

FRENCH HISTORIOGRAPHY TODAY: CROSSED VISIONS

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(with the collaboration of Anna BELLAVITIS and Bertrand HAAN)¹

What is the state of French and Francophone historiography in these times of accelerated globalisation, but also of the rise of Francophone Africa? The question deserves to be asked. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that the world has changed and that France and Europe no longer carry the weight they once did. Indeed, an assessment of the situation of historiography in a European country in 2020 cannot ignore what is happening elsewhere in the world. It is true that French historiography is no longer a 'model': the era of the *Annales* and the New History is behind us. It is true that interactions with other historiographic currents, often from the Anglo-Saxon world but also from other continents, are the order of the day. Nevertheless, despite the 'fashions' and the infatuation with certain approaches, such as 'global' history, the picture that can be drawn of it is one of a certain fragmentation and development of micro-historical research, which has rightly undermined many of the great models and 'grand narratives', and is sometimes reflected in a kind of timidity in the face of the possibility of proposing explanations on a wider scale.

Exchanges and interactions between the historiographical traditions of different countries are the order of the day, but the specificities of each country persist, linked to university systems and, particularly in France, to teaching competitions. The varying degree of openness in academic circles also plays a role, and in this field France has had and still has a marked tradition of openness, which must be maintained in a context of global crisis, present and future. This is the profound reason for this book, promoted by the French Committee of Historical Sciences (CFSH), with the support of the History Research Group (GRHis), a host team of the University of Rouen Normandy (EA 3831). While following the continuity of previous CFSH projects, it adopts a tripartite approach, based on three major themes: major historiographical advances by period; new fields and transversal approaches; debates, controversies and emerging research.

THE CFSH: A VOCATION TO PROMOTE FRENCH AND FRANCOPHONE HISTORIOGRAPHY

As everyone knows, scientific French is in decline today. As a result, French historians are less and less read abroad and their work less known.

Regular syntheses since the early 2010s

This is why, since the beginning of the 2010s, the French Committee of Historical Sciences has made a habit of taking stock of French and Francophone historiography. The aim is to present it to the scientific community during the International Congress of Historical Sciences, the main world event of the discipline held every five years. Two books have been published recently:

¹ Dominique Barjot, Anna Bellavitis, Olivier Feiertag et Bertrand Haan (dir.), *Regards croisés sur l'historiographie française aujourd'hui*, Paris, Éditions SPM, 2020, 302 p.

- *Les Historiens français à l'œuvre*, 1995-2010. Actes de congrès tenu à Paris en 2010, edited by Jean-François Sirinelli, Pascal Cauchy, Claude Gauvard, Paris, PUF, 2010. 332 p., with contributions by Stéphane Benoist, Régine Le Jan, Roger Chartier, Philippe Poirrier, Joëlle Burnouf, Patrice Brun, Olivier de Cazanove, Jean-Paul Demoule, Roland Étienne, Boris Valentin, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Dominique Iogna-Prat, Jean-Philippe Genet, Christine Bard, Olivier Levy-Dumoulin, Lucien Bély, Georges-Henri Soutou, Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, Mathieu Arnoux and Jacques Verger.

- *Les Historiens français en mouvements*. Actes du congrès tenu à Reims en 2012, edited by Jean-François Sirinelli, Pascal Cauchy, Claude Gauvard and Bernard Legras, Actes du Congrès de Reims de 2012, Paris, PUF, 2015, 184 p., with contributions by Dominique Barjot, Yvan Combeau, Gilles Le Béguec, Amaury Lorin, Charles-François Mathis, Thierry Terret, Nicolas Weill-Parot and Laurent Wirth.

The present book is the result of a cooperation between the CFSH and the GRHis in 2019. The colloquium planned for December 2019 at the University of Rouen, to prepare the international colloquium in Poznań in 2020, could not take place due to a transport strike, but several members of the GRHis agreed to prepare a historiographic review text in their speciality.

The French Committee of Historical Sciences: a long history

The French Committee of Historical Sciences was created in 1926. Several historians decided to provide France with a body responsible for representing it at the various international congresses of the discipline, participating in the development of the various historical methods and thus contributing to the promotion of the historical sciences. The fifth international congress of historical sciences - the first after the world war - held in Brussels in 1923 under the aegis of the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne, had given rise to a desire among historians to renew an international scientific dialogue. In 1924, the Hellenist Théophile Homolle, one of the presidents of the Brussels congress, took the initiative of bringing together French scholars specialising in historical studies. A first action committee was then created, whose first general assembly was held in 1925. This assembly unanimously approved the constitution of the French National Committee of Historical Sciences. The death of Théophile Homolle on 13 June 1925 delayed its implementation. The historian of ancient Greece, Gustave Glotz, chaired the first board on 9 April 1926. The following is a list of the officers of the CFSH since then:

Presidents

Name	Period	Name	Period	Name	Period	Name	Period
Gustave Glotz	1926-1929	Alfred Coville	1929-1940	Charles Petit-Dutaillis	1945-1946	Robert Fawtier	1946-1952
Lucien Febvre	1952-1956	Yves Renouard	1956-1965	Jean Schneider	1965-1971	Roland Mousnier	1971-1975
Michel Devèze	1976-1980	René Girault	1980	Robert-Henri Bautier	1981-1985	Paul Gerbod	1986-1990
Yves-Marie Bercé	1991-1995	Michel Balard	1996-2000	Jean-François Sirinelli	2000-2017	Dominique Barjot	2017-2020

General Secretaries

Name	Period	Name	Période	Name	Period	Name	Period
Didier Ozanam	1952-1958	Jean Glénisson	1959-1971	Françoise Hildesheimer	1981-1985	Jean-Pierre Brunterc'h	1986-1990
Ghislain Brunel	1991-1995	Bruno Galland	1996-2000 et 2001-2005	Pascal Cauchy	2006-2017	Bertrand Haan	2020-

The French Committee of Historical Sciences: its functions

According to the terms of its statutes, the Committee's particular aim is to

1°/ to establish a link between French historians engaged in teaching and research in order, in particular, to promote the place of history in teaching and research;

2°/ to ensure the participation of France in meetings and congresses of an international character devoted to the historical sciences and, in particular, to the International Congresses of Historical Sciences;

3°/ to organise national congresses of historical sciences

4°/ to take the necessary initiatives for the application in France of the resolutions and recommendations of these national and international congresses

5°/ to promote the organisation, development and dissemination of historical research in France.

6°/ to provide a framework for reflection for any individual member interested in historical sciences.

Since 2005, the CFSH has held three national congresses: in Paris in 2010, in Reims in 2012 and in Besançon in 2015 - the first two of which resulted in the publications mentioned. It was due to hold another on 5 December 2019, in Rouen, which, as has been reported, was cancelled. However, it has been replaced by the present book. Until 2018, during the rendez-vous de l'histoire de Blois, the CFSH organised each year a round table associating the four periods (ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary): on 'Les écoles historiques françaises' (2014), 'Les quatre périodes leur définition et leurs limites' 2015, 'L'historien et la Nation' (2016), 'La place du Français dans la recherche mondiale' (2017).

In 2020, as every two years since 1983 (see below), the CFSH awarded the Daniel and Michel Dezès Prize, under the aegis of the Fondation de France. This award is granted every two years by the French Committee of Historical Sciences. Worth €2,500, it is intended to reward a university research work (doctoral or Master II thesis) defended by a historian under the age of thirty-two during the two years preceding the awarding of the prize and whose quality and originality have been judged particularly remarkable.

Finally, the CFSH has supported the presence of French historians at international congresses of historical sciences: in Sydney (Australia) in 2005, in Amsterdam (Netherlands) in 2010 and in Jinan (China) in 2015. At this last congress, a French historian, Serge Gruzinski, received the first International Prize for Historical Sciences, awarded by the ICHS and the Jaeger-LeCoultre company. The CFSH was present at the ICHS General Assembly in Moscow (Russia), which took place from 27 to 30 September 2017. It is actively preparing the XXIII Congress in Poznań

(Poland), to be held from 23 to 29 August 2020, at which the present book should be presented. A few French-initiated proposals have been selected: "Les biographies de savants" (joint session moderated by Chantal Grell), "Écrire l'histoire de l'Indianoceanie" (Yvan Combeau), "L'histoire des sciences" (Nicolas Weill-Parot), "L'histoire du mot dans le vocabulaire politique" (Jean-Pierre Deschodt), "Histoire et vérité: la fabrique du procès" (Audrey Kichelewski), "Le Second Empire, bilan et nouveau historiographique" (Dominique Barjot).

MAJOR HISTORIOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENTS BY PERIOD

French historical research has remained fertile in each of the four major periods of history: without claiming to provide a global overview, this book gives an overview for each of them.

Ancient history: the example of war in Rome

This is the case, with regard to Antiquity, of works concerning wars and armies in Rome. According to Pierre Cosme, in ancient Rome, outside of the circles close to imperial power, the military environment is the one that is best understood by the sources. New discoveries (archaeological excavations, papyri, ostraka) have made it possible to question the stereotyped image transmitted by Roman historians. Even if we know more about the imperial army than those of the republican period or a priori of the Greek space, this has resulted in a rereading of the narrative sources. Thus, Marius' opening of the Roman army to the proletarians would have paved the way, it was believed for a long time, for the personal ambitions of the imperatores. But this view is now being challenged, as neither the proletarianisation of recruits nor the constitution of real private armies has been attested. Other historiographical advances have been made: particularly in the study of battle or the constitution of military knowledge. It has been shown, among other things, that the Judeo-Claudian period was decisive for the transition from a citizen's army to a permanent and professional army, where soldiers became the privileged interlocutors of the authorities.

Renewal of the medieval history

Medieval history is a particularly dynamic field of research, as Elisabeth Lalou convinces us. Beyond events (the fire at Notre-Dame de Paris) or discoveries (Cimabue's work acquired by the Louvre Museum, Thomas de Celano's manuscript on the life of Saint Francis), French medieval history relies on strong institutions: the SHMESP, the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, the École nationale des chartes, where women play a major role, the Agence nationale de la recherche through support for a number of major programmes (COSME Sources médiévales consortium 2013-2016, then 2017-2019), the École française de Rome and the Casa de Velázquez (Epistola ANR-DFG-Casa de Velázquez project). Medievalists are also actively involved in major transperiod themes: emotions, food and anthropology, networks, world history and connected history, gender (biography of Blanche de Castille, 2014 exhibition in Nantes on Anne de Bretagne). The agrégation programmes provide interesting indications of the most recent issues: in 2014-2016, 'Governing in Islam between the 10th and 15th centuries'; in 2016-2018, 'Confrontation, exchanges and knowledge of the other in Northern and Eastern Europe from the end of the 7th century to the middle of the 11th century'; in 2019-2022, 'Writing, power and society in the West from the beginning of the 12th century to the end of the 14th century'. The written word and power are

therefore fashionable themes. On the other hand, economic history and rural history are less attractive, while religious history holds up well. Moreover, although historians of Islamic countries or Byzantium work relatively autonomously, the issues they tackle are not very different from those developed by Westernists. For the future, the great challenge for medievalists lies in their collaboration with literary scholars, art historians and archaeologists.

Early Modern and Modern History: advances in religious history and economic and social history

Religious history remains one of the most vigorous areas of research in modern history, as shown by the example of the Wars of Religion (Nicolas Le Roux). Indeed, a number of historians have questioned whether the Wars of Religion were religious wars. It is true that the violence of the French 16th century owed much to noble solidarity and the defence of honour. It is true that not all the belligerents were warriors of God, which has led some authors to deny any legitimacy to the concept of religious violence because of the affirmation of state violence. These revisionist visions are nevertheless being challenged today: the power of the eschatological imagination was indeed at the origin of mass violence (Denis Crouzet). Belonging to a camp did not necessarily imply armed commitment. On the other hand, the first Wars of Religion were certainly a major turning point, with the multiplication of massacres by Catholics (St Bartholomew's Day) and the practice of targeted violence by Protestants. The war led to a process of militarisation and brutalisation, notwithstanding the policy of pacification edicts, which the Catholic Church opposed. Furthermore, the assassination of Henry III was the result of a process of desacralisation of the monarchy, to which Henry IV responded by asserting himself as the sovereign chosen by God to rule over a united people.

The study of the French economy and society from the beginning of the modern era to the Empire is not as bad as people want to say (Guy Lemarchand). It is true that it is no longer possible today to claim to dominate the whole of a discipline (history is "in tatters"). It is true that the ideological crisis that is sweeping through the scientific community has called into question the imperium of the Annals and of Marxism. However, the activity of researchers has been revived by the mobilisation of new archival sources, by a renewed interest in print and also by the growing specialisation of researchers. Thanks, among other things, to the exploitation of statistical sources (maximum prices of 1793-1794) and quantitative sources (bills of exchange), four trends have emerged from a methodological point of view: the primacy of the long term, a revival of quantification, increased interest in historiography and the development of interdisciplinarity. With regard to the sixteenth century, historians question the idea of 'great discoveries', insist on the turning point of the 1560s and push back the limits of the century to 1630-1640. For the seventeenth century, following the pioneering work of Pierre Goubert and Jean-Pierre Gutton, interest continues to focus on mass poverty and the development of welfare, but also on war, the rise in power of merchants and traders and the beginning of proto-industrialisation, without succeeding in rehabilitating the 'Great Century'.

The dominant research on the 18th century emphasises the demographic and economic boom, as evidenced by the progress of a dual industry, combining a modern and a traditional sector (Lewis' model), foreign trade and maritime enterprises. Agriculture was also modernised (progress in

viticulture and stockbreeding), and not only under the impetus of the physiocrats, without escaping the vagaries of the climate and poor harvests. From a historiographical point of view, the innovations developed around five major themes:

- 1/ the rise of circulation, which was broader than simple trade (the role of fairs, markets, hawking and waterways)
- 2/ the existence of an almost universal practice of short-term credit, including among merchants and court nobles. But, in the absence of large modern credit institutions, trade remained fragile and unstable;
- 3 / consumer fever in Paris (Daniel Roche), but also in the provinces;
- 4/ food (culinary books, hospital archives, inventories after death);
- 5/ the environment (industrial and urban pollution, "marsh fever", the conquering will of the great physiocratic owners).

As for the period of the Revolution and the Empire, the works always insist on the elements of continuity, by returning to the economic catastrophe that the years 1789 to 1815 would have constituted (following the research of François Crouzet, Maurice Lévy-Leboyer or Jean-Pierre Poussou), around the decline of the years 1770-1780 as well as the agricultural and industrial renaissance of the years 1802-1810.

Contemporary history: a look at the history of the right in France

In recent years, contemporary political history has suffered from competition from cultural history and social history. It has remained, however, a major sector of research, around renewed objects, such as the history of the right (Olivier Dard). For a long time, this history was dominated by René Rémond and his work *La droite en France* (1954). Republished in 1982 under the title *Les Droites en France*, it covers the years 1815 to 1980, around the famous tripartition bonapartism-legitimism-orleanism. It has been the subject of strong challenges (Zeev Sternhell), but also of strong support (Jean-François Sirinelli's *Histoire des Droites*). Nevertheless, the most considerable revision of its conclusions comes from Gilles Richard's book: *Les droites aujourd'hui* (2005). Challenging R. Rémond's genealogical approach, he identifies fifteen or so political families, highlights the disappearance of the old rights replaced by new ones (nationalism, Christian democracy) and the emergence of a new divide between neo-liberals and anti-globalisation nationalists. The last ten years have seen the flowering of political biographies (Pierre Laval, Pierre-Étienne Flandin, Philippe Henriot, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Louis Jacquinot, Edmond Michelet, Louis Terrenoire). Research has also focused on the parties themselves: the right-wing against the Cartel des gauches, the PSF as a mass party, the Parti républicain de la liberté, Gaullist networks, militant violence (RPF's order services, the UDF and the Front (then Rassemblement) national), as well as international networks, circulation and transfers (neo-liberalism, the influence of Barrès, Maurras and Salazar's Portugal, for example);

NEW FIELDS AND TRANSVERSAL APPROACHES

French and Francophone historiography is therefore in the process of renewal. New fields are opening up to research, which largely call for transversal and multidisciplinary, or even transdisciplinary, approaches: this is the case for archaeology.

Archaeology: an expanding field or an autonomous discipline?

In recent years, archaeology has evolved in depth (François Baratte). A good example of this is the development of an archaeology of recent conflicts (excavations in Smolensk, Russia, of the remains of soldiers from Napoleon's Grande Armée). One of the major factors in this evolution has been the development of salvage archaeology and the creation, in 2001, of the Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (INRAP). Driven by prehistoric archaeology, a New Archeology with an explanatory vocation was established, based on the definition of models, while computer technology became more widespread. Excavation methods have become more complex: it is no longer a question of clearing a site but of evaluating its archaeological potential, thanks to surface prospecting and also, increasingly, at depth. Geophysical surveys are combined with aerial archaeology and laser remote sensing. The use of satellites has made it possible to photograph increasingly large areas and to contribute to large international academic operations. Archaeometry is devoted to dating and characterising materials and is combined with the study of pollens (seeds, charcoal and animal remains) to define the palaeoenvironment and its evolution. Knowledge has thus progressed spectacularly (ceramics, excavation of necropolises and burials). Archaeology is increasingly seeking to assert itself as an autonomous discipline, for example by relying on ethnoarchaeology. Its increasing professionalisation is accompanied by a growing risk of splintering, but also by considerable scientific gains.

The affirmation of gender studies à la française

Women's history and gender history have also become a major field of historical research: this is what Anna Bellavitis shows. Since the first edition of the History of Women in the West, edited by Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, thirty years have passed, marked by the spread of gender studies, understood in the sense of "a direct way of signifying power relations", according to the definition of the American historian Joan W. Scott. Although the concept of gender was not assimilated until late in France, since 2011, gender has become a cross-cutting priority of the CNRS, which, in 2012, created the Gender Institute. Research is abundant and resonates with current events on themes such as religion, family, war, sexuality, feminism, politics and work. Databases and major ANR research programmes have been created, and gender history is one of the central themes of the LABEX EHNE. French historians have gone beyond the stage of mistrust of the 'American-style' institutionalisation of gender studies and interdisciplinary Master's and Doctorate degrees have been created in recent years. While suggestions from the US remain a reference, European-wide exchanges have multiplied, with European research groups and international degrees. Gender is both a field of study and a useful category for historical analysis, and, more importantly, women have been able to regain their place in the historical process.

The cultural turn in the history of techniques

Liliane Hilaire-Perez reveals the extent of the cultural turn in the history of technology. If techniques were long considered as applied sciences, the situation has changed over the last generation. Under the effect of the growing synergies between the history of techniques and general history, from a history of ideas and scientific truth, the history of science has moved to a history of experience, instruments and technicians. The history of technology has thus undergone a cultural

turn. Marked by a strong focus on the cultural dimension of techniques, this cultural turn is primarily the result of a historicisation of invention. For a time, the sociology of science questioned invention in favour of techniques, and invention was increasingly analysed as a process of borrowing, analogies and multiple circulations. This social dimension of invention is essential to institutional arrangements, due to the State, but not only (municipalities, professional bodies, laboratories). A second strong trend lies in the contribution of philosophy (Bertrand Gille, Hélène Vérin). Initially a science of technique, technology has increasingly become a science of production (Eric Schatzberg), but also, more broadly, a science of human activities, both intellectual and attentive to the most diverse and minute practices (role of museums, collectors, amateurs). A theoretical technology (energy transition) thus coexists with a descriptive technology based on observation, collection and classification.

Assuming globalisation or the challenges of French economic history

Economic history faces similar challenges, as Olivier Feiertag shows. Guillaume Calafat, Éric Monnet, Christelle Rabier and Pierre Saint-Germier drew up an alarming report on French and Francophone economic history in 2016. Of course, the decline is not specific to France: it is the result of the discrediting of economism, the growing interest in the history of representations, the rehabilitation of the individual in the face of social forces, the decline of Marxism in the face of neo-liberalism. But one of the major causes lies in a persistent divorce between economists and historians. It is true that economic science has changed: the decline of Keynesianism in favour of neo-liberalism, the victory of microeconomic analysis over macroeconomic explanations, and the globalisation of the economy. Despite the rise of management sciences, historians and economists no longer read each other. Moreover, in the face of the cultural turn and the postcolonial turn, the innovative capacity of the French school of economic history has largely dwindled. The time has come for global studies.

A new field: families and experiences of war

This cultural turn is particularly concerned with the history of families confronted with the experience of war. For Raphaëlle Branche, families constitute an object of history that would benefit from being considered as such by historians working on conflicts. In this respect, the rapprochement with sociology or the assimilation of the notion of 'gender' offer opportunities. First of all, we need to look at the war experienced (or what the war does to families), by distinguishing between the war itself and the end of the war. Dominique Fouchard has thus looked at the effects of the First World War on the relations of veterans with their families, between the "words of the dreamed return" and the "evils of the real return", Clémentine Vidal-Naquet, at the tests of couples during this conflict, and Emmanuelle Cronier, at the permissions during the year from 1915. The case of the prisoners of the Second World War was the subject of Fabrice Virgili's work.

Research has also focused on the question of violence suffered by relatives (raped women and children born of rape studied by Antoine Rivière or Daniel Ikuomola, wards of the nation, war widows). But the war experience is also transmitted within families. These constitute one of the fundamental frameworks of memory, as shown by the investigations of Florence Dosse (French

conscripts in Algeria) and the work of Marianne Hirsch on the survivors of the Shoah. Of course, the Second World War has focused most of the work, but the concept of the "generation of fire", considered in its relationship with the other generations, appears to be very enlightening: so does the comparison between veterans of the two world wars and the Algerian war. There remains the fundamental question of war trauma. On this theme, work on the victims of the Shoah still dominates, following the example of Michael Pollack (silence of those who return and the legacy of this silence), but the Vietnam War is also an important subject of study (around psychological suffering). However, this type of work, based on intimate sources, cannot be limited to interviews, but also requires personal archives.

From colonial history to imperial studies

A well-known specialist in colonial and military history, Jacques Frémeaux shows how the notion of imperial history allows us to free ourselves from the preconceptions that still surround colonial history today. This same notion reflects much better, according to him, the reality of imperialism, the 'transculturation' of the coloniser to the colonised and the transition to globalisation. He goes on to define a colonial society as 'the taking over of a country by an outside, usually Western, minority, which installs either cadres or settlers to form a settlement'. What these colonial societies have in common is "the domination of the natives by the conquerors and the cultural difference, experienced in terms of the superiority of the colonists over 'the natives'". Colonisation was carried out in order to control resources and navigation routes, resulting in wars with specific characteristics, of which Algeria offers good examples between 1830 and 1840, then from 1954 to 1962. Algeria also provides a typical case of the failure of an army-based colonisation when the colonists denied the indigenous elites any real access to affairs.

Transition to the digital age

The transition to digital history is disrupting the profession of historian (Yvan Combeau). Although it dates back at least thirty years, the digital revolution opens up a considerable field for the transmission of knowledge, through collective work, which is now possible on a global scale, the creation of 'cyberstructures' (databases and digitised archives), the introduction of 'hypertextuality' and 'multimodality'. Indeed, the page constitutes a framework of innovation for a plural writing, because the historian works in a constant communication. The screen thus overcomes the false alternative between history-science and history-narrative. With Web 2.0, the digitisation and formatting of archives are established on a global scale. But the confrontation of sources remains more than ever a priority in historical writing. Thanks to indexing, cognitive ergonomics and hypertextual connections, digitisation is gradually replacing the paper medium and the hard disk is becoming the library. These evolutions have greatly favoured the development of a history of the Indian Ocean, which has long been neglected.

DEBATES, CONTROVERSIES AND EMERGING RESEARCH

Contemporary historiography, particularly in the French-speaking world, is riddled with debate and controversy, but also constantly renewed by emerging research.

Cultural history in France today

Cultural history is characterised by a particular dynamism. It does not constitute an autonomous field of research, but rather lies at the convergence of political, economic and social history, and dialogues with the history of art and heritage, while coming up against the obstacle of the diversity of its sources and the limits of interdisciplinarity (Éric Mension-Rigau). Close to sociology (Cédric Giraud) and anthropology, it has experienced unprecedented growth over the last twenty years (Aurélien Poidevin), thanks in particular to the Association pour le développement de l'histoire culturelle. Giving an important place to the social history of representations (A. Poidevin), it uses and revitalizes recent currents, such as gender studies, colonial and postcolonial studies (Rémi Dalisson). Interested in the emergence of counter-cultures (A. Poidevin), it must, in order to become international, develop comparative studies (É. Mension-Rigau), hence its attraction to global micro-history (A. Poidevin), emotions, new cultures (comic strips, television series, street art) or the blind spots of social practices (R. Dalisson).

The question of the right price: a transversal problem at the frontiers of theology, philosophy and economic history

Questions that cut across time periods are often difficult. There are, however, areas that are particularly favourable to this type of cooperation. This is the case of the question of the "fair price" addressed in a recent book edited by Véronique Chandowski, Clément Lenoble and Jérôme Maucourant.² This is one of the fundamental keys to economic thinking. Inherited from Aristotle, it was at the heart of scholastic thought before finding a burning relevance. Behind this notion of "fair price" is the desire that exchanges be carried out at a moderate and socially appropriate price. Originating in Roman law, but taken up by medieval scholasticism, around Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, it continues to exert a profound influence through the search for a system of fair prices guaranteeing incomes proportional to the status and activity of each person. It is therefore the antithesis of the political economy that emerged at the end of the 17th century, for which the notion of justice is increasingly associated with that of competition. It is now the free play of competition that guarantees the efficiency of the economy. Nevertheless, there is now a return to the notion of "fair price" (fair value of IFRS accounting standards, implementation of a competition policy under the aegis of the State).

The transmission of knowledge: a huge project for researchers

The transmission of knowledge is another cross-cutting task for the various periods, an immense task. Involving transfers in time and space, it is rarely carried out identically. Two paths emerge: on the one hand, pure and simple imitation; on the other, teaching, which implies a certain critical distancing, a pedagogical reformulation, and even a reordering of knowledge. This reformulation may be carried out by the sender (transformation of knowledge), or by the receiver (adaptation of knowledge to his/her abilities or needs). School teaching and learning (professional or family) can

² Véronique Chandowski, Clément Lenoble et Jérôme Maucourant. *Les infortunes du juste prix. Marchés, justice social et bien commun de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, Lormont, Le Bord de l'eau, 2020, 240 p.

evolve between these two extremes. The transmission of knowledge can take many forms, be the work of specialised actors (teacher, master), be exercised in a diffuse manner in social practice, use various vectors (the written word and the book, speech and memory, images, gestures), be dealt with in institutional frameworks (school, profession), and take place throughout life in family and social life, economic activity and religious practice.

Knowledge is not limited to theoretical knowledge, since it is based on both science and technology, with differences depending on the period. Disciplines play an essential role, while close relations are established between art and science. As for the actors of knowledge, they are first and foremost individuals (the mother, then the father, the grandparents, the brothers and sisters, the friends, the comrades). Equally important is the role of family, lineage and reciprocal education. The institutions of training (transmitting knowledge) and research (creating or perfecting knowledge) appear no less essential. However, school, university and research institutions are not the only forms, channels and instruments of knowledge transmission: we must take into account learning, the role of the written word and the media, as well as orality. Finally, knowledge and know-how are transmitted to very diverse audiences, hence the question of the role of networks, of training as a prerequisite for the transmission of knowledge, and of the relationship between theoretical and practical training.

Is Public History a new historical school?

Both are involved in Public History. A relatively recent creation, it is the subject of a useful and informed update by Félix Torres. The North American and then international rise of Public History over the last thirty years or so has raised questions not only about its origins and causes, but also about its audiences, its practices and, henceforth, the historical significance of the historical content it produces and disseminates. It is somewhere between a new historical school that ignores itself and a particular variation of existing historical knowledge aimed at a wider audience or audiences. If there is a gap between Business History and public history in companies, the latter has a practice and an audience that are distinct from the former. Consequently, this public history is likely to contribute to the other, scientific history, in terms of 'pure' history, if not in terms of problems. Generally speaking, every history, when it is of good quality, can advance historical science.

Emerging research: the Daniel and Michel Dezès Prize (2015-2020)

Historical research is also renewed, and even more so, through theses. This is shown by a review of those awarded the Daniel and Michel Dezès Prize, which the French Committee of Historical Sciences has been awarding since 1983. This prize has honoured in the past some of the most renowned historians of the French university: among others Frédérique Audoin-Rouzeau, in 1983, for her thesis *Archéozoologie de la Charité-sur-Loire médiévale* (Archaeozoology of medieval Charité-sur-Loire), Olivier Guyot-Jeannin, in 1987, for his dissertation at the École française de Rome on *Les élites parmesanes, XIIe siècle et première moitié du XIIIe siècle*, Stéphane Benoist, in 1993, for his thesis *La fête à Rome sous les règnes d'Auguste et des Julio-Claudiens*, Bénédicte Vergez-Chaignon, in 1995, for her thesis *Histoire de la fonction d'interne dans les Hôpitaux de Paris aux XIXe et XXe siècles* or Johann Chapoutot, in 2008, for his thesis on *Le National-socialisme et l'Antiquité*.

Since the last International Congress of Historical Sciences, held in 2015 in Jinan, Shandong, China, three theses have been awarded the prize. In 2016, it was a thesis by a contemporaryist, David Gallo, that won the award. His thesis was on *La politique de formation idéologique de la SS (1933-1945). Institutions, discours, pratiques, acteurs et impact de la Weltanschauliche Schulung*. It is a scholarly and remarkably problematised contribution to the study of a key group of Nazi actors. Without establishing a mechanical link between instruction and the practice of warlike and genocidal violence, it brilliantly attempts to define the historical significance of the SS training apparatus, which it demonstrates both its singularity and its inability to carry out the tasks assigned to it.

In 2018, Maria Sokorina received the prize for her thesis entitled *Les Théologiens face à la question de l'influence céleste. Science et foi dans les commentaires des Sentences (vers 1220-vers 1340)*. This is a major research project, combining science, theology and philosophy, because it is devoted to a fundamental question for medieval thought, that of the influence of the celestial world on the terrestrial world. It renews in depth the problematic of the relations between faith and reason, between theology and science. Finally, it contributes to redefine a historiographic field, that of a strictly conceptualized intellectual history of science, on the institutional, cultural and intellectual levels.

In 2020, the competition was particularly strong, with no less than twenty-three applications, all of which are presented in this volume. It is the immense work, transversal to the medieval and modern periods, of Clothilde Dumargne that has been rewarded. Her thesis is entitled *Les chandeliers en bronze, en cuivre et en laiton en Europe du XIII^e au XVII^e siècle. Production, diffusion et usages*. The work convincingly covers a long period of time and a vast geographical area, mainly Northern Europe. Candlesticks are studied in terms of their forms, materials and production techniques, as well as their economic, social, cultural and heritage dimensions. C. Dumargne has taken up this challenge by mobilising the achievements of various sciences, at the confluence of archaeology, art history and history, without shying away from using archaeometric methods. Starting from an ordinary object, it has produced a total history. Among other contributions, we should mention the establishment of a terminology and a typology of copper alloy luminaries, the identification of cultural uses, and an analysis of the production and exchange circuits of candlesticks. Clothilde Dumargne thus confirms the fruitfulness of the study of "commonplace things" and of material history.