Cutting the cake: the Congress of Vienna in British, French and German political caricature

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Cutting the cake: the Congress of Vienna in British, French and German political caricature

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ABSTRACT

Although the Congress of Vienna was not a main topic for political caricature, it was anything but ignored. During the first five months of 1815, while monarchs and diplomats were deliberating on Europe's future, caricaturists in Great Britain, France and the German-speaking states depicted the Congress as a major or minor subject in 20 satirical prints. Together these caricatures provide a multi-perspectival view of the way contemporaries assessed the diplomatic deliberations taking place in Vienna. To obtain an insight into this important part of contemporary public opinion on the Congress, the corpus of graphic satire was submitted to close scrutiny in two ways. Firstly, a context analysis ascertained the artists who produced them; how the prints were published and brought to public attention; and for what audiences they were intended. Secondly, a content analysis explored the political messages that the caricatures on the Vienna Congress tried to convey and the persuasive techniques that were applied to visualise these points of view. Notwithstanding different national origins and opposite political views, the message is a negative one: the satires denounce the territorial greed of the Great Powers and their disregard for the demands and aspirations of the peoples they seek to incorporate.

Distinguished gentlemen around a table

After the Allied armies, in a protracted and exhausting struggle, had finally succeeded in bringing an end to Napoleon's Continental hegemony, monarchs and statesmen from some 200 countries, large and small, convened in Vienna to discuss the political future of Europe. However, during the seven months the Congress assembled – from November 1814 to June 1815 – it never met in a plenary session of all delegates present. In fact, all the important decisions were made in informal meetings of the plenipotentiaries of Russia, Austria, Prussia and Great Britain. Only France, yesterday's enemy, eventually succeeded in being admitted to these exclusive deliberations, shrewdly exploiting the rising animosity among the four Allied powers. The controversy over the fate of Poland and Saxony even brought the Great Powers momentarily to the brink of war. The sudden threat posed by Napoleon's return from Elba to France speeded up the negotiations in Vienna and on 9 June 1815 the Final Act was signed; nine days later the 'usurper' was defeated at Waterloo.
From the beginning of the twentieth century onward, historians have valued the lasting achievement of the Vienna settlement. The horrors of two world wars made them commend all the more the negotiators’ ability to establish relative peace in Europe for almost a century. This appreciation stands in marked contrast to the criticism on the Congress’ proceedings vented by contemporary historians and commentators. In their writings, Adam Zamoyski stated, the diplomatic gathering in the Austrian capital ‘became a byword for injustice, incompetence and above all disreputable practice and intrigue.’

Not only printed sources, however, give us insight into contemporary public opinion on the Congress. In another way, political caricature does the same. Hence, to enlarge our understanding, it seems relevant to investigate whether the numerous graphic satires representing the deliberations in Vienna convey the same negative message or offer another assessment.

A first impression of the outcome of such an investigation may be derived from the answer to a more primordial question: in what way, according to what conventions, are diplomatic conferences in general depicted in caricature? The answer is not easily given, since internationally such satirical images do not seem to be very numerous; at least not before the middle of the nineteenth century. Consequently, the great attention caricaturists gave to the Vienna Congress appears to be quite exceptional. This becomes all the more clear when we look – as the most obvious referent for comparison – to the satirical depiction of the four assemblies that gathered after 1815 under the so-called ‘Congress System’ inaugurated at Vienna. A quick glance shows that the congresses of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), Troppau (1820), Laibach (1821) and Verona (1822) each feature in one print at most. It is only in the latter half of the century that the number of caricatures on diplomatic conferences would increase, when they became the subject of cartoons included in satirical magazines and, increasingly also, in major political newspapers. Granted that there is not really a tradition of portraying diplomatic assemblies in caricature, some persistent features may be identified.

First of all – and this will hardly come as a surprise – the centrepiece in these images is almost always a table, around which some distinguished-looking gentlemen, crowned rulers or their plenipotentiaries, are engaged in negotiating or are even in open strife. On this table is the object of their attention, usually a map, upon which they lay their grasping hands or from which they are brutally carving out pieces with knives or swords. Quite often this activity is represented symbolically as the cutting of a cake. This was already the case in the pre-caricatural, emblematic phase of graphic satire, in the allegories devoted to diplomatic assemblies, of which the engraving on the First Partition of Poland by the French artist Noël Le Mire from 1773 is the most famous example. And this motif extends well into the late nineteenth century, via James Gillray’s famous print The Plumb-pudding in Danger from 1805, right through to the cartoons on the partition of Africa in 1885 or China in 1898. A final recurring element are the losers in the negotiations: the duped tend to lie under the table where they are rudely trampled upon, as the tiny German princes in John Lewis Marks’ caricature from 1823 on the Congress of Verona, or the bound Polish beauty in Honoré Daumier’s animal satire from 1832 on the Conference of London. It should therefore be clear that in satirical imagery on diplomatic assemblies the gentlemen around the conference tables seldom behave like gentlemen. And, as we shall see, in the caricatures on the Congress of Vienna it is not any different.
Twenty topical prints

The Vienna Congress assembled in the heyday of political caricature. All over Europe, the conclusive confrontation of the years 1813–15 between Napoleon and the Allies became a major subject of graphic satire, all the more so as the grip of French censorship – in France itself, but also in the countries annexed, occupied or otherwise controlled – rapidly loosened and eventually disappeared. Of course, such restrictions were never applied in Great Britain, which made the long-lasting conflict with Napoleon, from the very moment he came to power, a favourite subject for caricaturists. These satires were not only large in number, but also of high quality. Hence, it is not without reason that in this country the period from 1780 to 1830 is called the ‘Golden Age of Caricature’.

Through the years, these developments in the field of printed satire have received much attention in historiography, first and foremost in Britain. Since A.M. Broadley’s classic study, *Napoleon in Caricature* from 1911, there frequently have been publications on the caricatures relating to the French Emperor, which abound in the collections of the British Museum in London, the Bodleian Library at Oxford and the Lewis Walpole Library at Yale University. In recent decades, the anti-Napoleon satires have mostly been explored in richly illustrated exhibition catalogues headed by some introductory essays. Other aspects of the ‘Golden Age of Caricature’ were expounded in various scholarly publications, ranging from the ground-breaking inventory work by Dorothy George on British political caricature in general, to studies on specific themes or individual artists.

In Germany, the outburst of anti-Napoleon caricatures during the Wars of Liberation (‘Befreiungskriege’) of 1813–15 has only recently been systematically studied. Here, the pioneering work was done by Sabine and Ernst Scheffler, who in their *Zerstieben getraumte Weltreiche: Napoleon I. in der deutschen Karikatur* from 1995 compiled a comprehensive survey of more than 400 German caricatures relating to the end of Napoleon’s reign. In France, the same was done by Catherine Clerc in *La caricature contre Napoléon* from 1985 for 178 French anti-Napoleon satires, almost all from the years 1813–15, though the content analysis of the individual caricatures unfortunately lacks the level of detail of its German counterpart.

As caricature research focused on Napoleon’s downfall, some subjects have received recurring attention, such as the Allied advance after the Battle of Leipzig, the Emperor’s abdication, Elba, Waterloo and Saint Helena. Astonishingly, these topics do not include the Congress of Vienna, for all that it was one of the major international events in these eventful years. This is the more surprising because, having already ascertained that internationally the number of pictorial satires on diplomatic conferences in general before the middle of the nineteenth century is rather modest, the largest part of them nonetheless feature the deliberations in the Austrian capital. And – as we will see – this relative abundance has everything to do with the partial overlap between the Congress caricatures and the (anti-) Napoleon satires.

The Vienna assembly is a fascinating political event, which, particularly in its satirical representation, is worth more focused scholarly attention. Yet, this article not only finds its originality in the subject matter, but also in the way it engages it. For a political historian with a prosopographical background, it is self-evident that valid conclusions can only be drawn when *all* satirical prints featuring the Congress are surveyed. In this methodological aspiration the article pretends to be innovative as too often research on topical
caricatures concentrates on case studies and thereby fails to escape the odium of arbitrariness. Furthermore, apart from this systematic rigour, the article might also claim originality for its international comparative scope, since students of graphic satire tend to confine their research to only one country.

Preliminary to establishing an all-inclusive corpus of political caricature on the deliberations in Vienna, I formulated a general definition that covers both content and style. It reads as follows: a political caricature is a pictorial representation commenting on a political event or situation in a satirical, though not necessarily humorous, way. Its distinctive features are simplification and incongruity, distortion and exaggeration, most specifically of the persons portrayed, as well as the use of various symbols and metaphors to visualise complex political realities for a specific audience.\(^\text{13}\)

On the basis of this general definition, I specified six criteria to select the satirical imagery on the Congress of Vienna. First of all, (1) the caricatures, self-evidently, have to depict this diplomatic assembly as a major or minor subject, and (2) have to represent in this respect a political point of view. This led me to discard the many satires in which the Great Powers, without any direct relation to the Viennese context, side with the French king Louis XVIII to confront Napoleon after his return from Elba, or, in a more general way, mount a collective defence against the recidivist disturber of peace and security in Europe.\(^\text{14}\) Selection on this criterion made me reject several prints traditionally associated with the negotiations in Vienna, but actually depicting other events.\(^\text{15}\) In this context (3), the chronological demarcation matters, as all the selected caricatures had to be contemporary: they had to be published between November 1814 and June 1815, being the months the Vienna Congress assembled.\(^\text{16}\) On the other hand (4), the national origins of the graphic satires were of no relevance.\(^\text{17}\) Furthermore (5), it is obvious that all selected images had to be genuine caricatures, that is to say, that they have to portray persons who have been caricatured.\(^\text{18}\) Consequently, allegories were left out. Finally, (6) the caricatures necessarily had to be prints (i.e. etchings, engravings, aqua- and mezzotints), for only these could be widely spread and purchased; accordingly, unique creations, such as drawings or watercolours, were ruled out.\(^\text{19}\)

Extensive surveys in printed catalogues and online image repositories of public collections in various countries were conducted with multiple search terms.\(^\text{20}\) Thus, a corpus was established of exactly 20 political caricatures representing the Congress of Vienna which comply with the aforementioned selection criteria. Eventually, all these graphic satires proved to be held in four major collections: the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum in London, the Curzon Collection in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and the De Vinck and Hennin Collections in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris.\(^\text{21}\) The 20 prints thus traced are listed in the Appendix, which provides not only factual information, but also their URL to access them directly in the four image databases just mentioned. The numbers in square brackets, added to the titles of the caricatures mentioned in the text, refer to their numbers in the Appendix.

Although the defined corpus of graphic satire claims to be comprehensive, it is impossible to say with certainty whether this goal was actually achieved. For one can never know what remains hidden in public archives and libraries or in private collections. In the course of my research, for instance, two French prints featuring the Congress came to light which hitherto were little or not known, namely *Le Cabinet noir ou: Les Pantins du 19ème Siècle* [13] and *La Balance de l’Europe rétablie au Congrès de Vienne en 1815* [17].\(^\text{22}\)
The 20 political caricatures retrieved all date from the first five months of 1815. With regard to their origin, they are almost evenly distributed between Britain and France, with, respectively, 10 and nine satires. The German-speaking states are represented with only one print, and the reason for this imbalance has everything to do with the rigour of the applied selection criteria, more specifically the exclusion of allegories. For, in early nineteenth-century Germany, the emblematic tradition in pictorial satire was still vigorous.23 The most striking example is Endliches Schicksal, Friedrich Rosmäsler’s esoteric allegory on the Vienna Congress, in which not a single person is included.24 Furthermore, genuine satirical portrait caricature, as in Britain, was rare here; Frazer Clark tells us that, commonly, people were depicted in a ‘straight-faced, quasi-allegorical [way] most familiar to the German eye’.25 Caricatures on the Congress of Vienna from other countries where graphic satire was thriving at the time – Russia or the Netherlands for example – were pursued but not retrieved.

This body of satirical imagery I submitted to a twofold analysis, scrutinising both context and content of the images. Firstly, I ascertained who made the caricatures and with what intention. How were the prints published and brought to public attention? And for what audiences were they intended? Secondly, I explored the political messages the caricatures on the Congress of Vienna aim to convey. More specifically, I tried to assess what persuasive techniques – simplification, exaggeration, stereotyping, symbolism, allusion – were applied to visualise these points of view. In doing so, four themes emerged, which I will elucidate successively, namely: (1) the relation between the Vienna caricatures and the aforementioned (anti-)Napoleon satires; (2) the inclusion or omission of the principal negotiators and how they are caricatured; (3) the way in which the negotiations themselves are depicted and how their portrayal relates to the real issues discussed at the Congress; (4) and, in regard to the latter, the prevailing criticism was aired in the prints.

Finally, with regards to the content analysis, it needs to be emphasised, once again, that my approach is that of a political historian. In this respect, I admit to having more affinity with the work of fellow historians like Tamara Hunt, Tim Clayton and John Moores than with recent publications on graphic satire by scholars in the field of literary and cultural studies. That is why – without any intent to caricature diverging trends in caricature research – I have preferred to anchor my arguments in the solid ground of factual evidence and tried to refrain from interpretations and suppositions which are hard to verify.26 This article, therefore, deliberately does not engage the aesthetics of the political prints under survey.

**Publishers, artists and audiences**

Before proceeding with the contextual survey, a general remark has to be made. One must bear in mind that the 20 single-sheet prints selected for a topical reason in no way whatsoever stand on their own. As mentioned before, the Congress of Vienna was just one subject of satirical imagery among so many others. Accordingly, these specific caricatures cannot be studied without taking into account the process of change that pictorial satire as a whole went through at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. In each of the three countries from which the images originate, this process was defined by national tradition, artistic and technical progress, the opportunities for publishing and disseminating prints, and the domestic political situation at the time.

In Britain’s ‘Golden Age of Caricature’ artists such as James Gillray, Thomas Rowlandson and George Cruikshank brought pictorial satire to unprecedented heights. In this country,
caricaturists enjoyed great freedom not only to lampoon the royal court, the ministers and the politicians, but during the years of continuous warfare against France, deriding and ridiculing the implacable enemy Napoleon was also a persistent theme. Across the Channel, the situation was just the opposite. Under the strict censorship during the Consulate and Empire, only political prints mocking the British enemy were tolerated. In the spring of 1814, after the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty to the throne, initial freedom led to an outpouring of graphic satire in which the fallen Emperor especially was vilified. Inversely, Napoleon's brief return to power during the Hundred Days provoked an outburst of vehemently anti-royalist caricatures. In the German-speaking states, the news of Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign and, consequently, his defeat in the Battle of Leipzig in October 1813 unleashed a similar deluge of visual satire against the French Emperor. This brief interlude, when censorship was virtually non-existent, lasted until after the Congress of Vienna, when new repressive regimes were established. They, in turn, rapidly tightened their grip on public opinion.

In 1815, in all three countries, political caricatures were published and sold by professional print sellers. This type of entrepreneur came in various sorts, from the publishers of the artistically refined and therefore expensive prints, to those who sold the cruder and lower-priced plates, each with their own clientele. Since it has been extensively studied, we are especially well informed on the London print trade. The leading upmarket publishers in the British capital were Samuel William Fores (1761–1838) and Hannah Humphrey (c.1745–1818), who had their shops in the fashionable West End. So it is not surprising that the three caricatures on the Vienna Congress were published here. The situation was much the same in Paris, where Aaron Martinet (1762–1841) was the undisputed market leader. In the German states, the most important print seller in those days was Friedrich Campe (1777–1846) in the Bavarian city of Nuremberg. He published the only German satire in the corpus. In the caricature trade in all three countries, commercial interests prevailed. For the publishers political convictions, if any, were of minor importance. Since they printed the satires they thought would sell, their content was, therefore, consistent with prevailing public opinion.

Admittedly, this does not imply that their caricatures were only intended to confirm and never to convince.

For all 10 British prints in the corpus the name of the artist is known. As many as seven of them were produced by George Cruikshank (1792–1878), who by 1815, though only 23 years old, was the leading political caricaturist in Britain. The other graphic satires were made by artists of lesser renown, namely the elder Charles Williams (fl. 1797–1830) and the 19-year-old John Lewis Marks (c.1796–1855). In the case of the nine French prints, for five of them the artist's name could be identified: they are Forceval, G. Bein, presumably a certain Saint-Phal and Jean-Baptiste Gauthier l'aîné. More than their names, however, is not revealed. The other French satires are anonymous or unidentified. The only German caricature – or semi-caricature really – was made by the Bavarian Johann Michael Voltz, one of the most famous and decidedly one of the most prolific artists of his day.

No more than their publishers did the caricaturists position themselves as independent and critical opinion leaders, because basically, more than artists, they were artisans who made what they were paid for. As freelancers contracted by the print sellers, they
produced satires on subjects that in many cases were suggested by their employers. Voltz, for instance, a man without much humour and with limited imagination, received most of the ideas and – often very detailed – designs for his images from his publishers, in the first place from Campe. This is why Elisabeth Reynst has compared Voltz to a ‘well-oiled machine with a factory-like production: a huge quantity of guaranteed quality, but without any distinctive rough ends’. Apart from the publishers, subjects for graphic satires also came from various others. Especially in Britain, reputable caricaturists were, in the words of Robert Patten, ‘deluged with ideas from all quarters’. On five of the 10 British prints in the corpus [2, 5, 6, 7, 10], it is indicated by means of abbreviations as ‘inv’ (invenit), ‘del.’ (delineavit), ‘des.’(designavit) or ‘fec.’ (fecit) that the artist made the satire upon a design or an idea furnished by another. Thus, the two Cruikshank caricatures published by Hannah Humphrey [2, 7] have the inscription ‘G.H. inv’, which means that her nephew, George Humphrey, suggested the subject.

For all these reasons, the political viewpoint the caricaturists expressed in their work might vary over time. This is apparent in the case of Voltz and some of the selected French caricaturists who changed their attitude towards the defeated Napoleon overnight and with the greatest of ease. Although some of them had their work inserted as large hand-coloured fold-outs in oppositional periodicals, this may, therefore, not be taken as an indication for their political conviction. Two of the 10 British satires on the Vienna Congress – one by Williams and one by Cruikshank [1, 10] – thus appeared in the Whiggish, anti-governmental monthly The Scourge. Of the nine French caricatures an anonymous one [19] was included in the liberal, anti-royalist magazine Le Nain jaune.

In the three countries under study, political caricatures reached, all in all, rather narrow audiences. Assuredly, they were sold in editions of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of copies, not only in the print shops in the capitals, but also in provincial towns; and they were even shipped in substantial quantities to dealers abroad. Moreover, the latest pictorial satires were put on display in the shop windows of the print sellers, where crowds from all ranks of society would gather to enjoy and discuss them. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the purchasers belonged to the metropolitan elites. For only they could afford the caricatures and were sufficiently educated to fully comprehend and appreciate their satirical content with its irony, parody and cultural and historical allusions.

The Congress and the Hundred Days

After this contextual survey, the content of the 20 selected prints has to be analysed. As indicated above: while caricatures on nineteenth-century conferences are relatively rare, there are many featuring the diplomatic gathering in Vienna. Beside the temporary loosening or abolition of censorship in various Continental states in the years 1813–15, another reason for this profusion is the combination of the Congress topic with that of Napoleon’s return from Elba in March 1815. This event made a profound impression on contemporaries, and this effect is reflected in graphic satire.

In only eight of the 20 prints does Napoleon fail to make an appearance; in these satires, the Congress is the main subject. Firstly, there are of course the prints produced before the Hundred Days. Williams’ Amusement at Vienna [1] and Cruikshank’s Twelfth Night [2] both date from February 1815. Forceval’s print Le Congrès counts double, because it comes in two successive versions [11, 12], with only a minor variation in one of the persons
portrayed. They are the only French satires on the Vienna assembly published during the Bourbon regime. Secondly, no more than two prints, *La Balance de l’Europe rétablie* [17] and *La Balance politique* [19], both from France, have the diplomatic assembly in Vienna as an exclusive topic. Each of them displays in a very literal way how the various national interests had to be balanced. Finally, two caricatures are only indirectly related to the Vienna proceedings: in *The Ambassadors* [sic] *Return* [3] Williams anticipates what Castlereagh’s imminent return from Congress would look like. In the anonymous plate *Mr Tout-à-Tous ou le Modèle de reconnaissance* [18], Talleyrand is drafting the infamous declaration of 13 March 1815, by which he had his former master declared an outlaw by the Congress. He is prompted by the Devil, unquestionably a parody of biblical iconography.

Napoleon’s return from Elba thus dominates the caricatures on the Congress. In four British satires, three by Cruikshank [4, 6, 10] and one by Marks [5], the deliberations in Vienna are even reduced to no more than an amusing vignette. The assembly is an anecdotal detail in the distant scenery, visualised as a few grossly drawn gentlemen, sitting around a table or standing around a globe, in a tent or pavilion with an open front. Here ‘Vienna’ is just a side-topic, a mere sub-subject. In the other prints Napoleon – literally – interrupts the negotiations of the four Great Powers. But there is a striking difference between the representation of this event in British and in French graphic satire.

In the three British caricatures featuring this theme, Napoleon is brutally disturbing the discussions in Vienna [7, 8, 9]. These prints, all made by Cruikshank, should be placed in the more than two-decade-long tradition of satirical attacks on the French opponent, and more in particular on ‘Buonaparte’, the warmongering ruler. This, to a large extent, explains why it is essentially an outdated, anachronistic image of the escapee from Elba that is presented here. Both in content and in style it is the perpetuation of a time-honoured portrayal. For Cruikshank copied almost unaltered the popular image Gillray had conceived in 1803 of Napoleon as ‘Little Boney’, the enemy the British loved to hate. Therefore, with his large plumed bicorn, his *tricolore*-sash and spurred jackboots, he has the appearance, not of the mighty Emperor, but of the former bellicose revolutionary general. Obviously, this is not without reason: Cruikshank depicts Napoleon as an agent of force and violence, dashing in with his huge sabre drawn and – as in *The Congress dis[s]olved* [8] – metaphorically trampling on the Viennese documents concerning peace and security in Europe. This contrast between the beneficial proceedings of the Congress and the sudden threat of war posed by Napoleon is further accentuated in the verses under Cruikshank’s print *Boneys* [sic] *Return from Elba* [7]:

Assembled Congress fix’d the flattering Plan
  For Europes [sic] safety & the Peace of man
When like a Tiger, stealing from his den,
  And gorg’d with blood, yet seeking blood again;
From Elbas [sic] Isle the Corsican came forth,
  Making his sword the measure of his worth.

The French satirical counterparts, obviously, offer no such demonising imagery. The three relevant prints [14, 15, 16], dating from March and April 1815, depict Napoleon in a realistic way. He has the right physique and wears the correct uniform, complete with the signature hat and greatcoat. His body is in no way distorted, as hostile French caricaturists...
were apt to do before he reseized the throne.\textsuperscript{62} One might even say that he is idealised, as even his \textit{embonpoint} is missing. In these three caricatures the noble Emperor is symbolically claiming his rightful seat at the conference table, replacing Louis XVIII, whom, in \textit{La Bouillotte} \textsuperscript{[16]}, he is tapping politely on his shoulder to make way. The two other prints show the Bourbon King, in \textit{Le Poté indigeste} \textsuperscript{[15]}, and his representative Talleyrand, in \textit{Le Gâteau des Rois} \textsuperscript{[14]}, lying under the table, as the ultimate metaphor for the fallen monarchy, thus exposing their illegal presence in Vienna.

\textbf{The negotiators portrayed}

Although Napoleon’s intrusion is an important topic, there are also other themes to be explored in the graphic satire on the Congress of Vienna. In what way, for instance, were the negotiators depicted? Who were included in the prints, and who were not? And for what reason?

In their portrayal of the principal participants, the caricatures featuring the Congress are, once again, part of a longer trend. In almost all of the satires that were published from Leipzig to Waterloo and beyond, the four Great Powers that fought Napoleon are personified, not in a general, allegorical way but as real individuals.\textsuperscript{63} Assuredly, in some prints John Bull appears as symbol of Great Britain [1, 2, 3, 7, 19], and in Williams’ plate \textit{Amusement at Vienna} \textsuperscript{[1]} Russia, Austria and Prussia even figure, in the most bizarre incongruousness, as emblematic animals: respectively a bear, a double-headed and a single-headed eagle.\textsuperscript{64} But all these are no more than atavistic exceptions to the rule.

In the selected caricatures, each Great Power at the Vienna Congress is represented by its crowned head of state or its leading diplomat. To enhance recognition they have all been highly iconographically stereotyped. First of all, there is the invariable use of national colours, or better still, the colours of the army uniforms worn by the monarchs and military commanders.\textsuperscript{65} For Russia it is dark green, for Austria white with red facings, and for Prussia of course Prussian blue. For Great Britain there was the famous ‘red coat’. Apart from the colour of their costume, the representatives are likewise to be identified by distinctive physical characteristics, because in most cases, notwithstanding distortions and exaggerations, the artists remained remarkably close to the original.

The three eastern Great Powers are in almost all cases represented by their sovereigns. The Russian Tsar Alexander I is typified by his extended blond side-whiskers and an extra-large cocked hat. The Austrian Emperor Francis I may be recognised by his narrow oblong face, under an old-fashioned white-haired wig. The Prussian King William Frederick III is often characterised by his moustache and a shy, melancholic glance. Conversely, the two western Great Powers are usually personified by their foremost diplomats. For Great Britain, Foreign Secretary Castlereagh led the national delegation until February 1815. He is commonly depicted as the slender and stiff, impeccable gentleman. His successor, until the end of March, was Wellington. Apart from the scarlet uniform, his most characteristic feature is his prominent aquiline nose; ‘Old Nosey’ was his nickname in the army. Finally, Talleyrand, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, is easily recognised by his long white curly hair and, of course, his clubfoot, which British and Bonapartist caricaturists alike were keen to emphasise.\textsuperscript{66}

The circumstance that the crowned rulers of Russia, Austria and Prussia attended the Congress in person while the British monarch was absent posed a problem to the graphic
satirists, which they solved in various ways. Voltz, the author of Der Congress [20], the only German print, for example, chose the easy way and simply left Britain out altogether, portraying only the three Continental autocrats deliberating.\(^6^7\) Two – apparently uninformed – French artists allocated the British seat at the conference table nevertheless to George, the Prince Regent [14, 15].

Although he did not attend the deliberations either, the French King Louis XVIII, obese and with gout-ridden legs, is to be found in no less than nine of the 20 prints in the corpus.\(^6^8\) But only in Twelfth Night [2], Le Paté indigeste [15] and La Bouillotte [16] he actually personifies France at the Congress; the old, royalist France that is, and in the two last mentioned caricatures he is ousted as such from his seat at the conference table by Napoleon, self-evidently the epitome of the new, imperial France. In the other prints, the Bourbon King is shown in Vienna accompanied by his plenipotentiary Talleyrand [7, 14, 19] or in relation to the regime change in Paris after Napoleon’s return from Elba [5, 10, 13].\(^6^9\)

In the caricatures featuring the Congress, more persons are depicted, who in reality were not there. Two highly disputed issues in Vienna concerned the future of the kingdom of Saxony and that of the Kingdom of Naples. In two prints the Saxon King, Frederick Augustus I, appears, although – as Napoleon’s long-time ally – he was at first held in captivity as a prisoner of war and after his release banned from attending the Congress.\(^7^0\) The monarch symbolizes the precarious fate of his country: Prussia eagerly wanted to annex Saxony, and Austria, in turn, persistently tried to prevent this. Bein depicted this controversy in Le Cabinet noir [13], where Frederick Augustus figures as ‘Father Cassander’, the archetype of the duped old man in the commedia dell’arte.\(^7^1\) He has fallen victim to the Prussian King in the role of the cunning and mean-spirited ‘Crispin’, whose right hand is already in ‘Cassander’s’ pocket, a felony for which he is reprimanded by the Austrian Emperor, represented here as the clumsy and foolish ‘Jocrisse’. In both versions of Forceval’s caricature Le Congrès [11, 12], the Saxon King is shown with his hands desperately clinging to his crown and not participating in the dancing, anxious of losing it after all: ‘Il danse terre-à-terre’, reads the text above his head.\(^7^2\)

The King of Naples, Joachim Murat, was also absent from Vienna, but figures nevertheless symbolically in three French satires. Although Napoleon’s brother-in-law, he was initially allowed to keep his throne, after his timely defection to the Allies.\(^7^3\) Thus he is one of the dancing sovereigns – ‘Il saute’ – in the second version of Forceval’s Le Congrès [12], dating from January 1815.\(^7^4\) During the Hundred Days, however, he decided once again to side with the reinstated Emperor he had betrayed the year before. This spectacular volte-face might explain the awkward position in which Murat is depicted in Bein’s Le Cabinet noir [13]: as the clown ‘Pagliaccio’ he is balancing topsy-turvy on his head. In another French satire Le Gâteau des Rois [14] the parvenu King is shown more respect: he stands at the conference table, apparently on an equal basis with the Allies and Napoleon, and tears out a piece of the map of Europe that bears the name of Naples.

In two of his prints, Boney[sic] Return from Elba [7] and The Congress dis[s]olved [8], Cruikshank has the Crown Prince of Sweden and the Pope, though both absent, representing their countries. Obviously, the appearance of these heads of state has to be interpreted in a symbolic way, but the same cannot be said of the two Allied army commanders who figure in the satires. Maybe because for a few months Britain was represented by Wellington, the country’s leading general, Cruikshank, in Boney[sic] Return from Elba [7], depicts Field Marshal Blücher, the Prussian supreme commander, side by side with his sovereign
Frederick William III. This old, but still combative warhorse was invited, but refused to come. More complicated is the inclusion in the French caricature La Balance politique [19] of Field Marshal Schwarzenberg, another hero of the 1813–14 campaign [19]. As commander in chief of the Austrian army, he attended the Congress infrequently and played only a minor role as a military adviser. Still, in this plate Schwarzenberg conspicuously represents his country alone.

This observation leads to a surprising conclusion. The caricatures on the Congress not only depict persons who were absent, they also omit delegates who were present. In personifying the Great Powers by their crowned rulers, the actual situation in Vienna is, thus, distorted in the case of Austria and Prussia. After all, these countries had their negotiations not conducted by their Emperor and King, but by their chancellors. Consequently, the Austrian Metternich and his Prussian counterpart Hardenberg entirely disappear from view, with, apparently, only one exception, namely in the aforementioned La Balance politique [19]. In this plate the monarchs of the five Great Powers – the French king Louis XVIII is also included – are, for once, relegated to the background. There they keep an attentive eye on the haggling of their representatives in front of them. Easily recognised are Wellington, in scarlet uniform and with a high-bridged nose, on the far left, and Talleyrand, with long white curly hair, on the extreme right. To the Duke’s right stands a Prussian delegate in a dark-blue coat, who, with his white hair, has a reasonable likeness to Chancellor Hardenberg. Next to Talleyrand sits a man seen from the back in ‘Russian’ green, who supposedly is Nesselrode. Since the anonymous artist, as said, erroneously conferred the role of Austria’s chief plenipotentiary on Field Marshal Schwarzenberg instead of Chancellor Metternich, the latter is excluded from this caricature; and thereby from all satirical prints featuring this diplomatic gathering. It is the more astounding as Metternich was also the formal president of the Vienna Congress. This omission would hardly be remedied afterwards, in the scarce prints featuring the international summit meetings held between 1818 and 1822, notwithstanding the leading role the Austrian Chancellor played in all of them.

The negotiations portrayed

The most important issue at the Congress was the dispute over Poland and Saxony, which eventually escalated into a full-blown conflict between Russia and Prussia on the one hand, and Austria, Britain and France on the other. During the New Year’s Crisis this almost led to war. Yet, in none of the 20 satires in the corpus – all dating, with the exception of the two Forceval prints [11, 12], from February 1815 onwards – is there an explicit reference to this conflict. At the most, in some prints there is an allusion to the resulting animosity at the Congress table [13, 19]. Lack of information about the actual deliberations seems to be the most palpable reason for this absence.

A prominent theme in both printed and pictorial satire on the Vienna Congress is the criticism on the territorial ambitions of the Great Powers. ‘Et n’est-ce pas l’ambition de dominer et d’accroître leur puissance personnelle qui a réglé toute leur conduite?’ fulminates, for example, a Bonapartist pamphlet from May 1815. In caricature this theme is visualised by various metaphors. In Cruikshank’s The Bungling Tinkers [9], the sovereigns and statesmen in Vienna are hammering on separate parts of a huge kettle that is marked as the map of Europe. In his Boney[sic] Return from Elba [7] they are tailors in a workshop ‘cutting up’ the Continent in line with their own interests. In Gauthier’s satire [16], the representatives
of the five Great Powers appear as card players, indulged in the popular gambling game of 'Bouillotte', in which the contested territories serve as mere counters.\(^8^5\)

As we have seen, a highly evocative and therefore persistent visual trope in satirical imagery on diplomatic gatherings is the cutting of a cake. Hence, it is hardly surprising that it is also used in several caricatures on the Congress of Vienna. One Cruikshank caricature even has the reference in the caption: *The Congress dis[s]olved before the cake was cut up* [8]. Two satires mention specifically the cake that is eaten on the Twelfth Night after Christmas, the eve of the Epiphany. In France it is called *Le Gâteau des Rois*, a most appropriate name in the context of the meeting of monarchs in Vienna. The French print thus entitled, presumably made by Saint Phal [14], is patently obvious a parody on the aforementioned classic engraving on the First Partition of Poland by Le Mire.\(^8^6\) Nonetheless, regardless of the caricature's caption, it is a map and not a cake that the crowned rulers are cutting up. Only Cruikshank's *Twelfth Night* [2] actually shows the 'Twelfth Cake', of which the icing bears the names of the countries disputed by the four Great Powers sitting around it.\(^8^7\)

Whether inscribed on a card table or a tailor's cloth, a kettle or a cake, or simply on a map of Europe, the negotiators reach avidly with their grasping hands for the territories they want to acquire. Russia wants Poland; Prussia wants Saxony; Austria wants Lombardy and Venice, and hegemony in Germany. Britain's aspirations, however, are less obtrusively visualised. In Cruikshank's *The Bungling Tinkers* [9] Castlereagh takes guard over the country's interests in Hanover, the electorate that was raised to the status of kingdom in Vienna\(^8^8\); in Gauthier's print *La Bouillotte* [16], Wellington keeps an attentive eye on the Low Countries.\(^8^9\)

In the latter caricature, Wellington is the only gambler who has the cards in his hands. Suggestively, he says: 'Je fais la jeu.' The subtheme that Britain secretly determined international politics has a lengthy tradition in graphic imagery, particularly, of course, in France. Already during the Revolution, this allegation formed a principal element in war rhetoric, and it was most eagerly emphasised by Napoleon. During his reign, he even personally ordered the production of such caricatures.\(^9^0\) The suggestion that the politicians in Whitehall and Westminster were pulling the strings in Europe is poignantly visualised by the French caricaturist Bein in *Le Cabinet noir* [13]. In the upper part of his print, we see three unruffled figures dressed in black robes who are described as 'Les Magiciens.' The person in the middle is supposed to be the Prince Regent, to whom he otherwise bears no resemblance whatsoever. He is flanked by a violinist and a cellist, representing the House of Commons and the House of Lords, who are musically accompanying the monarch's manipulations. The evil nature of the trio's conduct is stressed by a fierce-looking Satan in the background, holding a torch in each hand. The lower part of the print displays the wrangling sovereigns in Vienna, who, apparently, are unaware of their being mere marionettes of the London Cabinet.\(^9^1\)

The role of Britain as paymaster to the Continental Allies is shown in two other French caricatures. In *Le Gâteau des Rois* [14], the Prince Regent is the only monarch around the Viennese conference table who is not trying to tear a substantial piece out of the map of Europe. Instead, standing in the centre of the print and seemingly distanced from the other heads of state, he holds up a pair of scales, one of which is loaded with gold coins and the other is empty, except for the label: 'Le prix du sang!!' It is an allusion to the subsidies by which the British government financed the war effort of the Continental powers against Napoleon.\(^9^2\) The same outrage – even using the same words – was voiced in a Bonapartist pamphlet from the Spring of 1815: 'L'Angleterre, forcée de nous [: Français] estimer en
salariant contre nous les rois de l’Europe, qui depuis vingt ans lui vendent à prix fixe le sang des peuples qu’ils gouvernent ...”

Again using the visual trope of a pair of scales, the conclusive importance of the British gold is more prominently visualised in La Balance politique [19]. This French plate seems to be a perfect illustration of the outcry in another Bonapartist pamphlet from the same date: ‘Y a-t-il rien de plus dérisoire,’ its author asks rhetorically, ‘que de prétendre vouloir établir une balance, un équilibre entre les états européens, tant que l’Angleterre pourra nous dire que, sans la coopération de ses subsides, nous ne pouvons rien entreprendre?’

La Balance politique suggests that Prussia and Austria’s dispute over Saxony – in the same way as previous differences over Poland and Italy – had been resolved by abundantly distributing British money. Opposite a large package inscribed ‘Saxe’ in one scale, Wellington places just enough coins and ingots of gold in the other scale to evenly balance the weighing device. Concurrently, the caricature implies that this way of conducting foreign policy did not come without a price. For behind the Duke there is an open treasure chest, filled with papers, over which John Bull bends, uttering his disturbing conclusion: ‘Il ne nous reste plus que des Banques-notes.’

That Britain, literally, had to pay a high price to guarantee peace and security on the Continent, is a subtheme that is also present in British caricatures. What is more, in both satires Charles William devoted to the Congress of Vienna it takes central place. The Ambassadors [sic] Return [3] displays an imaginary view of Castlereagh’s impending return to London, in which the financial burden of British diplomacy in Vienna is referred to in various ways. The Foreign Secretary, seated on an elephant as a genuine nawab, rides through a triumphal arch of which the architrave, significantly, is a huge account book inscribed ‘National Ledger’. On top of it are three huge moneybags, each bearing the word ‘Subsidy’.

In Amusement at Vienna [1], which was inserted as a large coloured fold-out plate in the February issue of the anti-governmental magazine The Scourge, Williams visualises the objections from British public opinion to these practices. In this satire, Castlereagh is lavishly disbursing guineas from a large, overfull sack, inscribed ‘Fiddlers Subsidy’, to the delegates, represented here as musicians. The print thus illustrates that the Foreign Secretary pays the piper, but – contrary to the proverb – fails to call the tune. ‘So! So! This is the way substance is given for Shadows,’ Cruikshank has John Bull therefore angrily comment on Castlereagh’s munificence. In other words: Britain’s money may have assured ‘Harmony at Congress’, but its government neglected to demand appropriate compensations in return.

Selfish and irresponsible greed

Nevertheless, in Britain, there was not only harsh criticism for the country’s delegates in Vienna because of their supposed disregard of British interests, but equally for the representatives of the Great Powers in general, who, quite conversely, pursued their own interests in the most relentless and immoderate way. According to Cruikshank, their behaviour was both incompetent and irresponsible. In Escape of Buonaparte from Elba [4] he depicts the representatives of the four Great Powers in Vienna around the conference table, all fast asleep while Napoleon with his armed forces lands in France. In The Bungling Tinkers! [9] Cruikshank argues that the Big Four were so occupied pursuing their own gains that this enabled Napoleon to slip away from Elba. Therefore, they were, indirectly at least, to blame for the renewed threat to the peace in Europe. While this ‘Congress of Blockheads’
was busy battering ‘Great Europe’s Kettle’, it was unaware that – as the literary satirist Peter Pindar eloquently put it in the broadside to this caricature 102 – … Elba’s frightful Gap display’d, 
The hole they’d in the kettle made. 
Avast! cried one – the hammers stopped, 
When from the hole there nimibly popp’d 
A man, that made them all to start; – 
Who could it be? – ’Twas Bonaparte!

Selfish territorial greed not only made the Great Powers fail to perceive the threat still posed by Napoleon; it also led them to disregard the demands and aspirations of the smaller nations. In British Parliament the Whig Opposition decried ‘the acts of rapine and aggression of the club of confederated monarchs at Vienna, who appear to have met, not to watch over the interests of Europe, but as contemners [sic] of public faith and justice …’103 This political view is reflected in Cruikshank’s Twelfth Night [2] from February 1815. Cutting up the European cake, the Great Powers fully ignore four lesser rulers in the shadowy background behind the table, who address them with the begging words: ‘Pray Gentlemen spare us a few of the small pieces [sic] for we are almost starving.’ In the clouds above the Big Four, an only half-blinded ‘Lady Justice’ is seen. The scales she holds up are lop-sided, being violently blown aside by two winds from the sky, inscribed ‘Avarice’ and ‘Ambition.’ This motif is repeated in the orchestra pit, where the cover of the first violin’s music book reads: ‘Avarice and Ambition an Old Song to a New Tune.’104

The same indignation found expression in two closely related anonymous French caricatures in which the negotiations are represented as the political balancing of national ambitions on a huge pair of scales. In Vienna, the peoples of various territories are bartered as ordinary merchandise. The inhabitants are packed together in corded bundles or tightly stuffed in huge barrels, from which they desperately try to escape. Presumably, this is an allusion to the Statistical Committee, the most important of the some 11 committees which had to prepare the Congress’ proceedings.105 Its task was to ascertain as exactly as possible the numbers of population in the territories under dispute, so as to serve as a quantitative basis in their final allotment by the Great Powers. For, as Le Nain jaune of 20 January 1815 commented:

Chaque cabinet forme des prétentions exagérées, dans l’espérance d’acquérir quelqu’accroissement de puissance en hommes; car les princes ont reconnu leurs véritables intérêts, et ne demandent plus de vastes territoires, dont l’étendue n’est pas toujours en proportion avec les richesses, mais tel ou tel nombre de sujets.106

This emotionless, purely numerical approach directed at the ‘distribution of souls’ – as a much used contemporary expression had it – is most tellingly visualised in La Balance de l’Europe rétablie [17].107 In this caricature the Great Powers are literally trying to establish a quantitative equilibrium between the inhabitants of northern and southern Europe. Tsar Alexander and King William Frederick are preoccupied with the peoples in the partly opened packages on the scale inscribed ‘Nord’, holding Russians, Austrians, Prussians and Saxons. Wellington sides with them, but does not participate in the balancing. Quasi-altruistically he addresses the Tsar with the words: ‘Nous vous laissons le continent’. On the opposite side, Emperor Francis I and a sceptical looking Talleyrand stand close to the scale inscribed ‘Midi’, on which tied-up bundles with Italians, Spaniards and Frenchmen
are deposited. According to the instructions of the five representatives, a servant with a scoop takes some extra inhabitants from a barrel inscribed ‘Marchandise commune propre à former bon poids’ to distribute them evenly over the respective scales.

In *La Balance politique* [19] – which most likely was made later – the design is basically similar as in *La Balance de l’Europe rétablie*, though the point of view slightly differs, because, as indicated previously, in this caricature it is the diplomats and not the monarchs that are doing the balancing, while it also castigates the alleged role of British money in manipulating the negotiations. Nevertheless, *La Balance politique* voices the same outraged criticism. When, in May 1815, this satire appeared as a fold-out plate in *Le Nain jaune* it was accompanied by a detailed explanation. In it, the proceedings at the Congress of Vienna are decried in the following inflammatory words:

Il s’est établi à Vienne, depuis environ un an, une bourse politique où se vendent, au plus-of-frant, les hommes et les états. Des ministres plénipotentiaires transformés en courtiers de chair humaine, disposent à leur gré de la vie, de la fortune, et de la liberté de quelques millions d’hommes …

**Conclusion**

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, peace conferences were only incidentally the subject of international political caricature. To this conclusion, however, the Congress of Vienna forms a major exception, for an apparently comprehensive corpus of no less than 20 graphic satires contemporaneously representing this diplomatic gathering and originating from three different countries could be established. In the selection process, some caricatures traditionally associated with the negotiations in Vienna were discarded, and, conversely, some satires which hitherto were little or not known came to light.

The relative profusion of graphic imagery on the Congress has everything to do with the moment at which it was held. The temporary loosening or even the abolition of censorship in many countries on the Continent during the brief interlude from 1813 to 1815 enabled graphic satirists to express their views more freely, while the coincidence with Napoleon’s return from Elba generated inordinate attention from caricaturists.

This combination of the Congress topic with the awe-inspiring event of Napoleon’s re-summption of power is one of the four major themes that can be distinguished within the corpus of 20 graphic satires. In the British caricatures, ‘Little Boney’ is invariably depicted as the disturber of peace and security in Europe, while in the French prints – all produced during the Hundred Days – the reinstated monarch is claiming his rightful place at the conference table. The second theme pertains to the specific way the negotiators in Vienna are caricatured. In the selected images from all three countries, the crowned rulers and plenipotentiaries are reduced to fixed iconographic stereotypes. The third theme relates to the negotiations themselves, in which the ambition of the Great Powers to enlarge their states is all domineering. These territorial aspirations are rendered in various visual tropes, most prominently by the cutting of a huge cake, a persistent metaphor in the satirical depiction of diplomatic gatherings from the late eighteenth century until far into the nineteenth century and beyond. As a final theme, the consequences of the Great Powers’ greed are to be distinguished. According to the caricaturists, they are irresponsible, failing to notice ‘Buonaparte’s’ return from Elba while disputing the spoils of post-Napoleonic Europe. At the same time, the leading European states are also selfish, for avid to enlarge their territories
by annexations, they disregard the demands and aspirations of the peoples they seek to incorporate. Because these are bartered as ordinary merchandise, many a satirist found a fitting metaphor in a pair of scales.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, caricatures in all three countries under study were published by professional print sellers. As for them commercial considerations prevailed, they were keen to sell satires that more or less conformed to predominant public opinion. Neither publishers nor caricaturists were intent on expressing a personal political view. The audiences were mainly the metropolitan elites, since only they had the money to pay for the satires and the education to understand and appreciate them.

The British prints on the Congress of Vienna represent the anti-government views of the Whig Opposition, while the French satires from the Hundred Days are in full accordance with the stance of Napoleon’s newly instated government. Still, notwithstanding different national origins and opposite political opinions, the message the selected graphic satires in both countries convey is a negative one. As such, the caricatures express the same public denouncement simultaneously voiced in political pamphlets, satirical journals and parliamentary debates, albeit in a more tangible and certainly more personified way: the distinguished gentlemen around the negotiating table in Vienna are irresponsible, incompetent, indolent, quarrelsome and avaricious.

Notes


2. For instance the British satirical prints: *Political Dandies* or *A Kiss at the Congress*, a caricature on the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle by William Heath (18 November 1818) [BM 13007]; *The Secrets of Trop-peau disclosed, or the Imbecille Alliance of Tyranny to Crush the Universal Spirit of Liberty defeated*, a caricature on the Congress of Troppau by William Heath (30 January 1821) [BM 14113]; *A hasty Sketch at Verona, or the Prophecies of Napoleon unfolding*, a caricature on the Congress of Verona by John Lewis Marks (10 February 1823) [BM 14501]; *The Holy Alliance Unmasked*, a caricature (presumably) on the Congress of Verona by Edward Purcell (February 1823) [BM Museum Number: 1985.0119.103].

3. I prefer to reserve the term ‘cartoon’ for post-mid-nineteenth-century satirical imagery. See the discussion on the use of this term in: Moores, *Representations of France*, 1–2.

4. *The Troelfth Cake / Le Gâteau des Rois*, an allegory on the First Partition of Poland in 1772 by Noël Le Mire (1773) [BNF, Hennin 9401]. See also: *The Polish Plumb-Cake*, a caricature by John Lodge on the same subject (August 1774) [BM 5229].


6. *A hasty Sketch at Verona, or the Prophecies of Napoleon unfolding*, a caricature on the Congress of Verona by John Lewis Marks (10 February 1823) [BM 14501]. *Conférence de Londres*, a caricature on the London Conference of 1830/1831 by Honoré Daumier (1832).


11. Other, more recent, French publications on anti-Napoleon caricatures are the exhibition catalogue by Fau-Vincenti and Lafon, *Napoléon … Aigle ou Ogre?* (2004), and Bertaud et al., *Napoléon, le Monde et les Anglais* (2004).

12. There are only very few exceptions to this conclusion: De Waresquiel (*Talleyrand*, 105–10) devotes attention to four caricatures featuring Talleyrand at the Vienna Congress. Moores (*Representations of France*, 100–1) discusses four prints featuring the Congress in relation to Napoleon’s return from Elba. Lentz (*Nouvelle histoire*, 74) and Vick (*Congress of Vienna*, 84) briefly mention some caricatures.


14. Not included for this reason were, for instance, the two caricatures by Jean-Baptiste Gauthier l’aîné, *La Balançoir* (May 1815) [BNF, De Vinck, 8064] and *Le Tapecu* (Spring 1815) [BNF, De Vinck 8065], Saint Phal’s (?) print, *Souvenirs de 1815: Le Destin de la France* (Spring 1815) [BNF, Hennin 13726], and Thomas Rowlandson’s satire *Scene in a new Pantomime to be Performed at the Theatre Royal Paris* (12 April 1815) [BM 12528].

15. Not included is Johann Michael Voltz, *Wir delibiren, ob wir die Stiefel wichsen oder schmieren* [Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin: Gr 90/34.63], a print of which, on the authority of Voltz’ biographer Karl Hagen (*Maler Johann Michael Voltz*, 37, 66), is asserted in many publications that it caricatures the Congress of Vienna. Quite wrongly though, as it actually is a satire on the municipal councils in post-Congress Germany (cf. Drugulin, *Historischer Bilderatlas*, 138; cf. Böhmer, *Welt des Biedermeier*, 49–50). Furthermore, this print has to be dated long after the Congress was dissolved. The picture on the wall, next to the window, shows a giant Napoleon on Saint Helena. On this island, recognisable by its characteristic dual hills, the former Emperor was imprisoned from 15 October 1815 until his death on 5 May 1821. Not included either was the well-known French satire *La Restitution, ou Chac’un [sic] son compte* [BNF, De Vinck 9335], that does not represent the Vienna Congress, as is often alleged, but depicts in fact (the preliminaries of) the First Peace of Paris, and must therefore be dated in the Spring of 1814.

16. Not included for this reason was, for instance, the anonymous German caricature *Soll er los gelassen werden?* (c. July 1815) [BNF, Hennin 13672].

17. The satirical print by the American William Charles, *The Congress at Vienna in Great Consternation* (Spring 1815) [BL-CC, b.11(113)], was not included, because it is more an allegory than a caricature. It is inspired by the allegory on the First Partition of Poland by Le Mire. See above note 4.

18. Not included for this reason were, for instance, the French prints *Grand Dieu, C’est Lui!!*, in two variations (Spring 1815) [BNF, De Vinck 9517 and 9518].

19. Cf. Streicher, “On a Theory,” 433: “The caricature is meant for mass reproduction from the beginning.” Not included for this reason were, for instance, two anonymous German satires, namely the watercolour *Titelvignette zu den Acten des Wiener Congresses* (De la Garde, *Gemälde des Wiener Kongresses*, 2) and the coloured drawing *Westliche Ansicht von Teutschland [sic] und den Congress, in Jänuar 1815* (January 1815) [Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna: Pk 5001]. *Déclarations du Congrès de Vienne, 13 et 15 Mars 1815* (1815) [BNF, De Vinck 9524], being the frontispiece to a book, was also left out, because of its potentially narrow audience.

20. General search terms used relate to the genre (e.g. “caricature”, “satire”) or the kind of event (e.g. “congress”, “conference”). Specific query terms relate to the period (“1814” and “1815”), geographical locations (e.g. “Vienna”, “Elba”) and individually named persons (e.g. “Tsar Alexander”, “Castlereagh”, “Talleyrand”). These key words were applied in multiple combinations, in English, French and German. Queries on the name of individual artists could
not be made, as they were not known in advance. Evidently, “Napoleon” or “B(u)onaparte”
did not seem suitable search terms, as the French Emperor dominates most satirical prints
of the time.

21. Other online public collections queried were: the Napoleonic Satires Collection in the
Brown University Library Center for Digital Scholarship in Providence (Rhode Island), the
Digital Images Collection of the Lewis Walpole Library at Yale University, the Bildarchiv und
Grafiksammlung of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, the Objektdatenbank
of the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin and the digital image database of the
Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

22. Le Cabinet noir ou: Les Pantins du 19ème Siècle [13] is only mentioned in the passing by
Broadley (Napoleon in Caricature II, 67–8) and might easily be overlooked. La Balance de
l’Europe rétablie au Congrès de Vienne en 1815 [17] is not included in the De Vinck and Hennin
Collections in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris and was only fortuitously found
by searching the internet.

23. Clark, Zeitgeist and Zerrbild, 29, 46, 59.

24. Endliches Schicksal, an allegory on the Congress of Vienna by Friedrich Rosmäsler junior from
Hamburg (before March 1815) [BM 12320]. The remark by Reynst (Friedrich Campe, 43) on
an allegory featuring the Congress of Vienna that one can only comprehend by consulting
some encyclopedias, most likely refers to this print.

25. Clark, Zeitgeist and Zerrbild, 29. An example is the realistic allegory by Johann Michael Voltz,
Der neue Bund […], geschlossen zu Wien den 13th März, als die Nachricht von Buonapartes
Landung in Frankreich eintraf (Spring 1815) [BNF, Hennin 13694].

26. An illustration of this difference in approach is to be found in Romanticism and Caricature
(2013) by Ian Haywood, a representative of the literary studies. In his book (p. 6) the author
compliments historians for the “excellent job of surveying and organising this voluminous
field of popular political imagery”. But, as their “main interest is in the extent to which graphic
satire records or distorts historical events”, he criticises the same historians for their lack
of “close reading and intensive analysis that is normally accorded to ‘serious’ works of art.”


28. Goldstein, Censorship of political Caricature, 97–101; Duprat, “Guerre des Images,” 490;


30. Broadley, Napoleon in Caricature I, 54–9; Donald, Age of Caricature, 3–5; Clayton, “London
Printsellers,” 150–1; Hunt, Defining John Bull, 15.

31. Three of the 10 British prints were published by the low-price City firms of John Johnson in
Cheapside [3], Whittle & Laurie in Fleet Street [6] and John Fairburn in Ludgate Hill [9].

32. Hauteœur, “Famille de Graveurs,” 266–70; Clayton and O’Connell, Bonaparte and the British,


34. Donald, Age of Caricature, 4; Hauteœur, “Famille de Graveurs,” 295. The Nuremberg publisher
Campe was such a staunch admirer of Napoleon, that in 1808 he even named his eldest son
after him. Four years later, after the Emperor’s fatal Russian campaign, he began to publish
anti-Napoleon caricatures, “for, after all, he was an entrepreneur” (Reynst, Friedrich Campe,

35. The discussion on whether early nineteenth-century caricatures not only reflected
contemporary public opinion but could also influence their audiences is aptly summarised
in: Moores, Representations of France, 13–17. See also: Donald, Age of Caricature, 44; Hunt,
Defining John Bull, 17, 19; Streicher, “On a Theory,” 442–3; Coupe, “Observations,” 82–4; Hill,
Mr. Gillray, 114; Vick, Congress of Vienna, 84.

36. Patten, George Cruikshank’s Life I, 102, 107.


The authorship of the two Forceval prints [11, 12] can be ascertained by the small crayfish with
which this artist used to sign his work (De Waresquiel, *Talleyrand*, 110). For the identification of the caricature by G. Bein [13]: Laran, *Inventaire*, 25. The authorship of the Gauthier print [16] and of what is most likely a satire by Saint-Phal [14] was established by analogy with the caricatures by these artists shown in Clerc, *Caricature contre Napoléon*. See below note 48.


40. *Der Congress* (February 1815) is actually a semi-caricature. The three monarchs present in Vienna are drawn in a highly realistic manner. The only element of caricature is seen in the background, where a tiny Napoleon on his Mediterranean rocklet, is observing the deliberations with a huge telescope (Scheffler and Scheffler, *So zerstieben getraumte Weltreiche*, 140). See also above note 25.


44. Patten, *George Cruikshank’s Life* I, 78–9. Cruikshank characterised this hack work as ‘the washing of other people’s dirty linen’ (quoted by Hill, *Mr. Gillray*, 138).


46. Patten (*George Cruikshank’s Life* I, 118) mentions the names of several people who, in the decade 1814–24, supplied Cruikshank with ideas for his prints.


48. See the anti-Napoleon caricatures by Saint-Phal, the presumed author of *Le Gâteau des Rois* [14], in Clerc, *Caricature contre Napoléon*, 211, 262, 272, and those by Jean-Baptiste Gauthier l’aîné, the author of *La Bouillotte* [16], ibidem, 138, 215, 239, 259 290, 297. Cruikshank, who in his younger years had the reputation of being a “Radical” (Patten, *George Cruikshank’s Life* I, 122), also worked for employers of various political affiliations, as the “independent or Whiggish” periodical *The Scourge*, the “middle-of-the-road” publisher S.W. Fores and the “increasingly conservative” publisher Mrs Humphrey (Wardroper, *The Caricatures*, 14). Cf. Evans and Evans, *Man who Drew*, 22: Cruikshank’s political convictions “like his talent, were at the bidding of anyone who chose to employ him”.


54. Cf. George, *Catalogue*, xxxvi: “Comparatively few of the satires on the return from Elba are simple prints on that theme; they combine with it ridicule of the Congress…”

55. In the first version of this print, the person on the far right is a woman, wearing a doge-like cap. It is an allegorical representation of the Republic of Genoa, the former city-state that the Congress finally allotted to the Kingdom of Sardinia (cf. Lentz, *Nouvelle histoire*, 87). Thus,
the text above her head reads: “Elle saute pour le Roi de Sardaigne.” In the second version this figure is depicted in exactly the same way; only its head is replaced by that of Joachim Murat, the King of Naples. De Waresquiel (Talleyrand, 110) seems inclined to date the first version in the last weeks of 1814. George (Catalogue, 506) argues, more plausibly, that the first version was probably published in January 1815.

57. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, Eugène Delacroix, 96.
58. Hill, M. Gillray, 124–32. At the end of his life, in 1842, Cruikshank commented as follows on the way he once caricatured Napoleon: “As for me, who have skeletonised him prematurely, paring down the Prodigy even to his hat and boots, I have but ‘carried out’ a principle adopted almost in my boyhood, for I can scarcely remember the time when I did not take some patriotice pleasure in persecuting the great Enemy of England” (George Cruikshank’s Omnibus, 28).
60. George, Catalogue, 526; Broadley, Napoleon in Caricature I, 378.
61. George, Catalogue, 515. These verses are signed with the initials “S.M.B.”
64. In Cruikshank’s The Fox & the Goose [6] the returning Napoleon has the body of a fox, while the representatives of the four Great Powers in Vienna are geese with human heads. In The Phenix of Elba resuscitated by Treason [10] the mythical bird Phoenix is portrayed with Napoleon’s head.
65. Cf. Patten, George Cruikshank’s Life I, 71.
66. In Le Gâteau des Rois [14] there is also a verbal allusion to his clubfoot. Talleyrand, hiding under the conference table, exclaims ambiguously: “Cachons nous, je suis sur un vilain pied ici bas …” (George, Catalogue, 523).
69. One print, Twelfth Night [2], dates from before the Hundred Days and shows Louis XVIII as a mere spectator in the theatre box.
70. From July 1814 to February 1815, Frederick Augustus I was held in Prussian captivity in Schloß Friedrichsfelde near Berlin. After his release, the Austrian Emperor invited him to reside in Pressburg, 65 kilometres from Vienna, where several delegates at the Congress deliberated with him. In May he moved to Schloß Laxenburg, only 20 kilometres from Vienna. The personal representative of the Saxon King at the Congress was Von der Schulenburg-Klosterroda (Blank, Der bestrafte König?, 140, 189, 246–8, 255).
71. Cf. Clerc, Caricature contre Napoléon, 95. Mark’s satire The European Pantomine [5] is also inspired by the stock characters of the commedia dell’arte. As in Bein’s Le Cabinet noir [13], Napoleon features here as “Harlequin” and Louis XVIII as an infuriated “Pantaloon.” Furthermore, Napoleon’s second wife, Marie Louise, appears as “Columbine,” while, according to the caption, the representatives at the Congress of Vienna are represented as “Clowns” (George, Catalogue, 518–19).
73. Lentz, Nouvelle histoire, 115–18.
74. See above note 55.
75. In response to the invitation, Blücher reportedly replied: “Was soll ich da bei all’ den Maulfechtern und Federhelden, die nach Ländern angeln, im Trüben fischen und hin und her krebsen, und der bunte Bund des einigen Deutschlands uneinig ist; da würden mir nur wieder die Glacés platzten und die Fausthandschuhe …” (quoted by Scheffler and Scheffler, So zerstieben getraumte Weltreiche, 140).
76. Kerchnawe and Veltzé, Feldmarschall Karl Fürst zu Schwarzenberg, 232.
77. Russia’s principal plenipotentiary at the Congress of Vienna was Nesselrode. However, it was generally known that in important affairs “it is the Emperor himself who does all.” Nesselrode
“remained in the background and could only serve his sovereign – when the Emperor’s confidence permitted – as his secretary or diplomatic spokesman” (Grimsted, *The Foreign Ministers*, 210, 225).

78. The assertion of De Waresquiel (Talleyrand, 108) that “cette caricature est sans doute la plus exacte” of the prints featuring the Congress of Vienna, disregards the many historical errors *La Balance politique* [19] contains. The same is true for the “Explication de la Caricature”, included in the May 15 issue of *Le Nain jaune* (pp. 191–2). In it, for example, the five monarchs of the Great Powers in the background are incorrectly described as “plusieurs souverains subalterns”, and the man in the green uniform, who is seen from the back, is identified as “l’autocrate des knoutés”, a derogatory epithet for Tsar Alexander I.

79. Apparently, the news that Wellington no longer headed the British delegation since 29 March 1815 had not yet reached the author of this print, six weeks later.

80. In the case of Nesselrode, the caricaturist, noticeably, lacked the documentation to portray him accurately. This must be the reason why the Russian plenipotentiary is seen from the back, without showing his face. It might also explain why the civilian Nesselrode is incorrectly wearing an army uniform.

81. In the four British caricatures mentioned above in note 2, Metternich is only portrayed in *A hasty Sketch at Verona* by John Lewis Marks.


84. George, Catalogue, 514–5, 532–3.


87. George, *English Political Caricature*, 158. Cruikshank’s print is most likely inspired by *The Polish Plumb-Cake*, a caricature on the First Partition of Poland by John Lodge (August 1774) [BM 5229]. The anonymous French print *Le Paté indigeste* [15] is more or less a variation on this metaphor. The monarchs of the four Great Powers are ready to carve a huge pie – with no names of disputed territories inscribed – from which, to their obvious surprise, a small Napoleon emerges (George, *Catalogue*, 521). Hence, the main theme of this caricature is not so much the territorial greed of the Big Four as Napoleon’s unexpected return from Elba, which abruptly disturbed the negotiatons in Vienna.

88. Although not a subject of dispute at the conference table, there is also a reference to the British interests in Hanover in Williams’ *Amusement at Vienna* [1] and in Cruikshank’s *The Phenix of Elba* [10] (George, Catalogue, 504–5, 536).

89. A less explicit allusion is also to be found in *La Balance politique* [19], where a bale inscribed ‘Belgique’ stands close to Wellington and John Bull. Probably, this is not without a reason (George, Catalogue, 541).


92. George, *Catalogue*, 523. After Napoleon reseized power in Paris, in March 1815, the British subsidies to pay for the armies the Allies brought into the field were reinstated (Sherwig, *Guineas and Gunpowder*, 332–9). For this reason, the Crown Prince of Sweden, in Cruikshank’s *Boneys [sic] Return from Elba* [7], seems rather pleased seeing the French Emperor suddenly reappear. With a grin on his face, he says: “This looks like another subsidy” (George, *Catalogue*, 515).


95. The suggestion made in *La Balance politique* [19] that British money was used to settle diplomatic disputes in Vienna is not without ground: e.g. Jarrett, *Congress of Vienna*, 135, 146, 419 note 166.


98. Shortly afterwards, during the Hundred Days, “radical caricatures [would once again] emphasize the burdensome costs of resuming military operations” (Patten, *George Cruikshank’s Life*, I, 105).


102. “Peter Pindar” is the pseudonym of the literary satirist John Wolcot (1738–1819).


106. *Le Nain jaune*, 20 January 1815, p. 73.


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**Bibliography**

**Surveyed caricature collections**

Abbreviations for the surveyed caricature collections used in the Notes and in the Appendix:


Secondary sources


George Cruikshank’s Omnibus. London: Tilt and Bogue, 1842.


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