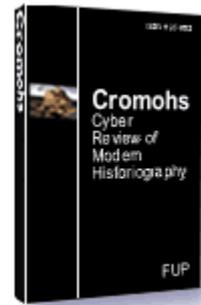


CROMOHS 21 (2017) - CALL FOR PAPERS

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From Comparative to Global History: Assessing Relational Approaches to the Past (1400-1900)



In 1928, Marc Bloch made what proved to be an influential statement when he said that the practice of comparing societies distant in space and time, described rather disparagingly as “comparative method in the grand manner”, may serve some ends but is too imprecise to be of any great use “from the scientific point of view”. Decades later William H. Sewell, Jr. objected that “mere temporal and spatial proximity does not assure similarity, and some societies which are very remote from one another are surely more alike, at least in ways that are crucial for some explanatory problems, than some neighboring societies”.

Themes such as “global history,” “Transfergeschichte”, “circulation,” and “connection” all hold an undoubted appeal and draw in the present age. It has been pointed out though that all too often the history of the world, especially when it is based to a large degree on (mostly English) secondary literature, has ended up being fashioned into a flat narrative of “the rise of the West and the Westernization of the rest.” For Sanjay Subrahmanyam, an alternative to the “grand narrative of modernization” would be for historians not simply to adopt a different scale, but to take a step sideways, finding a different vantage point and employing a decentring technique to identify previously hidden or unseen connections among places and cultures.

More recent comparative endeavours have seen scholars engaging more and more with what Serge Gruzinski has described as the “alchemy of hybridization,” and the “intensity of circulation ... that reveals mixed landscapes”. Entangled histories (Espagne, Kocka, Werner, Zimmermann) have explored “mutual influencing,” “reciprocal or asymmetric perceptions,” and the intertwined “processes of constituting one another.” Further efforts to restore cultural comparison to the centre of scholarship have included the “cognitive science of religion”, “World Literature” and “World Philology”. Finally, but no less important, historians of emotions have begun to investigate and to problematize the transcultural translatability of emotions.

The next issue of CROMOHS (21/2016) will offer a critical historiographical survey and discussion, accompanied by exemplary case studies, of the various approaches to comparative early modern history that have been theorized and practiced in the last two decades. These range from transcultural and translation studies to global and connected histories. The aim is to unravel, review, and compare the possibilities and limitations of this plurality of relational approaches and methods. Has a change of scale been taking place, or a shift in perspective instead? What are the consequences of adopting a practice of synchronic or diachronic comparison? How can researchers working with languages, concepts and categories that are not part of their sphere of socialization deal with the inescapable challenges of reflexivity that these pose?

We invite ground-breaking research articles that either critically address the history of relational approaches to historical and cultural studies, or apply a possible variant of such perspectives (comparative, connected, global history, etc.) to a research theme (political, intellectual, social, cultural, religious, and so on), combined with a reflection on its theoretical implications. Any geographic area may be considered, while the time span covered by the issue will be from 1400 to 1900. The opening historiographical essay will be by Prof. Dr. Margrit Pernau, Senior Researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development (Center for the History of Emotions), Berlin.

Submissions must be sent no later than April 28, 2017 to: giovanni.tarantino@uwa.edu.au and/or g.marcocci@unitus.it.

Articles should be no more than 7,000 words in length, notes included. Proposals should include a c.500 word abstract and a short biography of the author. Please prepare your essays using the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition (www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/), using footnotes rather than endnotes. Authors will be informed as to whether or not their articles have been accepted for publication within two months, following evaluation by two internationally renowned referees.