

## editorial: global history

Global history, or world history, to me the two terms are interchangeable, is in very good shape at the moment. Its practitioners are well-organised. There is a *World History Association* (WHA) with many branches and a *European Network in Universal and Global History* (ENIUGH), which originated in Leipzig and is now in the process of becoming a world-wide organisation. The sub-discipline of global economic history has its own Global Economic History Network. There is a Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction. In the German-speaking world there is a *Verein für Geschichte des Weltsystems*. Those who are interested in the topic have ample opportunity to visit conferences where it is discussed. Not just those organised by the WHA or ENIUGH. At Social Science History Conferences, in Europe as well as in the United States, for example, there are always panels or debates dedicated to global history. The theme of the World Economic History Conference of 2009 in Utrecht will be global economic history. These are just some examples from the Western world. Many more could be given.

Many students are at least introduced in the subject. According to Felipe Fernández-Armesto, in the interview I conducted with him for this issue of OEZG, at the moment, in the USA and Canada alone, over 300,000 undergraduates are taking some kind of course in it. An increasing number of universities there are offering Master programs for interested students. The same goes for Europe. The University of Leipzig, the London School of Economics and Political Science and the Universities of Leipzig, Vienna and Wrocław run a Master Programme in Global History and Global Studies. In Warwick, a newly founded Global History and Culture Centre from 2008 onwards offers a MA programme in Global History. Many universities have courses in global history in their Bachelor-programmes. Most of these initiatives originate in the West, but especially East Asia is catching-up.

There is no lack of possibilities to publish. The *Journal of World History* has already entered its twentieth year of existence. Four years ago the first issue of the *Journal of Global History* came on the market. *Itinerario. International Journal on the History of European Expansion and Global Interaction* is already over thirty years old, although it started under a different name that indicated that initially its focus was more exclusively on European expansion and the reactions it provoked. Those who read German are not short of publications either. Just think of *Zeitschrift für*

*Weltgeschichte*, the journal of the Verein für Geschichte des Weltsystems, or *Comparativ* that some time ago got a new subtitle: *Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und Vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung*. The Journal *Saeculum. Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte* actually already exists since 1950. There are ample possibilities to publish and discuss on internet. *H-world Net* provides a popular and intensively used discussion forum. *World History Connected* [www.worldhistoryconnected.org], an internet journal, has just entered its sixth year with an entirely renewed format. It gives access to various websites and services. In Germany, there is the internet-site *Geschichte-transnational/History transnational*.

There is no lack of general overviews of what has already been done in the field of global history or of introductions showing how to practise it. Let me refer to some very recent examples. To begin with, there is Patrick Manning's *Navigating world history. Historians create a global past*, the most complete overview up until now. *Palgrave Advances in World histories*, a book edited by Marnie Hughes-Warrington, provides an extensive discussion of various topics and themes in global history. In a book edited by Tony Hopkins authors deal with interactions between the universal and the local in a number of interesting case studies. In 2008 Eric Vanhaute published his *Wereldgeschiedenis. Een inleiding*. And finally, there now is an introduction by Pamela Kyle Crossley, called *What is global history?*<sup>1</sup> For the German-speaking public Sebastian Conrad, Andreas Eckert and Ulrike Freitag quite recently edited a volume with a selection, and translation, of recent articles that can function as a survey of the current state of the art, preceded by a long, informative introduction.<sup>2</sup> So did Jürgen Osterhammel, although he went further back in time and also selected some texts that are older but still have their relevance.<sup>3</sup> In Austria, the University of Vienna has been quite active in promoting and discussing global history for already over a decade. Let me just refer to one recent publication, the book edited by Margarete Grandner, Dietmar Rothermund and Wolfgang Schwentker on globalisation and global history.<sup>4</sup> The number of books and book series claiming to deal with world history has become too numerous to mention.<sup>5</sup> There are encyclopaedias of world history<sup>6</sup> and books dealing with the history of the writing of global history.<sup>7</sup>

All these indicators point in the same direction: global history is very much alive and has evolved into a mature discipline. It does not need an ump-tied 'in defence of'-text. I have never understood why global history would need so much defending anyhow, but considering its current boom, it is simply a waste of time and effort to try and explain that its existence would be a "Good Thing". Neither do I see much use in producing yet another publication full of declarations of intentions, announcements of plans, or theoretical reflections on principles. We have enough of those already. It is time to bother less about cooking books and focus on the actual cooking.<sup>8</sup> That means, that in this issue of OEZG the reader can find survey articles,

case-studies, and, in particular, articles in which practitioners of global history tell us about their career, their points of view and their actual work. History to a large extent is a craft. Analysing best practices and watching best practitioners is much more informative than trying to formulate and follow general rules and principles. I have consciously chosen to try and present a 'state of the art-overview' here which, without in any sense pretending to be exhaustive, gives an impression of what is actually going on in global history. Where possible, I have done so via concrete persons, projects and publications. The best way to know a tree is by looking at its fruits. In my introduction I will try to put the articles in this issue and the topics they are dealing with in perspective by showing how they fit into what global history has and has not achieved up until now.

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If one wants to further one's career as a scholar, writing a textbook is not usually regarded as a very efficient investment. If, however, one wants to make an impact by one's writings, it probably is. Global history in this respect is in a somewhat different position from most other varieties of historical writing. Interest in it, especially in the United States – which play such an important role in its current boom – often did not spread from scholarship to teaching but rather the other way around. The main driving force behind publications in the field has long been demand for good teaching materials. In the World History Association, which was founded in the United States, teachers working in schools and colleges held and still hold a prominent position and much that is written in the *Journal of World History* and in particular in *World History Connected* and associated media, tries to take on board the specific needs and interests of such teachers. Writing introductory textbooks has become a cottage industry. For the respectability and acceptance of the field it is extremely important what these books look like and whether they are up-to-standard. In an overview like the one we intend to present here, they should not be ignored.

We managed to get contributions by two authors who recently have published a textbook: Felipe Fernández-Armesto, who is interviewed, and Eric Vanhaute, who wrote an article. The textbook by Fernández-Armesto, *The world: A history*, is very well-received and much discussed.<sup>9</sup> It gives a sweeping overview of the history of the world in which, though of course not as neatly and strictly circumscribed as is the case in 'traditional' introductions in fields of history, time and place continue to function as the structuring principles of a text that, full of maps, charts, figures, pictures, comparisons, questions, anecdotes and vignettes, aims at giving the reader an overall survey. Its author is one of the most prolific (global) historians of this

moment. He is outspoken, his work wide-ranging and widely-read. Interviewing him seemed an excellent way of charting what is going on in global history in general, while at the same time getting direct insights into the particular views of one of its eminent practitioners who, strikingly enough, as he himself indicates, was never educated to become a global historian.

Eric Vanhaute, professor at the University of Ghent in Belgium, also wrote an introduction in global history, with an equally succinct and adequate title, that, in English, reads *Global history. An introduction*.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly enough, the set-up of his book could hardly be more different from that of Fernández-Armesto's. Vanhaute has not written a narrative, nor does he provide a synthesis of 'what happened'. His approach is thematic and problem-oriented, each chapter of the book dealing with a specific topic. He provides more of an introduction into the discipline global history than a survey of the history of the globe. As compared to Fernández-Armesto, he has produced a slender volume. One can only hope that it will soon be translated. The connection with teaching in his case is obvious: the book was written for and in the course of an introductory class in global history given by the author. In his article, Vanhaute shows that he is a global historian who seriously reflects on the scholarly, social and political implications of his work. He emphasizes that the world, including the world of scholarship, is not, and has never been 'flat'. Inequality is a fundamental fact of global life. He discusses the state of the discipline from four angles: defining global history, debating global history, teaching global history, and, what is very important for a further professionalization of the discipline, researching global history. His definition is rather straightforward: world or global history studies the beginnings, the growth and the changes in human communities from a comparative, interconnected and systemic perspective. Central underlying questions refer to the gradual (internal) expansion of human societies in relation to (external) ecological constraints and challenges, the emergence of overarching structures, called cultures or civilizations, and finally, the contacts, connections, and conflicts between cultures and civilizations. His background is that of an economic historian with a special interest in regional economic history, especially the history of peasants and agriculture, who became inspired by Wallerstein's world-systems analysis. This shows in the research projects he briefly presents on the copper commodity-chain and the global disappearing of the peasantry.

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Much ink has been spilled over the question what exactly global history would be. I will not enter into that debate here. According to David Christian, it in any case means playing with scales, which in practice boils down to covering broader geo-

graphical areas and longer periods of time than 'ordinary' history.<sup>11</sup> The study of time-periods which are quite distinct from those most traditional historians – and even an enthusiastic promoter of the *longue duree* like Braudel – tend to deal with, overall has received a boost. I need only refer to two studies by Jared Diamond that both had a huge impact, one providing a short history of everybody for the last 13,000 years, and one analysing cases of ecological collapse stretching over a period of many centuries.<sup>12</sup> This extending of the time-frame is taken to its limit by practitioners of 'big history', the branch of history that deals with the complete story of the planet, life, and people from the Big Bang to the present day.<sup>13</sup> Big history is beginning to develop into a subfield with various prominent practitioners like Fred Spier, David Christian, Dan Smail, and Cynthia Stokes Brown and Christopher Lloyd.<sup>14</sup> We are glad that David Christian responded positively to our request to write an article for this issue. In it he discusses his intellectual development, his work, and his inspiration, dealing amongst other things with the question whether big history with its huge time scale and its broad interdisciplinary approach has anything to offer to the 'professional' historian. Although, overall, the natural sciences provide a friendlier environment for it, he definitely thinks the answer must be positive. In his case too, the connection with teaching is obvious: his career as 'big historian' began when he quite enthusiastically, and naively, proposed at his university that one should teach "the whole of history" and then started wondering whether it would be possible to give a viable course on such a huge topic. And again, the background of this global historian is that of an 'ordinary' historian. As Christian indicates, he started his career as a historian who, influenced by the French *Annales*-school and by British Marxist historiography, studied the history of Russia. He still publishes on that topic and on the history of Central Asia, Mongolia and the Silk Road.

The effort of authors who 'confine' themselves to trying to encompass *human* history in its entirety has also already resulted in some fine syntheses. The most well-known example at the moment probably is the book by John and William H. McNeill on the human web, which, of course, also might function as a textbook. But their's is just one among many.<sup>15</sup> Most global historians prefer a less extended time-frame. Not as well-known with the public at large and 'only' dealing with the pre-industrial world, is Patricia Crone's book from 1989. This excellent, concise volume with its thematic and analytical approach, to my view, has never received the attention it deserves.<sup>16</sup> What is called 'the Ancient World' in Western historiography, as far as I can see, has not yet received a really global treatment. In the West at least, studies dealing with that period, tend to focus primarily on Greco-Roman Antiquity. There are signs, however, that interesting new perspectives are bearing fruit.<sup>17</sup> For the Middle Ages, to again for the sake of convenience use Western chronology, to my knowledge, no global overviews have been published. Felipe

Fernández-Armesto's *Millennium. A history of our last thousand years* at least deals with a substantial part of them.<sup>18</sup> The same goes for Janet Abu-Lughod's book on the world system before European hegemony in which Eurasian and African connections are analysed, and for Hodgson's classic study on the venture of Islam.<sup>19</sup> A fairly rare example of a more global, *comparative* approach for the medieval era can be found in Michael Mitterauer's *Warum Europa?*, where the author claims that the reasons why European history took such a specific course already lay in the Middle Ages and tries to support that claim by comparing developments in Europe with developments in the Islamic world and China.<sup>20</sup> There are though, some promising attempts by scholars who write in German to further broaden the geographical scope of 'medieval' history.<sup>21</sup>

The early modern period undoubtedly is the period that is covered best in global historical writing. One can point at various overviews, e.g. Chris Bayly's *The birth of the modern world*.<sup>22</sup> Less well-known, as it is written in German, but definitely quite interesting, is the one by Hans-Heinrich Nolte on empires, religions and systems during the period from 1400 to 1900.<sup>23</sup> A fascinating early example of a global treatment of this period can be found in Fernand Braudel's, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XVe–XVIIIe siècle*, a book that to my view is far more interesting and revolutionary than the book on the Mediterranean that made this author famous.<sup>24</sup> In it Braudel, as expected, tends to strongly emphasise the importance of the environment and of material life. This emphasis can be found in many global histories dealing with this period. One might think of studies dealing with what Crosby called the "Columbian exchange" and "ecological imperialism", or of John Richards' environmental history of the early modern world.<sup>25</sup> This of course does not mean that, for this period, only the environmentalist-materialist approach would have ushered in general surveys. We, for example, do have syntheses dealing with its military history, with the history of its science and technology, and, at least for Eurasia, with the history of its cultural exchange.<sup>26</sup>

For the modern era, especially the twentieth century, we still are less well-provided with good syntheses. Hobsbawm's four overviews – *Age of Revolution*, *Age of Capital*, *Age of Empire*, *Age of Extremes* – though certainly of high quality and still valuable, according to modern standards would not be considered as 'really' global.<sup>27</sup> For the long nineteenth century, we now do have a global history, and even a superb and voluminous one: Jürgen Osterhammel's *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Osterhammel wrote an extensive article for this issue, but preferred not to devote it to his own work. His book, to my view a masterpiece that is bound to become a classic, deserves serious attention and discussion.<sup>28</sup> For the twentieth century we of course have many efforts to describe and interpret it globally, but as yet no books that have acquired the status of a 'classic'.<sup>29</sup> The efforts

made by Peter Gran deserve mentioning for their originality.<sup>30</sup> In Vienna, a series has been started, *Globalgeschichte – Die Welt 1000–2000*, that takes the concept of a century quite literally and may also present a good overview of the twentieth century.<sup>31</sup> Other time-frames are of course possible. Some authors focus on the global history of just one year, for example 1688, 1800 or 1968.<sup>32</sup> The year 1000 apparently is very popular in this respect.<sup>33</sup>

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All global historians try to get away from the national, territorial ‘state-focus’ and somehow become ‘trans-national’. That is easier said than done: if it is not states, then what entities must be regarded as the ‘bearers’ of global history, or at least as its units of analysis? Entire continents like Eurasia, that Jared Diamond likes to contrast with other parts of the world and that members of the California School like to see as a world of “surprising resemblances”?<sup>34</sup> Civilisations, as in Felipe Fernández Armesto’s book with that title, in Marshall Hodgson’s book on Islamic civilization, or in the many (text)books on Western Civilisation? World systems, in the sense that Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills use that term.<sup>35</sup> Or rather world-systems – and empires – in the specific sense that Wallerstein uses these terms?<sup>36</sup> Weltregionen, as is done in the Viennese series with that name? Or areas, as long was popular in so-called ‘area studies’?<sup>37</sup> Seascapes?<sup>38</sup> Or rather empires?

The study of empires, in particular their rise and fall, has a long and time-honoured pedigree and is very much *en vogue* amongst global historians.<sup>39</sup> We are therefore glad that John Darwin was willing to contribute an article to this issue. Darwin has just published a global history of empire, a *magnum opus* covering the period from the fifteenth century till the contemporary world, in which he writes: “The history of the world, it is tempting to say, is an imperial history, a history of empires.”<sup>40</sup> Darwin opens his article trying to explain the causes of the rise of global history, then points at the risks one runs when one tries to write it and reflects on the choices the bulk of global historians have made in their efforts to ‘interpret the globe’. They tend to do that by means of tackling big themes. He distinguishes between three options: the first one being to concentrate on macro forces beyond human control, which leads to studies in which geography and ecology loom large; the second one being to study new ‘ecumenes’, i.e., geographical entities that are larger than territorial or that in any case do not coincide with such states. The third one he mentions is to focus on the trail of consumption and write the history of products like tea, coffee, sugar or tobacco.<sup>41</sup>

After that introduction, Darwin reflects on why he came to write his global history of empire, and why he did it the way he did. The focus, as in so many global

history books at the moment, is on Eurasian interconnectedness and similarities. His analysis leads him to the conclusion that the fortunes of empires can be reversed quickly as global history is an unending series of conjunctures or phases. Darwin's book received many enthusiastic reviews, but there of course also was critique. That is also dealt with in the article. Darwin too, came to global history from other fields of interest. He has always been mainly known as a historian of colonization and de-colonization, in particular the decolonization of the British Empire. Making sense of that process increasingly led him to look at empire from a global perspective. He now teaches imperial and global history as a Fellow of Nuffield College in Oxford.

The experimenting with different scales that is so often regarded as characteristic for global history, can also mean connecting the local with the global in an effort to see 'heaven in a grain of sand'. One option then would be to try and combine a biographical approach with one that focuses on global phenomena.<sup>42</sup> Another one would be to try and pinpoint global phenomena at one specific geographical site.<sup>43</sup> The research of Birgit Tremml, PhD student at the Institut für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte in Vienna, may best be regarded as an example of such an approach. Her research project she is reporting on in this issue, will be finished in about three years. It focuses on the history of the Philippines, more in particular Manila, during roughly the second half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. There probably is no better place to study global developments and make global comparisons in this period of time than the city of Manila. The moment that the Spaniards decided to settle there and set up a port in 1571, is often regarded as the moment that all major continents became actually linked by overseas connections and thereby as the moment 'globalisation' really took off.<sup>44</sup> Studying in this site provides the opportunity of learning about three different early modern states (Castile-Spain, Japan and China), which for the global historian of course means, comparing them and looking at their interactions and their wider ramifications. What did 'Manila' mean for those states and what did those states 'mean' for Manila? What can their interaction in the Philippines tell us about their politics, their political economies, institutions and cultures? Birgit Tremml presents two case-studies that will throw some light on these questions: the first one focusing on the political relationship between Japan and Spain in the first decades of Manila's existence, the second one on the rebellion of the Chinese in Manila in 1603.

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World historians, of course, can also focus primarily on certain topics or themes which they then try to cover globally.<sup>45</sup> The very long-term perspective that is so



popular amongst global historians quite often is combined with a wide geographical coverage and a strong emphasis on ecological conditions.<sup>46</sup> A study like Felipe Fernández-Armesto's *Civilizations*, to which he refers in the interview, can count as an example. For its author, a civilisation is a specific relationship between the species of man and the rest of nature. He argues that civilizations have such strong geographical foundations that one can classify them according to environment.<sup>47</sup> But he is just one amongst many global historians who think natural conditions are quite important in understanding human history. The study of topics like the history of ecology, disease and energy, has already matured to such an extent that the reader can choose among various good syntheses.<sup>48</sup>

That also goes for military history, of which, to my regret, we have no representative in this issue. This discipline that has long been primarily the reserve of self-referring specialists has evolved into one of the most innovative and open 'sectors' of historiography with many of its prominent practitioners quite willing to go global.<sup>49</sup>

Although I might be prejudiced, I tend to think that in no sector of historiography global perspectives have become so prominent and the debate so lively as in economic history. The topic *par excellence* in global economic history, in particular in books dealing with the early modern era, continues to be that of 'the West versus the Rest', in which 'the Rest' increasingly tends to be identified with 'Asia'. The classic 'rise of the West-story' is not dead, as the success of, for example, David Landes' book on the wealth and poverty of nations, proves clearly.<sup>50</sup> But many global historians regard it as too Eurocentric and too fond of European exceptionalism.<sup>51</sup> What currently holds centre stage is a lively debate on what is now usually called the 'Great Divergence-debate'. The so-called California School has completely changed the parameters of that debate, by claiming that the 'rise of the West' was far less obvious than it looks in traditional historiography and far less explicable in internal terms: it claims it occurred quite late and for quite contingent reasons.<sup>52</sup> Authors who are primarily responsible for this change of perspective are Andre Gunder Frank, with his plea to reorient economic history, and of course Kenneth Pomeranz, with his original and highly influential book on the Great Divergence.<sup>53</sup> The Californian point of view has become so popular and wide-spread that it already provides the basis of new handbooks on the (economic) history of the early modern world, one by Robert Marks and the other one by Jack Goldstone, who wrote an article for this issue in which he expands on the ideas of this school and his position in it.<sup>54</sup> Current debates on the Great Divergence are strongly intertwined with debates on economic globalisation, in which the topic of intercontinental migration from the very beginning was a very important field of its own, for all periods of time.<sup>55</sup> Both issues, in particular the first one, are put in context and analysed in my extensive survey of what is and has been going on in global economic history.

Global history of science and technology has also come of age. Here too, various syntheses have already been published, and here too, to be honest, many studies focus on the early modern period.<sup>56</sup> In this special issue, we have contributions of two specialists in this field who will both publish a *magnum opus* during the course of this year. The first one is Floris Cohen who already wrote a widely acclaimed book on the Scientific Revolution and who is now finishing a book called *How science came into the world. A comparative history*.<sup>57</sup> The other one is Jack Goldstone, the author of many articles and, amongst others, books on revolution and rebellion in the early modern world and on the rise of the West, who is now finishing a book on the origins of modern economic growth.<sup>58</sup> Both authors are clearly interested in the Great Divergence. Readers very probably will be struck by the extent to which these authors, coming from opposite intellectual backgrounds, that of a macro-sociologist with quantitative leanings in case of Goldstone and that of a historian of science and ideas in case of Cohen, end up with quite similar interests and a quite similar approach.

Cohen as historian of science wants to connect – or in any case discuss connections between – economic history and the history of science and technology, two fields between which, according to him, there exists “a curious dichotomy”. He claims that the rise of modern science played a pivotal role in the rise of the West and sets out to answer a couple of related questions: What do we mean by modern science? How could it emerge in Europe in the seventeenth century? Why did it emerge there rather than somewhere else? What did it mean for traditional craftsmanship in the shorter and longer run and what was its contribution to the coming into being of the modern world? He regards the harnessing of steam power as quint-essential for understanding the Western ‘road to riches’ and therefore focuses on analysing the role of science in the invention and application of the steam engine. His conclusion leaves not much room for doubt: without ‘science’ the steam engine could not have been invented, which implies that it could not have been invented in China, as modern science did not – and was extremely unlikely to – emerge there.

Goldstone was trained as a sociologist and acquired a PhD in that discipline. He developed a strong interest in historical macro-sociology and later on in quantitative economic history and global history. In his article he tells how exactly this happened and gives an insight in the workings of modern international academia that, according to him, benefits from globalization. He is the person who coined the phrase ‘California School’, and he shares many of its ideas which he aptly synthesized in his *Why Europe?* He is strongly influenced by and sympathetic to its views, but criticises its lack of attention to science, technology and culture in explaining how the Great Divergence could come about. According to him, it did not start in Britain by accident. So he began focusing his research on the question why Britain

and at first *only* Britain became the leading centre of machine invention and use. He regards it as global history's goal to look for similarities and differences between various societies to then identify the most likely consequences of those similarities and differences. He clearly is very optimistic about the future of this endeavour, claiming it entered a new golden age in the 1990s and is still gathering momentum.

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Global history is clearly booming. There is a lot of activity in which many people are involved; there are many excellent and interesting publications. There of course also are problems, or rather 'challenges'. As yet, not all subfields of global history look equally well developed. It looks as if social history and women's history have to do some catching-up.<sup>59</sup> That also seems to apply to religious history, although the number of books with global as well as religion in the title increases quickly.

One problem would be its place in ordinary, secondary schools; in the Netherlands e.g., as a student of mine discovered, attention to non-Western history in books used for teaching in secondary schools, over the decade from 1990 to 2000 as compared to the previous decade, in absolute terms *decreased* rather than *increased*.<sup>60</sup> I would not be surprised if this were the exception rather than the rule. Then there is the position of those who teach it and write about it. Most of the people who do global history are not employed as global historians and often global history is not even mentioned in their job description. A look at the careers of the scholars writing in this very issue is enlightening in this respect. It means that, institutionally, the discipline is still quite weak. That of course brings us to the question of its further professionalization. The classic standards of professionalism for traditional historians are well-known: whatever else they may include, they in any case presuppose intimate knowledge of a confined field with its sources, archives and literature, and the ability to critically analyse one's primary source material. These requirements can not simply be transferred to global history. What can not be doubted is that a broad erudition covering different societies, judgement, and as a rule knowledge of more than one discipline are required, as all the articles in this issue clearly show. For example, the global study of Manila Birgit Tremml is writing, would, ideally, require the capability to read sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources in Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese; knowledge of these languages in their current form to read secondary literature; very probably also working knowledge of a couple of other languages; acquaintance with the history of the regions involved and with comparative methods, and finally the capability to write down one's results in fluent English.

All this suggests that teamwork might be very important in global history. It clearly is in the collecting, constructing and standardising of data, as well as in making them available for researchers. Here there still is an enormous amount of work to be done. Currently exists – and very probably always will exist – a sometimes enormous imbalance in what we know and might know about various parts of the world. Teamwork is also the rule when it comes to providing the platforms for discussion without which any kind of serious modern scholarship would be impossible anyhow. The actual writing of monographs, however, still tends to be done by one or sometimes two persons and very probably that will continue to be the case. What in any case is needed is a ‘professionalization’ of research. That throws up the questions how to find and educate a new generation of researchers and how to find substantial and sustained funding. Who is willing to pay for the past of the world?

Then there of course is the problem of how to write from a global perspective, assuming that this is what global historians are supposed to do. Felipe Fernández-Armesto suggests that it implies writing like a “[...] galactic museum-keeper, contemplating the world from an immense distance of space and time and seeing it whole with a level of objectivity inaccessible to us, who are enmeshed in our history”.<sup>61</sup> Apparently he thinks such objectivity is possible as well as salutary. I personally have severe doubts about that and would claim that in writing history a more ‘engaged’ perspective is not only unavoidable but also necessary because otherwise one lacks focus in one’s research and one’s writing. In this context, it is usually the danger of being Eurocentric, that is, almost ritually, decried. What one may call the ‘Eurocentrism of arrogance’, that tends to claim that the West and only the West has made history and has been the source of all progress, is a phenomenon directly linked to that brief period in global history that the West indeed was a dominant and progressive force. That period appears to be coming to its end, which robs this kind of thinking of most of its material base and in any case makes it much less convincing and acceptable. History is ‘provincializing’ Europe: it does not need historians to do so. Amongst global historians anti-Eurocentrists already far outnumber Eurocentrists.

The real problem now has become how to make global history a really ‘ecumenical’ project. When it comes to the number of studies that is devoted to them, some regions are clearly under-represented. In a way, one might talk of a certain Eurasia-centrism in current global history. The Americas but in particular Africa are under-represented, although one must not lose sight of the fact that Eurasia has always been home to the bulk of world population. Far more problematic for global history than Western arrogance is the persisting dominance up until now of what might be called ‘the Western way’. The West appears to still be dominating the agenda of global history in terms of the questions that are asked, the terminology used, and

the interpretative models that figure as points of departure and reference.<sup>62</sup> This can be explained by the fact that global history, like the modern discipline of history as a whole, not only began as a Western project but, *for the time being*, still is dominated by Western scholarship that is backed-up by large amounts of resources. A majority of prestigious and well-endowed institutions of teaching and research still are in the West. Much of the material needed to study non-Western societies has over time been moved to the West. Many important scholars who originally came from elsewhere, have found a new home in the West too. Especially for East Asia, things are changing quickly. But overall, the West and Westerners are still dominant in scholarship, in particular in the humanities and social sciences that are ‘luxuries’ many poorer countries can ill afford. All the contributors to this issue are Westerners living in the West. It would definitely have been possible to include various non-Westerners working at Western universities or research institutes, or scholars from East Asia. It would definitely have been much more complicated to include non-Westerners living outside the West. But my approach has been quite pragmatic: try and produce a good overview with interesting topics and good scholars, which is complicated enough as it is. The line-up of this issue may not yet be all-encompassing: its authors do live in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, The Netherlands and the United States. That is a quite international group.

It is not by accident that this issue is in English: that has become, almost exclusively, the *lingua franca* of international scholarship. That clearly is not to everyone’s liking and in any case food for thought. That brings us to the one article in this issue that we have not yet referred to, the one by Jürgen Osterhammel. He opens his analysis by pointing out that in Manning’s *Navigating world history* there is not one reference to a living historian coming from a German speaking country. If one does not write in English, one apparently is not noted in the wider world. In a way, that of course is to be expected and ‘normal’. If one wants to reach an international or even global public, one should write in an international or global language. German simply isn’t such a language and will not become one in the future; actually only English is. One simply cannot expect many foreigners to learn German, a language that is sufficiently understood by, I guess, at most five percent of the world’s population.

Osterhammel correctly points out though, that most global historians, even if they may want to speak to the world, continue to work in a context with an often distinctly national character and have a national audience. This as a rule implies that they (also) have to speak to that audience. The debates on global history and its practice unmistakably have a distinct flavour in various countries across the globe, a fact that may very easily be lost sight of when publications are not in the *lingua franca* of modern scholarship. Even a discipline as global as global history, is clearly connected to and rooted in certain, often national contexts or ‘subcultures’. In his

succinct analysis of roots and varieties of global history in Germany, Osterhammel manages to inform those who do not read German about what has been and is currently going on in German global history. Before 1945, there were various traditions of global history in the country. These, however, did not manage to coalesce into one strong scholarly tradition after World War Two, so that global history became quite weak in a country that had made substantial contributions to its invention. German historiography continued to be focused on the state and the nation, especially the modern state and nation in Europe, and in particular Germany. The study of global history reached its lowest ebb in the 1970s and 1980s. Osterhammel tries to explain why and sketches various efforts to go ‘beyond the nation-state’ and make history transnational. These efforts notwithstanding, global history institutionally remains quite weak in Germany, as it basically is still dependent on personal contacts and interests. Prior to the current generation of PhD candidates, nobody in Germany ever had a chance of being trained from the outset in the study of global phenomena, and even at the moment very few universities possess the necessary institutional foundations for global history. Strikingly enough, Osterhammel himself teaches conventional courses in late modern European history and the history of international relations. His first major publications dealt with the history of China and more broadly Asia. In countries like France, Italy or Spain global history too faces idiosyncratic challenges and problems. Overall, the situation there definitely is not better. But like Goldstone, I would want to conclude quite optimistically: global history is a very vibrant field of study that is still gathering momentum.

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## Notes

- 1 Patrick Manning, *Navigating world history. Historians create a global past*, New York and Houndmills Basingstoke 2003; Marnie Hughes-Warrington, ed., *World histories*, Houndmills Basingstoke and New York 2005; A.G. Hopkins, ed., *Global history. Interactions between the universal and the local*, New York 2006; Eric Vanhoute, *Wereldgeschiedenis. Een inleiding*, Gent 2008 (*Global history. An introduction*); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *What is global history?*, Cambridge 2008.
- 2 Sebastian Conrad, Andreas Eckert and Ulrike Freitag, eds., *Globalgeschichte. Theorien, Ansätze, Themen*, Frankfurt am Main 2007.
- 3 Jürgen Osterhammel, ed., *Weltgeschichte. Basistexte*, Stuttgart 2008.
- 4 Margarete Grandner, Dietmar Rothermund and Wolfgang Schwentker, eds., *Globalisierung und Globalgeschichte*, Vienna 2005.
- 5 Let me only refer to two Viennese series: *Edition Weltregionen*, published by Promedia, and *Globalgeschichte – Die Welt 1000–2000*, published by Mandelbaum Verlag.
- 6 See e.g. *Berkshire Encyclopedia of World History*, senior editor William H. McNeill, Great Barrington Mass. 2005; *World History Encyclopedia*, editor Alfred J. Andrea, forthcoming.
- 7 For example, Benedikt Stuchtey and Eckhardt Fuchs, eds., *Writing world history 1800–2000*, Oxford 2003; George G. Iggers and Q. Edward Wang, with contributions by Supriya Mukherjee, *A global history of modern historiography*, Harlow 2008. See also the article by Patrick Karl O’Brien, *Histo-*

- riographical traditions and modern imperatives for the restoration of global history, in: *Journal of Global History*, vol. 1, issue 1 (2006), 3–39.
- 8 I take this expression from Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 2009, 1305.
  - 9 Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *The world: A history*, Upper Saddle River 2006; second revised edition, Upper Saddle River 2009.
  - 10 Vanhaute, *Wereldgeschiedenis*.
  - 11 See his contribution called 'Scales' in: Hughes-Warrington, *Advances in World histories*, 64–89.
  - 12 Jared Diamond, *Guns, germs and steel. The fates of human societies*, London 1997; idem, *Collapse. How societies choose to fail or succeed*, New York 2005.
  - 13 That at least is the way Christopher Lloyd puts it. See his, *What on earth happened? The complete story of the planet, life, and people from the Big Bang to the present day*, Bloomsbury 2008.
  - 14 Fred Spier, *The structure of big history: From the Big Bang until today*, Amsterdam 1996. In 2009, Spier will publish a book called *Big history and the future*, with Amsterdam University Press; David Christian, *Maps of time. An introduction to big history*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 2005; Dan Smail, *In the grip of sacred history*, in: *American Historical Review*, vol. 110, issue 5 (2005), 1337–1361; Cynthia Stokes Brown, *Big history*, New York 2007. For Lloyd see the previous note.
  - 15 In chronological order: Robert Wright, *Nonzero: the logic of human destiny*, New York 2000; Clive Ponting, *World history. A new perspective*, London 2000; Noel Cowen, *Global history: a short overview*, Cambridge and Malden Mass. 2001; John R. and William H. McNeill, *The human web. A bird's eye view of world history*, New York 2003; Michael Cook, *A brief history of the human race*, New York 2005.
  - 16 Patricia Crone, *Pre-industrial societies*, Oxford 1989.
  - 17 See e.g., Walter Scheidel, *Rome and China: comparative perspectives on ancient world empires*, Oxford and New York 2009; Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel, *The dynamics of ancient empires. State power from Assyria to Byzantium*, Oxford and New York 2009. Still interesting and relevant in this respect is Joseph A. Tainter, *The collapse of complex societies*, Cambridge 1988.
  - 18 Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Millennium. A history of our last thousand years*, London 1995.
  - 19 Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European hegemony: the world system A.D. 1250–1350*, Oxford 1989; Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The venture of Islam*, 3 vols., Chicago 1974.
  - 20 Michael Mitterauer, *Warum Europa? Mittelalterliche Grundlagen eines Sonderwegs*, Munich 2003.
  - 21 See the article by Osterhammel in this volume, note 36.
  - 22 Chris A. Bayly, *The birth of the modern world, 1780–1914*, Oxford and Malden Mass. 2004.
  - 23 Hans-Heinrich Nolte, *Weltgeschichte, Imperien, Religionen und Systeme 15.–19. Jahrhundert*, Vienna, Cologne and Weimar 2005.
  - 24 Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XVe–XVIIIe siècle*, 3 vols., Paris 1979. This trilogy book has been translated in German and published under the quite misleading title *Sozialgeschichte des 15.–18. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 1985/86.
  - 25 Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange. Biological and cultural consequences of 1492*, Westport 1992; idem, *Ecological imperialism. The biological expansion of Europe, 900–1900*, Cambridge Mass. 1986; John F. Richards, *The unending frontier. An environmental history of the early modern world*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 2003.
  - 26 Military historians like Geoffrey Parker and Jeremy Black, have published a lot about this period. For the global history of science and technology that also tends to 'disproportionably' focus on the early modern period see under note 56. For cultural exchange in Eurasia, see Geoffrey C. Gunn, *First globalisation. The Eurasian exchange, 1500–1800*, Lanham 2003.
  - 27 Hobsbawm's books were published in 1962, 1975, 1987 and 1994.
  - 28 Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*. The book is no less than 1568 pages. It will be extensively discussed in a coming issue of *Comparativ*.
  - 29 For an introduction in the literature see Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, *World history in a global age*, in: *The American Historical Review*, vol. 100, issue 4 (1995), 1034–1060, in: *Comparativ*, vol. 4 (1994), 13–45, one can find their ideas presented in German in the article *Gobalgeschichte und die Einheit der Welt im 20. Jahrhundert*. We do have an excellent environmental history of the twentieth century: John R. McNeill, *Something new under the sun. An environmental history of the twentieth century*, New York 2000.

- 30 See Peter Gran, *Beyond Eurocentrism. A New View of Modern World History*, New York 1996; idem, *The rise of the rich. A new view of modern world history*, New York 2009.
- 31 *Globalgeschichte – Die Welt 1000–2000*, Mandelbaum Verlag Vienna. So far Peter Feldbauer and Jean Paul Lehnert, eds., *Die Welt im 16. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 2008, and Bernd Hausberger, ed., *Die Welt im 17. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 2008, have been published.
- 32 John E. Wills, 1688. *A global history*, London 2001; Olivier Bernier, *The world in 1800*, New York 2000; Mark Kurlansky, 1968. *The year that rocked the world*, New York 2005.
- 33 See for a very recent example the journal *GeoEpoche* 35, 2/09, *Die Welt im Jahr 1000*.
- 34 *Diamond, Guns, germs, and steel*.
- 35 Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills, eds., *The world system: five hundred years or five thousand?* London and New York 1993.
- 36 See for a brief recent explanation, Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-systems analysis: an introduction*, Durham 2004.
- 37 See e.g. Birgit Schaebler, ed., *Area Studies und die Welt. Weltregionen und neue Globalgeschichte*, Vienna 2007.
- 38 See note 110 of my article in this issue.
- 39 See, e.g. in chronological order: Paul Kennedy, *The rise and fall of the great powers. Economic change and military conflict 1500 to 2000*, New York 1987, very influential but not really global; Peter Turchin, *War and peace and war. The rise and fall of empires*, London 2006; Amy Chua, *Day of empire. How hyperpowers rise to global dominance – and why the fall*, New York 2007. For an example in German, see Herfried Münkler, *Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft – vom Alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten*, Berlin 2005. For a very recent analysis with many references see Peter Turchin, *A theory for formation of large empires*, in: *Journal of Global History*, vol. 4, issue 2 (2009), 191–218.
- 40 John Darwin, *After Tamerlane. The global history of empire*, London 2007, 491.
- 41 This 'strategy' is also used by contributors to this volume. See e.g. the article by Vanhaute, where he refers to the commodity-chain analysis that his PhD-student Abbeles is performing, and my *Zur politischen Ökonomie des Tees: Was uns Tee über die englische und chinesische Wirtschaft der Frühen Neuzeit sagen kann*, Vienna 2009.
- 42 See e.g. in chronological order: Roxann Prazniak, *Dialogues across civilizations. Sketches in world history from the Chinese and European experiences*, Boulder 1996; Nathalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster travels: a sixteenth-century Muslim between worlds*, New York 2006; Bernd Hausberger, ed., *Globale Lebensläufe. Menschen als Akteure im weltgeschichtlichen Geschehen*, Vienna 2006; Linda Colley, *The ordeal of Elisabeth Marsh: A woman in world history*, London 2007; Jonathan Hyslop, *The world voyage of James Keir Hardie: Indian nationalism, Zulu insurgency and the British labour diaspora, 1907–1908*, in: *Journal of Global History*, vol. 1, issue 3 (2007), 343–363.
- 43 A very original strategy of looking for the global in the local is used by Timothy Brook, who in his book, *Vermeer's hat. The seventeenth century and the dawn of the global world*, New York 2008, looks for traces of globalisation in Vermeer's paintings.
- 44 For this claim see in particular Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, e.g. in their *Globalization began in 1571*, in: Barry K. Gills and William R. Thompson, eds., *Globalization and global history*, London and New York 2006, 232–247.
- 45 There is actually a series called *Themes in global history*, published by Routledge Publishing House.
- 46 Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris 1949. See for the comment that ecology figures so prominently in the work of many global historians, Jerry Bentley, 'Web browsing', in: *History and Theory*, vol. 44 (2005), 102–112.
- 47 Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Civilizations*, London 2001, Introduction.
- 48 For some very recent syntheses, see, in alphabetical order: J. Donald Hughes, *An environmental history of the world: Humankind's changing role in the community of life*, London 2009; Clive Ponting, *A new green history of the world: The environment and the collapse of great civilizations*, Harmondsworth 2007; I.G. Simmons, *Global environmental history*, Chicago 2008. For an important contribution in German, see Joachim Radkau, *Natur und Macht. Eine Weltgeschichte der Umwelt*, Munich 2000. There is a paperback-edition with a new afterword, Munich 2002, and an English version, together with Thomas Dunlap, *Nature and power. A global history of the environment*,



- Cambridge 2008. For the history of diseases, see e.g., Dorothy H. Crawford, *Deadly companions. How microbes shaped our history*, Oxford 2007, and Mark Harrison, *Disease and the modern world: 1500 to the present day*, Cambridge 2004. For the history of energy see e.g., Vaclav Smil, *Energy in world history*, Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford 1994, and Alfred W. Crosby, *Children of the sun: a history of humanity's unappeasable appetite for energy*, New York 2006.
- 49 The amount of literature has already become enormous. Here, I simply refer the reader to the work of Geoffrey Parker and Jeremy Black.
- 50 David S. Landes, *The wealth and poverty of nations. Why some are so rich and some so poor*, London 1998.
- 51 For concrete critique on Eurocentrism and European exceptionalism, see e.g. James M. Blaut, *The coloniser's model of the world. Geographical diffusionism and Eurocentric history*, New York 1993; James M. Blaut, *Eight Eurocentric historians*, New York and London 2000; Jack Goody, e.g., *The East in the West*, Cambridge 1996; *Capitalism and modernity. The great debate*, Cambridge 2004, and *The theft of history*, Cambridge 2006; John A. Hobson, *The eastern origins of western civilisation*, Cambridge 2004. For a more theoretical critique, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Postcolonial thought and historical difference*, Princeton 2000.
- 52 For an analysis of the ideas of the members of this school, see Jack A. Goldstone, *Why Europe? The rise of the West in world history, 1500–1800*, Boston 2008, and Peer Vries, *The California School and beyond: how to study the Great Divergence?*, in: *Journal für Entwicklungspolitik/Austrian Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 24, issue 4 (2008), 6–49.
- 53 Andre Gunder Frank, *Reorient. Global economy in the Asian Age*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1998; Kenneth Pomeranz, *The great divergence. China, Europe, and the making of the modern world economy*, Princeton N. J. 2000.
- 54 Robert B. Marks, *The origins of the modern world. A global and ecological view*, Lanham 2002; Goldstone, *Why Europe*.
- 55 For a synthesis see Patrick Manning, *Migration in world history*, New York and Oxon 2005.
- 56 See e.g. in chronological order: Michael Adas, *Machines as the measure of men: science, technology, and ideologies of Western dominance*, Ithaca and New York 1989; Joel Mokyr, *The lever of riches. Technological creativity and economic progress*, New York and Oxford 1990; Arnold Pacey, *Technology in world civilization: a thousand-year history*, Oxford 1990; Toby E. Huff, *The rise of early modern science. Islam, China, and the West*, New York 1993; James E. McClellan III and Harold Dorn, *Science and technology in world history. An introduction*, Baltimore 1999; Daniel R. Headrick, *Technology: A world history*, New York 2009. For the enormously influential comparative approach of Joseph Needham, see Joseph Needham and C.A. Ronan, *The shorter science and civilisation in China*, 5 vols., Cambridge, 1978–1995.
- 57 H. Floris Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution. A historiographical inquiry*, Chicago and London 1994. The forthcoming book will be published by Chicago University Press.
- 58 Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolution and rebellion in the early modern world*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford 1991; Goldstone, *Why Europe*.
- 59 In *Journal of World History*, vol. 18, issue 1 (2007), special attention is given to the position of social history and women's history in world history. See *Forum: Social history, women's history, and world history. The history of labour has always figured very prominently in social history. Here the recent book edited by Marcel van der Linden, Workers of the World. Essays toward a global labor history*, Leiden 2008, shows one is indeed catching up quickly.
- 60 I refer to Jonathan Even-Zohar, *World History in education. Non-Western history in school textbooks: a quantitative and comparative analysis*. This text was submitted as Master Thesis for the study of history at the Institute of History at the University of Leiden.
- 61 Fernández-Armesto, *Millennium*, Preface and Prologue.
- 62 See for an analysis e.g. Arif Dirlik, *Performing the world: reality and representation in the making of world histor(ies)*, in: *Journal of World History*, vol. 16, issue 4 (2005), 391–410; Dominic Sachsenmaier, *World history as ecumenical history*, in: *Journal of World History*, vol. 18, issue 4 (2007), 465–489. Giorgio Riello, *La globalisation de l'histoire globale: une question disputée*, in: *Revue d'Histoire Moderne & Contemporaine*, vol. 54, issue 4 bis, 2007, Supplement, 23–33.