other (capital) cities. The following themes were suggested:

- histories of the book trade, including publishers, mission presses, printers, and libraries.
- writing and reading (in) the city.
- text and/as image, e.g. on posters, pamphlets, postcards, or maps of Pretoria/Tshwane.
- inscriptions, on walls, billboards, stone, trees, hilltops, bodies, from tattoos to graffiti.
- the capital as an epistolary 'hub' for writing to and from Pretoria.
- networks of production and consumption, local and transnational.

The current themed section in *Image & Text* makes a beginning at addressing these topics. Elri Liebenberg provides a cartographical history of Pretoria. Through more than twenty maps, she traces the inscription over more than a hundred years of a colonial modernity and, eventually, its post-apartheid reconfiguration on the landscape. She makes a powerful point about not only the physical world but also the prejudices, biases and partialities of its inhabitants having been mapped for successive moments over time.

In the second contribution Jeanne van Eeden also takes a long view over more than a century of printed material records. She moves from the symbolism of maps to the visual representation of the capital city as a place of power and privilege. Van Eeden illustrates the role postcards had played as marketing and propaganda tool in affixing this image of the city, and explains the resultant blandness and predictability of the visual imagery in postcards.

The following two contributions take different avenues to lift this veil off the touristic gaze. Elizabeth le Roux's empirical study of the history of JL van Schaik, Pretoria publisher and seller of books – and postcards – enquires into the business success of this independent publisher who profited from the reading tastes and requirements of Afrikaner nationalists while certainly also having been complicit in the shaping and proliferation of their very convictions.

The homogenising of the imagined community in Afrikaner book culture has always been but one dimension to Pretoria's reading culture. The postcard veil over the 'real diversity and rich complexity of the multiracial capital city' which Van Eeden had lamented as she exposed it, is lifted by William Kelleher and Tommaso Milani in a contemporary linguistic landscape analysis of a particular part of town: Bosman around Pretoria Central Station. Every possible manifestation of the

Roman alphabet in the public domain, its rich and diverse combination with photography, drawing, and graffiti – from printed billboards to hand-painted signs and colourful murals – are extracted from the cityscape, introducing the reader to the entanglement between contemporaneity and different pasts of the producers and receivers of these texts in the Pretoria ‘everyday’.

The last two contributions, by Karin van Marle and Rita Barnard respectively, take a reflective turn on the writing of a text for Pretoria, as Van Marle borrows from Sarah Nuttall, who had used the metaphor in relation to her reflection on Johannesburg. Both Van Marle and Barnard grew up in Pretoria, in the Afrikaner print culture network of Van Schaik school textbooks, and foreground the autobiographical in their contemplations. Van Marle advocates for a general jurisprudential take on the capital city as a lawscape. She follows Nelson Mandela from Johannesburg to Pretoria, and asks how his encounter with the law in the capital city may help us envision a different, post-apartheid Pretoria. Rita Barnard opens her proposal for a visual and experiential history of Pretoria with a discussion of the way print media had employed the image of Nelson Mandela in an attempt to see Pretoria through ‘new eyes’ only. She employs the concept of the uncanny to confirm that the palimpsest past will continue to pervade imprints of Pretoria.

A few people worked very hard to make this themed issue possible. When the Capital Cities Project was still in its infancy, Detlev Krige saw potential in a workshop on the Capital City “in/imprint”, and encouraged and assisted Elizabeth le Roux and me to write the call and the funding proposal. Alan Mabin then took up his position as coordinator of the Capital Cities Project at the University of Pretoria, and resourced some contributors, resulting in no less than two of the articles featuring in this issue. It was an absolute pleasure co-organising an event with Elizabeth le Roux and her colleagues from the Publishing Division in the Department of Information Design. Jeanne van Eeden was very supportive as Chief Editor of *Image & Text* and assisted with everything but the independent peer-reviewing of the articles. Many thanks to our anonymous readers for unselfish dedication, unweighted criticism and invaluable advice. Lastly, thanks are due to Kyle Rath; for a special edition on a topic related to the history of printed images and words, good layout has a particular appeal and demands particular mentioning.