



From Professionalisation to Global Ambitions: the History of History Writing at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century

Matthias Middell

HCM 1 (1): 87–99

DOI: 10.5117/HCM2013.1.MIDD

Review of Daniel Woolf, *A Global History of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 568 pp., ISBN 978-0-521-69908-2.

Abstract

Over the past twenty years, the history of historiography has developed into an increasingly professionalised field within general history writing. At the same time, its narrow focus on national historiography has been acknowledged. This review essay places Daniel Woolf's *A Global History of History* (2011) in the context of new directions in global history and the history of historiography. Woolf's main goal is to rehabilitate the non-European parts of that history of history writing, refuting the traditional Eurocentric, teleological approach in histories of Western thought and the Whiggishness of many intellectual histories of historiography. The great strength of the book, this review essay argues, is that it compares an innovation in one corner of the world with other innovations elsewhere, thus focusing on multiple modernities. Woolf also makes us aware of transnational entanglements, of the simultaneity of concepts and practices in regions far apart as well as the lack of communication between regions geographically closer to each other. Although Woolf does not pay enough attention to the most recent trends in global history writing, his global history of historiography will further nourish comparative studies of historiography.

Keywords: global history, historiography, eurocentrism, multiple modernities

While an International Committee of Historical Sciences (CISH) has existed since the 1920s, world and global history was always a rather marginal subject at its regular meetings.¹ It was not before the Amsterdam conference in 2010 that the CISH accepted a subcommittee for world and global history among the specialised subdivisions of this international organisation of historians – at last reflecting the boom that global history has seen since the late 1980s, first in the US and later in other parts of the world.²

This indicates the growing interest in global history almost everywhere in the world but also the application of global perspectives to more or less all subfields of historiography including the study of history writing itself. It might be easy to imagine a history of world markets or stock exchanges facilitating a global economy, a history of technologies connecting different world regions like the telegraph, the sea cable or the internet, or even a history of warfare with simultaneous battles on different continents. However, the particular challenge in the case of a global history of historiography is the fact that the historical self-reflexivity of societies, as well as history as an academic endeavour, were believed to have emerged in the West and were subsequently interpreted as core elements of modernisation following Western patterns. Greek, Roman and Christian forms of history writing were presented as preceding and anticipating modern transformations in the understanding of history (writing).

To overcome such limitations, a need was felt for a substantial shift in the way historiography was studied. This subfield developed over the past twenty years or so into an increasingly professionalised field within general history writing. It is no longer of relevance only for a few pioneers like Georg Iggers, who long championed the field with his masterpieces of synthesis – starting with German historiography from Herder to the present, focusing later on Western historiography and opening up more recently to a sort of global perspective. Historiography is no longer quantitatively dominated by texts looking back at prominent predecessors in order to legitimise propositions in current methodological quarrels. And it is no longer exclusively interested in published historical texts, but is based upon archival work even to the extent that sometimes the historian's oeuvre is overshadowed by interest in his or her political views of historians, sometimes beyond their work – especially when it comes to historians who worked under authoritarian regimes.

The CISH's subcommittee on the methodology and history of history writing became more prominent and influential. Since the 1990s it publishes an academic journal of high reputation: *Storia della storiografia*. The history

of historiography has developed into a recognised topic for PhD theses and thus has not only nourished the market for scholarly monographs but also contributed to the emergence of a first generation of scholars who started their academic careers with a specialisation in this particular field. This stands in marked contrast to the time when books on historiography were written mainly by the discipline's elder statesmen.

This turn towards the professional discovery of the roots and sources of current historical thinking and representation clearly takes its inspiration from an engagement of whole societies with their history, and with the ways such engagement becomes an argument in current debates about politics and the future. Already in the late 1980s and early 1990s Jörn Rüsen, one of the activists within the CISH, proposed to take a broader perspective and to include in the field of historiography the following dimensions: academic research, historical writing (which is not necessarily the monopoly of academics), historical representations (from coherent forms in museums to more heterogeneous ones, such as icons used in the advertising industry), the historical narratives and values accepted by the majority of national, religious or ethnic communities (*Geschichtskultur* or master narrative) and the political use of history by reigning elites and oppositional forces.³ Others, of course, have theorised this extension of interest in other terms⁴ and with other priorities,⁵ but what these authors share is a sense of complexity. More and more factors were emphasised as being important for understanding the ongoing self-examination of societies in their search for a seemingly appropriate history.

The 1990s marked the professionalisation of historiography, albeit with one particular limitation: most authors restricted themselves to one country or, in the few instances in which national historiographies were compared, to a limited number of "big" historiographies (France, Germany, Britain, and the US). There was an increasing interest in the development of the discipline in many countries and solid works were published, but they remained for the time being largely neglected in the international debates on the role of historiography in society and academia. The discussion on the effects of communist dictatorship on historians, on historical institutes and their production as well as on the use of history for political purposes was an exception to this rule. These studies were mainly focused on former satellites of the Soviet Union in the Eastern bloc. This was, however, not a totally isolated subfield since at the same time a new interest in the history of historiography under National Socialism emerged, sustained by better access to the archives than was possible during the 1950s and 1960s, when the topic for the first time came to the fore.

It is possible to criticise the underlying methodological nationalism but one should take into account that academic systems within which careers developed were mainly national in character, and that many historians gave master narratives a particular national outlook. In addition, the many studies on national cases (somewhat ironically) became the point of departure for studies transcending these national limitations – be it through comparative approaches to historiography or through investigations less focused on framing historiography in national terms.⁶

Larger research and publication projects brought together the now emerging community of professionalised historians of historiography.⁷ During the first decade of the twenty-first century, two major initiatives pushed the field forward, at the same time reaping the fruits of hard work by many specialists of their respective countries or regions. One project resulted in the publication of eight volumes by Palgrave-Macmillan, which provide a global perspective on the history of national history writing in its various forms since the 1850s.⁸ The other project materialised in the five volumes of the Oxford History of Historical Writing, covering all historical periods and all continents. The latter was a result of the initiative and indefatigable effort of Daniel Woolf, previously a professor at the University of Edmonton and now at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. The institutional context was as important as the strong personality of Woolf, who was able to mobilise resources from his university to bring together a team of more than one hundred scholars to write on current Vietnamese historiography as well as on Babylonian chronicles.⁹

Daniel Woolf's single-authored *Global History of History* is a product of the intense dialogue between historians who share an interest in the role of history in society and academia, but are, at the same time, highly specialised in a particular field. The fact that Woolf wrote his own version of the intricate ways in which historical writing developed over the past three or four millennia can be seen as a signal that today a multi-volume endeavour needs to be available in a format accessible for graduate students and non-specialists. It is also an indication that collective work is indispensable for the kind of global ambition that is on the present-day scholarly agenda. But, at the same time, it shows that the results of this endeavour do not yet satisfy to a degree that it is able to replace the traditional single-authored work by historians.

What are the consequences of this shift in writing from a collection of essays by specialists of particular world regions or countries to the overarching conceptualisation by a generalist who, of course, has his own expertise (in Woolf's case this is Victorian historiography) but who now aims to

integrate collective wisdom in a personally informed framework of interpretation? Woolf starts his journey with a discussion of key terms like history and historiography and it becomes apparent right from the outset that he neither deals with political, nor with cultural aspects of remembrance. Instead, he remains focused on oral and written representations of the past, on the one hand, and the academic discipline of history on the other (while conceding that this distinction is not always helpful for the analysis of pre-modern times or non-European contexts such as China). To focus on history writing as the author does is, of course, a legitimate decision. It fits the needs of graduate courses on historiography at Anglophone universities. But it also leaves out a larger part of the history of history writing, especially the question of how societies deal with their past in all its diverse forms of representation – the book is explicitly not about monuments, rituals, politics of history or remembrance. It thus privileges a very important format of the relationship between societies and their past but neglects others. This becomes problematic since preference is given to those representations of the past that have been and still are central in Western countries but not to the same degree to other societies.

Woolf knows, of course, about the postmodern doubts regarding Western ways of representing history but he only touches upon it at the beginning of his book. He does not discuss it in more detail elsewhere. The author once again lists the well-known sins of his Eurocentric predecessors and insists that since global history is winning more and more support such a view is no longer appropriate. No one will disagree with this. At the same time, the argument that the global character of history has been discovered only very recently might be acceptable to legitimise current efforts to write such a global history, but should be discussed more critically in a history of historiography. It is interesting that Woolf refers in a later chapter to the German *Methodenstreit* around 1900 but totally ignores the perhaps most interesting dimension of that debate, which precisely concerned the possibilities and difficulties of conceptualising world history anew. Woolf's main goal is rehabilitating the non-European parts of that history of history writing, firstly by giving them their rightful place and secondly by discussing their often underestimated contribution to the rich reservoir of methods and theories in historiography.

Distancing himself from the ambition to draw a complete picture of all history ever written, he argues against the idea that all representations of history have been on equal footing. He also refutes the traditional Eurocentric, teleological approach in histories of Western ideas and the Whiggishness of many intellectual histories of historiography. The many

meanings history and historiography can have are, of course, a problem especially for a project like the one Woolf is undertaking, but in the end it remains clear that there is no reconstruction of any objectively existing history: there is only a discussion of various attempts to reconstruct and represent selected dimensions of the past. Representations of history are accessible to any kind of academic analysis, the past itself is not. The interesting question here is why the past and history are often confused and many languages tend towards increasing this confusion instead of overcoming it. But Woolf is neither intending to write a philosophical essay, nor is he primarily interested in fundamental methodological issues. Instead, he takes the reader on a long journey through many epochs and world regions to discover the varieties of formats of history writing and the fundamental ideas about how to do it. He is also very clear about what his book is not: it is not a comprehensive record of historiographical activity and its practitioners and it is, therefore, only interested in great authors and not so much in any kind of statistical analysis of the historical production. One may criticise this as old-fashioned and argue that it exaggerates the role of important and original thinkers in comparison to the dominant practice in a given society. However, it seems to be the only way to stick to a global ambition, given the current imbalance in the empirical investigation of the ever-expanding production of scholarly monographs, textbooks, articles, paintings, films, and – more recently – computer animations.

Such an approach, which favours a reading of a limited number of influential historians' works, increases the role of composition and interpretation. Woolf organises the book into nine chapters and a very brief epilogue. Each of these chapters opens with a timeline of the most important works published in a certain epoch and for later periods also includes the foundational dates of learned journals and even the dates of court decisions like the one against David Irving. This sensitises the reader to both the time span and the geographical theatre he or she will be confronted with. This is supplemented by small boxes introducing especially interesting authors or paradigms. The role of these boxes seems evident since they are illustrative and anecdotic in style and direct the reader to more detailed information. But since most of the text introduces a specific author and his works, one sometimes has difficulty in understanding why some authors made it into the box and others figure prominently in the paragraph close by.

The first chapter gives an overview of Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Israelites, and the Greeks and Romans but also includes a longer part on ancient China and on South Asia. Africa and the Americas are deferred to later chapters. In a fascinating manner, Daniel Woolf draws a picture that transcends

any kind of Eurocentrism and helps us to understand the ways history emerged in different parts of the world. What is presented, however, in the first chapter are parallel histories that invite comparative thoughts, while interaction is mainly restricted to the circulation of ideas across time: authors pick up concepts developed by their predecessors and put themselves in a certain tradition. Woolf, however, pays little attention to people living at the same time and reacting to ideas expressed by contemporaries. Due to the focus on concepts, social contexts remain in the background of Woolf's account. This does assist in understanding why certain ideas popped up at a particular moment and place. When the author departs from this principle it sometimes leads to anachronistic shortcomings, for example when the Chinese Legalists in the third century BCE (under the Qin dynasty) are characterised as representatives of totalitarian thinking and are presented as precursors of twentieth-century historians collaborating with dictatorships (p. 59).

The title of this chapter, "Foundations", refers not only to beginnings; rather, the author focuses on foundational models that can be traced throughout the history of history writing. Unfortunately, the chronological order of the book makes it impossible to order the material in a more systematic way, along the lines of models surviving for more than two millennia. But the recurring themes are the following: "the relation (or lack thereof) of history to actual events in the past; the duty of the historian to be truthful (though truth itself is a slippery target); the educative role of the historian; the belief that the past was, more or less, an exemplary mirror from which the present could learn; the relative value of written sources versus oral information; and the emerging ties between control over the writing of the past and political power." (p. 71) These concluding remarks at the end of chapter one invite a cross-chapter reading along these characteristics but Woolf leaves it to the reader to discover the continuities, discontinuities and developments of such a definition of history writing.

Chapter two focuses on Christianity as a significantly new element, especially in regard to the ways in which it merged with or challenged the established conventions of history writing during the first millennium AD. Woolf draws parallels with the emergence of Islamic historiography as well as the bureaucratisation of history writing in China under the Tang dynasty. Again, the author develops an impressive picture and invites the reader to take leave of European exceptionalism. The great strength of the book is that it compares an innovation in one corner of the world with other innovations elsewhere. Modern historiography has a much broader basis than the traditional portrayal of a development from Antiquity through

the Middle Ages to the Renaissance/ Enlightenment might suggest. Daniel Woolf has not just made such a focus on multiple modernities the underlying principle of his book, he is also able to demonstrate it convincingly page by page.

Woolf discusses the five centuries between c. 1000 and c. 1450 under the label of global violence in the third chapter, focusing on the Crusades, the Mongol expansion, and the emergence of the Ottoman Empire on the ruins of the declining Byzantine Empire, as well as on inner European conflicts from the English war of Roses to the Reconquista on the Iberian Peninsula. It is not so much the violent character of the epoch but the increasing entanglement of societies far apart that influences the writing of history. The challenges that now had to be faced include both the presence of much more information about other societies and their increasing entanglement. The effects the field of historiography nevertheless remained limited at least when compared to the following period, the time between 1450 and 1700. Here, Woolf concentrates on the input of humanist intellectuals and compares it to what happened along the Silk Road in the Islamic Empires of the Safavids, the Mughals and the Ottomans as well as in China. Contextualisation highlighting the emergence of new territorial states in an environment of empires would perhaps have merited a more systematic discussion of this factor in other chapters too.

Chapter five on transatlantic histories reconstructs the other direction of European contacts across the Ocean to Africa and the Americas, and follows the pattern of cultural encounter and exchange. Between this chapter and chapter seven (“The Broken Mirror”, on the “Spread of the Western practices of history across the rest of the world” (p. 276) in the nineteenth century), Woolf places a chapter on the new notion of progress as a central element in the understanding of history developed by the “Eurasian enlightenments”. These include not only the well-known European thinkers from those involved in the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* to Condorcet, but also the Russian Karamzin and several Chinese, Korean and Japanese authors. Unfortunately, he does not engage much with the debate on the uniqueness of the European Enlightenment. This is a pity insofar as that he seems to provide convincing hints about an East Asian intellectual contribution, but ignores the Islamic dimension of the debate. According to Wolff, East Asia neither stayed far behind European achievements, nor only copied some features under Western influence. Instead, he presents it as a region that faced similar challenges as the West and thus developed parallel intellectual answers to the same structural problems in society. Critical (and sometimes even iconoclastic) scholarship emerged in East Asia as well as in Europe.

Woolf seems to argue that this prepared East Asian society for communication, later on in the second half of the nineteenth century, with Western innovation in historical methodology (as well as in the many others fields which became mobilised by cultural transfers). The argument might apply to other regions as well but Woolf restricts his demonstration to East Asia.

Chapter seven, entitled “The Broken Mirror”, deals with nationalism, romanticism and professionalisation in the West during the nineteenth century. Ranke is very much at the centre of this discussion. It is in this period that national schools of thought emerge, serving as the background for describing the concepts of individual historians. It looks as if “Germany” was particularly advanced in the production of especially innovative thinkers and methodologies. Interestingly, Woolf himself offers a great deal of evidence for their transnational connectedness, yet he does not insist much on the border-crossing networks, which in some cases were much more important than the relationship with the nation. Since Woolf deliberately omits most of the institutional context related to state sponsorship of seminars and institutes as well as to national educational systems, it remains rather unclear what, exactly, produced the strong ties between the nation and a particular concept of history practised by a single historian.

Chapter eight on “Clio’s Empire” contrasts with the attempt to overcome Eurocentric positions. The author argues in favour of such a reorientation because “European historical culture [...] reached the zenith of its influence over the rest of the world in the years between 1800 and 1945, at precisely the time that the countries which had developed disciplinary codes and institutions were also exercising political and intellectual sway over the rest of the globe.” (p. 399) While colonisers imposed their own “regime of historicity” not only on the colonies but also on other areas in the world, this was, in Woolf’s words, often also a “conquest by invitation”, without which it would not be possible to understand why historiographies with indigenous roots accepted the switch to “modern” (Western) methods and concepts. Here, we are, of course, at a critical point for any global history of historiography. Various questions can be raised. Thus, one may wonder about the relationship between political, economic and intellectual superiority. Also, one may ask, when comparing Asian or African historians with European and North American scholars, to what extent similarities in institutional settings and languages imply identical practices and social functions. Is the long nineteenth century the period of a great homogenisation in history writing or is it the moment when people at very different places discovered seemingly similar tools and used these for purposes that were dictated by their different global “positionality”?

The term *positionality* was introduced by Michael Geyer and Charles Bright in order to characterise a qualitatively new period in the history of globalisation, when practically all societies around the world had to confront the challenge of global markets, an increasingly integrated system of financial transactions, technological advancement and the much faster communication and transportation of goods and ideas.¹⁰ It can be argued that societies around the globe were looking for new and more efficient tools to cope with the dialectics of this global condition, specifically the coexistence of de- and re-territorialising tendencies at all levels, from economy to politics and culture. What looks like the use of the same tool – in our case: the institutional and intellectual organisation of ways to deal with the past – was the result of transnational circulation (instead of a dissemination from one source of origin) and it resulted in different meanings in different contexts. Writing the nation in France and writing the nation in India can be compared, but obviously it has, at least in part, different functions and addresses different realities. What is interesting about “conquest by invitation” is that it raises the question of why this invitation was accepted and whether we can call it a conquest when people use history writing as a tool for political and cultural emancipation. Although alternative interpretations of the long nineteenth century’s history writing are possible, the great advantage of Daniel Woolf’s chapter is that it very elegantly summarises the great achievements that were made over the past decades in the concrete presentation of East, South and Southeast Asian historiography, that it revisits the old debate on written history and oral traditions, and that it examines in much greater detail the place of Africa in modern history writing (with a special section on the particularities of the Ethiopian case), ending with a look at the so-called Islamic world.

The last chapter is an attempt to cope with the “massification” of history writing in the twentieth century. It is divided into small sections dealing with some of the most prominent tendencies, starting with the crisis of historicism and new trends in the philosophy of history in the interwar period, discussing the *Annales* school and the particular proximity with geography, followed by an analysis of the relationship of history with the social sciences. It then presents the problems of Marxist historiography in terms of, first, a history from below, and, second, history writing under dictatorships. The chapter next moves on to gender issues, the relationship of indigenous people to history writing often dominated by the settlers’ successors, and the role of postmodern approaches, intellectual history and the linguistic turn. It ends with new oral history. It is not by accident that

Woolf uses the metaphor of the Tower of Babel in the title of this chapter, highlighting the ongoing specialisation and even fragmentation.

Looking back, especially on this chapter one can only agree with the author that the overwhelming impression is one of an explosion of the discipline into thousands of subdisciplines. There is no chance of getting back to the grand narratives after postmodern thinking destroyed the rather naïve conceptualisation of the relationship between past, history and remembrance. What strikes me here is that Woolf's global history of history spends only a few words on the most recent trend of global history writing. Global history as we see it emerging now is not a way back to old fashioned Hegelian universal histories, but is much more interested in empirical research of questions that may help us to understand how today's global connectedness came about and how the global condition has influenced and will continue to influence the development of individual societies. Daniel Woolf's book contributes to this trend since it is based on an astonishing variety of research efforts concerning single historians and larger schools of thought in historiography, while at the same time its composition demonstrates the author's willingness to organise the seemingly fragmented knowledge into a consistent narrative. As such, it may raise questions about details, and it may even provoke counter-narratives that organise the material in other ways. But it remains an intelligent and comprehensive account that represents the current status of our knowledge about history writing across the last millennia and across all continents. As such, it works as part of a substantial shift in our historical culture towards global consciousness. At the same time, this book provides a clear view of some of the particularities this historical culture has developed over the past two decades in the Anglophone world. The existence of a publication in English helps knowledge about specific phenomena or particular methodologies to enter this global consciousness. It is, nevertheless, surprising how polyglot authors like Daniel Woolf, under the pressure of the market, agree to limit bibliographies to English titles and thus have graduate students at universities in the US and the UK believe that no worthwhile knowledge exists outside the realm of their own language.

As will be clear from the brief overview given here, Daniel Woolf has opted for a narrative that includes as much detail as possible about historical thinking and writing in non-Western societies while insisting on the centrality of non-fictional writing by increasingly professionalised historians. This gives his book a clear focus and invites other authors to privilege other dimensions in representing the past when making global comparisons. Daniel Woolf's global history of history will further nourish

the fundamental methodological debate about comparison and the study of connections in the field of global history. Comparative approaches tend to present the units of analysis as rather static containers within which interesting things may happen. As Woolf's book demonstrates, this is an appropriate way to describe developments at times in the past when the degree of connectedness was rather low, and ideas and concepts emerged separately, uninfluenced by a dense and permanent mutual exchange.

On the other hand, the limitations of the comparative approach surface where such entanglements get stronger and stronger.¹¹ The study of cultural transfers becomes all the more important to get a sense of the transnational quality of developments since both nationalisation and transnationalisation already went hand in hand during the nineteenth century. Historians saw themselves more and more integrated into national academic systems but at the same moment intensified cross-border communication. Ideas and concepts travelled from one place to another. In the process, they did not remain unchanged, but creatively adapted to new contexts. Neither Ranke's ideas about professional historical research, nor a seemingly typical French proximity of geography and history exclusively influenced historians in Germany or France.¹² But the radius of transnational entanglements is always a specific one and cannot be generalised: some concepts travelled faster, and others never took off. The big challenge for a global history of history is to determine when, how and where these entanglements transcended the boundaries of continents, empires and linguistic communities. Daniel Woolf's book is a great help in addressing these questions since he makes us aware of the simultaneity of concepts and practices in regions far apart as well as the lack of communication between regions geographically closer to each other. Together with the more detailed chapters in his multivolume *History of Historiography*, Woolf has established solid ground for the next steps to be taken by a reflective discipline with global ambitions.

Notes

1. See, for example, the plan submitted by Karl Lamprecht to the Berlin congress in 1908 on how to transform history curricula at universities to fit with "the age of world politics": Karl Lamprecht, "Die kultur- und universalgeschichtlichen Bestrebungen an der Universität Leipzig," *Wochenschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik* 2 (1908): 1141-50.
2. See www.nogwhisto.org, accessed 16 May 2013.
3. Jörn Rüsen, *Historische Vernunft. Grundzüge einer Historik I: Die Grundlagen der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983); Jörn Rüsen, *Rekonstruktion der Vergangenheit. Grundzüge einer Historik II: Die Prinzipien der historischen Forschung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); Jörn Rüsen, *Lebendige Geschichte. Grundzüge*

einer Historik III: Formen und Funktionen des historischen Wissens (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

4. To mention only François Hartog's interest in the regimes of historicity (François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2002) François Hartog and Jacques Revel, eds. *Les Usages politiques du passé* (Paris: Editions de l'EHESS, 2001) as well as the interest in the particular quality of academic historiography: François Hartog, *Évidence de l'histoire. Ce que voient les historiens* (Paris: Editions de l'EHESS, 2005).
5. One important direction became more interested in the narrative form of history writing while another strand focused more on the institutions within which the production of "history" happens.
6. Matthias Middell and Lluís Roura, *Transnational challenges to national history writing in Europe*, (Basingstoke/ New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
7. Perhaps the first one was initiated and edited by Wolfgang Küttler, Jörn Rüsen, and Ernst Schulz, eds. *Geschichtsdiskurs*, five volumes (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993-1999) covering mainly in its fifth volume the global arena with contributions on Japan, Russia, Latin America, the Arab countries, and sub-Saharan Africa.
8. The series *Writing the Nation* is edited by Stefan Berger, Christoph Conrad and Guy P. Marchal, the whole network, with members from practically all European countries, was funded by the European Social Science Foundation.
9. Daniel Woolf ed., *Oxford History of History Writing*, five volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008-2013). A first conceptual note was published as Daniel Woolf, "Historiography," in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Maryanne Cline Horowitz, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), xxxv–lxxxviii.
10. Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, "World History in a Global Age," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 1034–1060.
11. Michel Espagne, "Sur les limites du comparatisme en histoire culturelle," in *Genèses* 17 (1994): 112–121.
12. A good example of the study of such travelling concepts is Gabriele Lingelbach, *Klio macht Geschichte. Die Institutionalisierung der Geschichtswissenschaft in Frankreich und den USA in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

About the author

Matthias Middell is professor of Cultural History at the University of Leipzig and director of the Global and European Studies Institute as well as the Centre for Area Studies at the University of Leipzig. His current work focuses on world history writing in the twentieth century and on the relationship between territorialisation and globalisation since the late eighteenth century. Email: middell@uni-leipzig.de.



© 2013 Middell / Amsterdam University Press.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.