

## **Bibliography of Global History: Introduction**

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### **Abstract**

*This Bibliography of Global History is by far not the first scholastic catalogue of current research on world, Patrick Manning's noteworthy collection (Global Practice of World History, 2009) has inspired others to be interested in as well as to examine the lively debates around the crucial role of relations, comparisons, and connections when studying historical developments. The analytical review of literature presented here is distinct, however, as it presents collective work of a new kind. Written by a group of authors, each a distinguished scholar in his and her special field of world historical enquiry, this work also reflects the members and collaborators of the Network of Global and World History Organizations (NOGWHISTO). This network was founded in 2008 to enable global exchange in our field of interest. In 2010, it was accepted by the International Committee of Historical Sciences (Comité International des Sciences Historiques, CISH), the world association of historians, as an affiliated international organization. For the bibliography, colleagues from the Asian Association of World Historians, the European Network in Universal and Global History, and the World History Association agreed to review the literature produced in their respective region. In addition, and thanks to colleagues from Dakar and Moscow, we could also include surveys expressing what might be called an African and Russian perspective, respectively, on world history. Another angle is presented by the team from the International Big History Association. In the preparation of this collective work, all authors made use of their regional or topical networks; in this way, this bibliography was written through a new form of transregional cooperation.*

*The bibliography is available online at: [http://research.uni-leipzig.de/~gwhisto/fileadmin/nogwhisto/documents/2017/Bibliography\\_Global\\_History\\_2017.pdf](http://research.uni-leipzig.de/~gwhisto/fileadmin/nogwhisto/documents/2017/Bibliography_Global_History_2017.pdf)*

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on behalf of the NOGWHISTO bureau acting as the editorial committee for the bibliography

Reaching well into the past, bibliographies have been one of the key tools enabling border-crossing scientific exchanges. Reviewing and assessing the literature published in a particular field of knowledge has a long tradition. The work of the International Institute of Bibliography, founded in 1895 in Brussels, is one among many initiatives for collecting and disseminating information about research undertaken on a certain subject matter, at one specific institution, or in one distinct discipline. What has been called bibliographical internationalism was spurred by the growing connections between scholars from different places, facilitated by new transport and communication technologies that were spreading across the world after the second half of the 19th century.

Informing others about one's own research and being informed about what is being studied elsewhere has been part and parcel of turning history writing into an academic discipline and profession. Since the late 19th century, historians, just like their colleagues in other disciplines within the humanities and social sciences, have met regularly at international congresses and presented their works. After World War I, these transnational relations led to the creation of the International Committee of Historical Sciences (Comité International des Sciences Historiques, CISH).

Already four years after its foundation, the CISH began to publish the International Historical Bibliography and has done so ever since 1930. In parallel, it invited its members – national historical associations – to prepare annotated bibliographies that would then be presented and distributed at the international congresses taking place every five years. After World War II, these surveys provided the valuable opportunity to reach out to the wider community of historians. This was a crucial connection given the fact that most publications were not available in the libraries on the other side of the Iron Curtain and were even less accessible in regions of the world where university

budgets were very limited. In that context, the bibliographies became instrumental in creating a sense of professional belonging and of being devoted to a common cause. Therefore, the guiding principle in their preparation was to make them as complete and exhaustive as possible.

Today, in times of electronic catalogues and the Internet – which provide access to online literature or at least to catalogue entries across the world – there is much less need for a comprehensive bibliography of all publications coming out on a specific context. Moreover, the immense and growing number of publications throughout the globe has rendered the ambition of completeness more and more obsolete.

However, becoming more important than completeness is orientation given by specialists in the seemingly ever-increasing flood of information. To put it bluntly: the question of which is the better scenario – to request an international interlibrary loan or to buy at websites where a scholarly article costs USD 40 – remains unanswered for individual researchers as well as for academic institutions lacking the necessary resources to purchase all works on a topic. For students who need to decide where to start reading and what, the need for guidance can be even more pressing. At the same time, the dominance of English, which has become a lingua franca of sorts among historians of global processes, does not mean that scholarship worth reading is only written in English.

This general situation is also true for the field of world and global history, which has received growing attention and recognition over the last two decades. Of note are the discussions at the CISH congresses. The congress in Oslo in 2000 has been crucial in this regard. Patrick O'Brien (LSE), a leading global economic historian, opened a day-long section – and one of the major themes of the congress – presenting „Perspectives on Global History: Concepts and Methodologies“. It was divided into two parts. In one, the question was posed „Is Universal History Possible“, and the other was named „Cultural Encounters between the Continents over the Centuries“ and was chaired by Jerry Bentley (+), co-founder of the US-American World History Association

(WHA) and long-time editor of the *Journal of World History* (Hawaii). Bentley used the occasion to discuss with the CISH secretariat the possibility of integrating the field into the internal structure of the CISH by highlighting the increased interest in the field of world/global history since the early 1990s in many parts of the world. At that time, the response from the CISH was not positive; membership was kept restricted to the national and few thematic committees, and to even fewer internal commissions of historians working on very specific topics. There was, however, also a formal reason for rejection. The WHA was seen as an essentially North American-based organization, while the CISH statutes require that affiliates not only allow access to scholars from all over the world but also demonstrate a wide range of membership.

With the founding of the European Network in Universal and Global History (ENIUGH) in 2002 and the Asian Association of World Historians (AAWH) in 2008, the conditions for a successful relaunch of the initiative became much better. The three organizations were able to mobilize scholars from other parts of the world, and created in 2008 the Network of World and Global History Organizations (NOG-WHISTO). The network serves as an umbrella for the existing and future regional as well as thematic organizations devoted to the study of the global dimensions of the past, be it by researching humanity's tradition at large or by reconstructing the entanglement of various scales of human action. The purpose of our network is to facilitate worldwide discussion among world and global historians as well as exchanges with colleagues from other disciplines who historicize the global age we live in.

Despite all its differences, the field of world, global, transnational, transregional, or big history is built upon a shared interest in relations, comparison, and connections, aiming to facilitate the intellectual transcending and contextualization of borders and to overcome the dominance of national history. This includes the analysis of large-scale processes as much as micro-studies, bringing together different histori-

ographical traditions and approaches to past entanglements and global conditions. Along these lines, our efforts in crossing and transcending borders – in historical research as well as in teaching – are directed against the hegemonic centring on nations and the nation-state in history writing (as is done in the humanities and social sciences in general) and related political projects.

We can draw on a century-long experience of people interacting across space and borders and also on a rich tradition in writing histories about these interactions. Humanity has been „constantly shifting about in an endless series of transcontinental migrations“ and „any partitioning of the world is nothing but a fiction“, as Lucien Febvre formulated back in 1949 when he wrote an outline for the *Scientific and Cultural History of Mankind*, which was edited under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The *History of Mankind* was the first attempt at an international cooperation among historians interpreting the past in global terms.

At the 2010 congress in Amsterdam, NOGWHISTO was accepted as an affiliated organization of the CISH. This status allows the achievements in the field to be presented to all the historians coming to the CISH congresses as well as further cooperation beyond the congresses. We now actively contribute to the programme of the CISH congresses, which we have done so for the first time in Jinan in 2015 when world history was very much at the centre of the entire congress. To reach out to as many scholars as possible, the bureau of NOGWHISTO decided to initiate a bibliographical overview on the subject matter, following its primary aim to promote world/global history and all other forms of shared and entangled histories. Since each of the regional member organizations employ various approaches to transcend the national frameworks, a division of labour seemed best to allow different expertise and perspectives to be included in the compiling of the *Bibliography of Global History*. The regional member organizations agreed to review the literature produced in their respective areas and

to select important contributions to an ongoing debate, whose future course will be covered by later editions.

In the tradition of the earlier CISH bibliographies, when bibliographies covered five or ten years of historiographical production, we concentrated on the period 2010–2015; that being said, since the compilation at hand is the first of its kind some authors/editors included works that are older but still important in current discussions. In a similar vein, it was left open to the discretion of the authors to which extent the selected studies would be commented upon. The only condition set by the bureau was a limitation of 50 titles per region so that the result could be a fair representation of the multiplicity of approaches, perspectives, languages, and places of publication. We are conscious of the fact that some regions produce in relative terms more than others. Nevertheless, we believe, first, that this disproportion is something that should rather be challenged than confirmed, and, second, that although such imbalanced bibliographies already exist, the task of a CISH affiliate might rather be encouraging thus far underrepresented historiographies. This being said, we are well aware that this first edition of such a bibliography is far from complete and we can only hope that scholars from those regions or places who feel neglected will accept our invitation in further editions.

In general, we depart from the idea that global or world history writing has undergone in many parts of the world a process of professionalization. Such a process has led to a situation, where not only very experienced members of the scholarly community write at the end of their career some sort of world, or even universal, history as a sum of the topics they dealt with individually during their years of teaching and research, but historians devote their entire career to the methodologically reflected investigation of explicit problems from the large field of global history. This has resulted in an increase of not only brilliant works of synthesis but also in a remarkable number of PhD theses and specialized monographs, as well as of collective volumes coming from workshops where some of these experts have put their

forces together to find answers to major problems in the interpretation of global processes.

Many historians working on global processes insist that multiperspectivity is crucial for understanding the past. In support of such an approach are arguments underlining the possible existence of multiple modernities – or multiple globalizations – and the explanatory power of increasing interaction between different political, socioeconomic, or cultural regimes. Such paradigms inspire the search for more empirical evidence and convincing conceptualization coming from different parts of the global community of historians. We therefore thought it important to start an endeavour that may be elaborated upon in the future and that demonstrates the variety of historical interpretations arising out of different practices of big, world, and global history. The following pages\* strive to exhibit parts of that lively research - acting as an invitation to explore and to make use of it for everyone's own studies.