



# **THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF HISTORIOGRAPHY**

**ICHTH Newsletter | No. 3, February 2024**

# WELCOME ADDRESS



By  
**Daniel Woolf**  
Co-Secretary General/Programme Chair

## ***SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE TEACHING OF HISTORIOGRAPHY***

Our colleague Marnie Hughes-Warrington wrote eloquently in the last issue of this newsletter about responsible history, an important topic that, in the past few months, has become even more pressing in light of global events. Hers is a hard act to follow in terms of importance, but I would like to make a case for the importance of historiography in pedagogy and in considering how we teach it. The “importance” scarcely need be argued to readers of this newsletter. But what exactly *is* historiography? There are perhaps nearly as many definitions of it as there are historians. It's not easy to define, and it's especially difficult to explain to undergraduates, all of whom have preconceptions as to

what it means, and not a little fear about studying it for the first time. In a way, it's a bit like another word ending in “ography” of which a US supreme court justice once said that he knew it when he saw it.

In a book I published over a decade ago I offered three different definitions, which are almost certainly not exhaustive, but which for convenience I will reproduce verbatim here:

- a) a study of historical methods—essentially a “how to do history” course; a variant of this is the study of historical errors and fallacies, or how *not* to do history;
- b) the review and study of the state of knowledge and key debates in one national area, sub-discipline or historical event, for instance “recent trends in Sino-Japanese historiography” or (more clearly) “the historiography of the Russian Revolution”, where what is being referred to is past and current scholarship *about* the Russian Revolution, and not the writings of Pokrovskii, Pankratova, and other historians active before and after 1917;
- c) the history of historical writing, as in “Japanese historiography from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries”, typically a review of the great historians and their texts, but sometimes expanding outward to consider non-canonical works, and even the wider social and cultural contexts within which such works were produced.

To this one can add theory and philosophy of history, often taught outside history departments, especially in the Anglo-American world where till relatively recently “theory” (other than perhaps Marxist theory) has been a dirty word. That's changing a bit as even the most unreconstructed empiricists have been obliged in recent

decades to acknowledge the existence of, and sometimes even engage with, feminist theory, postcolonial thought, and that most suspect of isms, postmodernism. But my impression is that theory still lives on the margins of most history departments, at least in the Anglo-American world (continental European history departments do not share this aversion, nor do Latin American ones in my unscientific scan of them).

Is it any wonder then that students are bemused, if not terrified, of having to do “the historiography course”. I've taught at 5 different institutions over my career, and in every case, because my research has always focused on some or other aspect of the ways in which our understanding of and writing about the past has changed, I've always been welcome to teach a historiography course, first because it was felt to be a good thing and secondly because no one else was interested in doing it. I've done so with mixed success, sometimes with fabulous class discussions, sometimes in a silence that would make a cemetery at 2 am seem noisy. I've concluded that part of the problem is that historiography has been simultaneously ghettoized and casually appropriated by the profession, without any common agreement as to what it encompasses and how it should be taught. What I call historiography is not what many of my colleagues consider it to be, so is it any wonder that students are confused?

I'm not proposing for an instant that there should be a kind of set curriculum for teaching historiography any more than for history-proper, but I do wonder if the word itself is so protean that it has outlived its usefulness. I'd offer the following suggestions which in an era of shrinking humanities budgets are unlikely to be realized because they would demand resources and perhaps tenure lines that would impinge on the needs of “more important” or “line” areas defined by period and region. But let me dream for a moment. What about having every undergraduate program in history include an array of courses all of

which consider historiographical issues explicitly, so that the subject isn't marginalized into “that course or module you have to do”? Bolder still: what about every department having a theorist, someone whose job it is to do cutting edge research into the topic and keep their colleagues up to date. Literature departments seem to have no problem doing this, nor do most social science departments. The sciences are all over it—any physics department has both pure theorists and experimentalists (themselves scarcely ignorant of theory).

But not history departments: where we have specialists, they have almost always been hired as period/national historians (I'm a Tudor-Stuart England man; our late friend Georg Iggers was a historian of modern Germany; even Hayden White started out as a historian of medieval Italy). What about joint appointments between History and Philosophy to teach both historical and contemporary philosophy of history as an option? There's a philosopher of history just down the hall from me in my building; in the three years since I've been in that office, I've met him only once, and then only by accident. And my immediate neighbour, a historian who teaches the history of sexuality, knows a lot more about Foucault than I ever will. So I don't doubt that these subjects are getting attention. But are we teaching them effectively to our students, especially the undergraduates? (It's worth noting that where pedagogy tends to meet history most comfortably is in the halls of Education faculties, seized with inculcating the ability to “think historically” in school-age students).

One may well ask why does this matter? Is it not more important that students learn the facts of history (something beloved of a certain kind of politician who assumes that facts are unassailable, apolitical, and adamantine)? Or research methods? I don't dismiss either of these: so far as facts, historical literacy is at an all-time low, it seems, among the current adult population with few young adults able to name the principal adversaries in the Second World War, never mind the First, and a fixation in some schooling curricula on developing historical consciousness has pushed out of bounds some of the basic

historical knowledge my generation took for granted. Similarly, methods are very useful to learn about, and not merely for prospective academic historians since they are highly transferable skills. But as I explained to a graduate student from another department about 30 years ago, there is no such thing as “THE historical method”. These subjects are not mutually exclusive however; were I to design a degree program in history from scratch, it would have a mixture of “content” oriented, theory oriented, and methodological classes—with multiple choices of each. There would be no single “historiography” course, for teaching historiography would be everyone's business; there would however be a specialist (and why stop at one?) in either or both of the history of historical thinking and of advanced theory/philosophy.

Perhaps in the end I'm arguing for a different type of “responsible history”—one that sees a responsibility in the discipline to be self-critical about pedagogy and method, and prepared to teach our students that historiography (in its many senses) is neither a box that must be ticked (and dreaded) nor a luxury add-on, much less “that course you do if you don't want to do real research” as one of my own students overheard a peer remarking last autumn, but a necessary component of any historical education. Perhaps our Commission can in the coming years give some thought to ways in which we can bring our manifold interests into the mainstream of university-level historical education and research.

## NOTE

[Some of the argument in this address repeat material in my event essay “Separate Isles? On Historiography, Philosophy and Intellectual History” in Sandra Lapointe and Erich H. Reck (eds.) *Historiography and the Formation of Philosophical Canons* (New York and London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 300-334]

# COMMISSION NEWS

## PROPOSED VENUE OF ICHS 2026 CONGRESS

- On 16 January 2024, the Board sent a letter to the Bureau of the International Committee of Historical Sciences (ICHS) about the location of the 24th International Congress of Historical Sciences in 2026. We reproduce the text here in full.

Dear Colleagues,

Meeting on 13 January 2024, the Board of the International Commission for the History and Theory of Historiography (ICHTH) discussed the location of the 24th International Congress of Historical Sciences in 2026 and decided by secret and unanimous vote that Israel is not an acceptable location for the Congress. This means that our Commission will not participate in the Congress if it is held in Israel.

The ICHTH Board, already very critical when the location decision was originally taken, is primarily motivated by the armed conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the appalling breaches of international human rights and humanitarian law committed by all warring parties. In addition, the Board expresses its serious concerns about free access and safety guarantees for Congress participants.

The decision is without prejudice to the ICHTH Board's great appreciation for the many preparatory efforts already undertaken by the ICHS and by the Historical Society of Israel and its partner organizations.

The freedoms of expression and assembly, including the organization of historical congresses, are robust human rights. They are rightly enshrined in Article 1 of the ICHS Constitution. However, they are not absolute. In the present circumstances, they are clearly outweighed by the imperatives of peace and justice.

With best wishes,

Antoon De Baets

ICHTH President, on behalf of the ICHTH Board

- As is reported above in this Newsletter, the ICHTH Board on 16 January 2024 sent a letter to the International Committee of Historical Sciences about the location of the 24<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Historical Sciences. The discussion document underlying the meeting where this decision was taken is a memorandum with the title “Location of the International Congress of Historical Sciences of 2026 in Jerusalem”. This memo can be consulted at <https://www.ichth.net/news/23.pdf>

## OBITUARY

- On Saturday 21 October 2023, our honorary member Natalie Zemon Davis passed away. Please also see the thumbnail sketch written by Co-Secretary General Daniel Woolf in our first Newsletter at <https://www.ichth.net/news/9.pdf> (on page 4).

In the words of Co-Secretary General Marnie Hughes-Warrington, “We have lost a champion and an incredible person.”

She was an example to all of us. We miss her dearly. May she rest in peace.



Natalie Zemon Davis

## SUBSCRIPTION DISCOUNTS FROM SELECTED JOURNALS

Please find below special subscription rates for ICHTH members from the following journals:

- Subscription discount (20%) for the ICHTH-affiliated *Journal Storia della Storiografia*
- Subscription discount (35%) for the *Journal of the Philosophy of History*
- Subscription discount (17%) for the *Journal of the History of Ideas*
- Subscription discount (77%) for the *Journal Rethinking History*

You can also access the discount options via the membership page: <https://www.ichth.net/membership>

## 'ONE MORE THING': INTERVIEWS BY PIOTR KOWALEWSKI JAHROMI AND TAYNNA MENDONCA MARINO

Under the coordination of Piotr Kowalewski Jahromi, a member of ICHTH, and Taynna Mendonca Marino a series of interviews with historians was published on "One More Thing" - the blog of the journal *History and Theory*. The idea for the interviews project came from Ewa Domanska, former president of ICHTH. Among the interviewees are ICHTH members Olufunke Adebayo, Edward Q. Wang, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Marek Tamm, Zoltan Boldizsar Simon, Edoardo Tortarolo, Estevao Chaves de Rezende, Martins, Kalle Pihlainen, Veronica Tozzi Thompson, and Antoon De Baets.

Read the interviews at

<https://historyandtheory.org/omt/poznan-home>

## ICHTH-INTH BOOK PRIZE

- The deadline for the 2023 ICHTH-INTH Book Prize for the History and Theory of Historiography (31 December 2023) passed. The Jury (coming from Belgium, Estonia, Mexico and South Africa) has started its work to evaluate all submissions. A shortlist of selected candidates will be determined by 20 April 2024. An announcement and celebration of the prize will be held on 21 – 24 May 2024 at the INTH conference in Lisbon. *Storia della Storiografia* will publish two Fora dedicated to the Prize

winners: Forum for the Best First Book and Forum for the Best Book. Both Fora will consist of a summary of the winning book by the laureate, three review essays, and a rejoinder by the laureate. Further news will appear at <https://www.ichth.net/prize>.

## WIKIPEDIA PAGE

• Since June 2023 wikipedia has included a page for ICHTH in Portuguese: [https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comiss%C3%A3o\\_Internacional\\_para\\_a\\_Hist%C3%B3ria\\_e\\_Teoria\\_da\\_Historiografia](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comiss%C3%A3o_Internacional_para_a_Hist%C3%B3ria_e_Teoria_da_Historiografia). The page was developed by members of a project called “More Historical Theory at Wikipedia”, directed by Flavia Varela, a member of the board of the Brazilian Society for the Theory and History of Historiography. ICHTH member Arthur Alfaix Assis from the Universidade de Brasilia took the initiative to create the page. We are looking for members of our commission who want to create a Wikipedia page in other languages. If you are interested, please write to [info@ichth.net](mailto:info@ichth.net).

The ICHTH website has a page with links: <https://www.ichth.net/links>. The page includes links to international networks, collective works, journals, blogs, and book series in our field. For practical reasons, the page excludes links to works of individual authors or initiatives of merely national scope, but please send any other suggestions to [info@ichth.net](mailto:info@ichth.net).

## MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS

• All ICHTH members can nominate candidates for our Commission. The procedure is very simple and involves filling out a small nomination form that can be found at <https://www.ichth.net/membership>. Alternatively, candidates can also apply for membership themselves. A small application form can be found at <https://www.ichth.net/membership> as well. At regular intervals, the ICHTH Board evaluates all nominations and applications and invites those approved for membership.

## ICHS/CISH 8TH NEWSLETTER

• On 31 December 2023, the International Committee of Historical Sciences- the global body of historians to which our commission is affiliated as an international organization- published its eighth Newsletter.

Contents: Editorial; ICHS-CISH General Assembly, Tokyo 2024; Call for Panels for the 24<sup>th</sup> ICHS Congress in Jerusalem; Necrology Manuel Espadas Burgos; ICHTH-INTH Best Book Prize and Best First Book Prize 2024; Dan David Prize 2024; Walter Markov Prize 2024; Conferences organized by member organizations of CISH; Announcement of upcoming conferences. The Newsletter can be downloaded at <https://www.ichth.net/news/22.pdf>.

# MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### Chiel van den Akker, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

• Special Issue *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 2023:3: Reinhart Koselleck in the Anglophone World, edited by Helge Jordheim, Lisa Regazzoni and Chiel van den Akker.

### Arthur Alfaix Assis, University of Brasilia

• Assis, Arthur Alfaix (2023). *Plural Pasts: Historiography between Events and Structures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [Element of Historical Theory and Practice].

### Maria Grever, Erasmus University Rotterdam

• Advisory Report of the Netherlands Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), Wankele Sökkels. Omstreden monumenten in de openbare ruimte (*Unstable Pedestals. Controversial Monuments in Public Space*) Amsterdam: KNAW, 2023 (185 p.). See <https://www.knaw.nl/en/publications/unstable-pedestals-controversial-monuments-public-space>

- Maria Grever, “Historical Consciousness and Controversial Statues in a Postcolonial World: the case of Missionary Peerke Donders (1809- 1887)”, *History of Education*, theme issue “Timeless Memories: Memory and Temporality in Histories of Education”, vol.52, nr.6, 1000- 1014.

- Maria Grever and Susan Legene, “Histories of an Old Empire. The Ever- Changing Acknowledgement of Dutch Imperialism as a Present Past”, in A. Delgado and A. Mycock eds., *Conflicts in History of Education in Europe. Political Context, History Teaching and National Identity*. IAP Information Age Publishing, 2023, 27-47.

### Jaume Aurell, University of Navarra, Spain

- Jaume Aurell, *What is a Classic in History: The Making of a Historical Canon*: (<https://uk.bookshop.org/p/books/what-is-a-classic-in-history-the-making-of-a-historical-canon-jaume-aurell/7604119>). Cambridge University Press, 2024.

### Ethan Kleinberg, Wesleyan University

- *History and Theory* December 2023 Theme Issue on Chronopolitics: <https://historyandtheory.org/current>

### Herman Paul, Leiden University

- New open-access book: Herman Paul and Alexander Stoeger, *Dogmatism: On the History of a Scholarly Vice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2024), <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/dogmatism-9781350382633/> Why does the history of dogmatism deserve our attention? This open access book analyses uses of the term, following dogmatism from Victorian Britain to Cold War America, examining why it came to be regarded as a vice, and how understanding of its meaning has evolved.

### Eros Vilmos, University of Debrecen, Hungary

#### (A) Publications, 2023:

- Malyusz Elemer: Visszaemlekezés.

(Recenzio es reflexiok.)

In: *Valosag*, 2023/December. 16-26.

- Malyusz Elemer (1898-1989), mint a magyarorszagi Zsigmond-kutatas kiemelkedo kepviseloje  
In: *Magyar Tudomany/November*, 184 (2023). 1457-1466.

- Eros Vilmos. (Tudomanyos oneletrajz es az MTA doktori ertekezes absztraktja).

In: *Magyar Tudomany*, 2023. (Kulonszam.) 52- 53.

#### (B) Conference presentations, 2023:

- Views/debates on Hungary's place within Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian agricultural history/rural historiography. Emlékkonferencia Niederhauser Emil születésének 100.évfordulója alkalmából./Nation Statehood, and Historiography in Eastern Europe. International Conference in Memory of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Emil Niederhauser. ELTE/Eotvos Lorand University, Kelet-Európai Tanszék/Department of Eastern and Central European History and Historical Russistics. Budapest, September 28-29, 2023.

- “Geistesgeschichte” and beyond: The Anjou's in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Hungarian Historiography. International Conference entitled “The Heritage of the Anjou Dynasty in Central Europe”. Cracow/Poland, Jagellon University, October 19-20, 2023.

### Francisco M. Ortiz-Delgado, University of Guadalajara

- F.M Ortiz-Delgado, “Una Definicion-concepcion de historia para combatir el eurocentrismo y la ambigüedad” (“A Definition-Conception of History in Order to Fight Eurocentrism and Ambiguity”). *Revista de El Colegio de San Luis*, v.12, n.23, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.21696/rcsl122320221440>

- F.M Ortiz-Delgado “The Philosophy of Trans-Historic-History Followed by President Lopez Obrador”. *Revista de Filosofia de la Universidad de Costa Rica*, v.62, n.163,2023. <https://doi.org/10.15517/revfil.2023.50537>

## PERSONAL NEWS/HONOURS

- In December 2023, ICHTH Board member and past ICHTH President Ewa Domanska joined the Editorial Committee of the journal *History and Theory*. In the journal's press release, Ewa was called “an adventurous pathbreaking and energetic scholar.” Warm congratulations, Ewa!

### **Davide Cadeddu, University of Milan**

- Elected Associate (Senior Member) of the College of Clare Hall, Cambridge.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS/ TRAININGS

- Antoon De Baets has started editorial work on *The Palgrave Handbook of Attacks on History*, scheduled for publication in early 2027. All information about this project, including a draft introduction, time line and provisional table of contents, can be found at <https://www.concernedhistorians.org/handbook>. Please do not hesitate to suggest names and email addresses of strong potential contributors to [a.h.m.de.baets@rug.nl](mailto:a.h.m.de.baets@rug.nl).

### **INTH CONFERENCE 2024**

- The Conference “History & Responsibility: Doing History in Times of Conflicting Political Demands,” organized by the International Network of Theory of History (INTH), will take place in Lisbon from 21 to 24 May, 2024. Go to the dedicated website page for more information about the (extensive) program, registration, etc.: <https://www.inth.ugent.be/node/147184>

Our Commission has contributed three panels to the program. In addition, the ICHTH-INTH Prizes for the Best Book and Best First Book will be awarded during the closing session of the Conference. One of the principal organizers of the Conference is ICHTH Board Member Berber Bevernage. Early-bird registration before 1 March, 2024. The Conference program is at: <https://www.ichth.net/news/25.pdf>

### **ESSHC 2025**

- The 15th European Social Science History Conference (ESSHC) will be held in Leiden, The Netherlands from 26 to 29 March 2025. The ESSHC Theory and Historiography Network is therefore issuing a Call for Papers. You can find the call on the ICHTH website at <https://www.ichth.net/news/24.pdf> or <https://www.ichth.net/news>. The deadline is 15 April, 2024. The Network is chaired by Stefan Berger and Victoria Fareld (both ICHTH members), and Kenan Van De Mierop.



## **Davide Cadeddu, University of Milan**

- The Betty Behrens Seminar on Classics of Historiography

**Location:** Clare Hall, University of Cambridge

**Time:** 2-4 pm

### **Program:**

- Wednesday 31 January 2024:  
Amira K. Bennison (Professor in the History and Culture of the Maghrib, University of Cambridge) on “Muqaddimah” (1377) by Ibn Khaldun
- Wednesday 7 February 2024:  
Robert Black (Professor Emeritus of Renaissance History, University of Leeds) on “History of Italy” (1537-1540) by Francesco Guicciardini
- Wednesday 17 February 2024:  
Paul Cartledge (Emeritus A.G Leventis Professor of Greek Culture, University of Cambridge, Clare College) on “Histories” (V c. BC) by Herodotus of Halicarnassus
- Wednesday 21 February 2024:  
Karen O'Brien (Vice-Chancellor and Warden, Durham University) on “The History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line” (1763 - 1783) by Catherine Macaulay

Website: <https://www.clarehall.cam.ac.uk/>

For further information: [davide.cadeddu@unimi.it](mailto:davide.cadeddu@unimi.it)

## **Eros Vilmos, University of Debrecen, Hungary**

- “British and German Historiographical receptions in Hungarian History Writing around 1900” “New Reflections on Historiographical Interactions and Networks between British and German Historians from the Early Nineteenth Century to the Present” (Workshop, Institute for Social Movements of Ruhr- University-Bochum, from 12 to 14 July, 2024).

## **International Commission for the History and Theory of Historiography BOARD**

### **Executive Committee**

- President: Antoon De Baets – University of Groningen, The Netherlands
- Vice-President: Olufunke Adeboye – University of Lagos, Nigeria
- Secretary-General and Program Chair: Marnie Hughes-Warrington – University of South Australia, Australia
- Secretary-General and Program Chair: Daniel Woolf – Queen's University, Canada

### **Prize Coordinators**

- Berber Bevernage - University of Ghent, Belgium
- Marek Tamm - Tallinn University, Estonia

### **Members**

- Dipesh Chakrabarty - University of Chicago, United States
- Efi Gazi - University of the Peloponnese, Greece
- Allan Megill - University of Virginia, United States
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- Xupeng Zhang - Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China
- Ewa Domanska - Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland – ex officio

Follow ICHTH activities on the website: <https://www.ichth.net>

ICHTH Members are requested to pay their annual fees. For more information about annual fees, write to [info@ichth.net](mailto:info@ichth.net)

**ICHTH No. 4 newsletter is scheduled for October 2024. A call for submission of News items shall be made in July 2024.**

ICHTH Newsletter No. 1 and 2 can be read at:

No. 1 – <https://www.ichth.net/news/9.pdf>

No. 2 – <https://www.ichth.net/news/18.pdf>

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